

Basic Bible Doctrine 4

A Study in Basic Systematic Theology

The Doctrine of Salvation

The Doctrine of Last Things

False Doctrine

Conclusion

16 – 30 Minute Lessons (8 Hours)

Taught by: Dr. Jeffrey Lange

The Doctrine of Salvation

The doctrine of salvation can be likened to a diamond. A diamond has many facets that can be viewed from different angles. Just as each viewpoint gives a different perspective of the diamond so looking at the different “facets of salvation” gives a different viewpoint of what it means to be saved. Failure to understand the “diamond of salvation” can lead to embracing error. For example, many people misunderstand the relationship between faith and good works. One group says that we are saved by our good works to “earn” salvation and point to James 2:17.

James 2:17 – “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

However, the other group says that we are saved by faith and point to Romans 4:5.

Romans 4:5 – “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

The first verse speaks of works and the second of faith. Is there is a contradiction between these two verses? No! Both verses are looking at the “diamond of salvation” from a different “facet” or viewpoint.

The verse in Romans is speaking of the work of God IN us. The verse in James is looking at another “facet” and speaking of the work of God THROUGH us which produces good works. Therefore, we understand that a true believer is saved by God’s grace which will then produce good works because he is saved and NOT in order to be saved.

It is very important to have the correct understanding of salvation. A person may be wrong on many things in the Bible, but as long as he believes right about salvation, he will still get to Heaven. However, he can believe everything in the Bible correctly, but if he is wrong about salvation, he will go to Hell.

Some believe salvation is a lifelong process beginning at infant baptism while others, like Baptists, believe in a conversion experience. Who is right and who is wrong? As usual, we will learn what the Bible teaches.

Although there are many Christian denominations, we can separate them into two groups based on their view of salvation – the “Do” group and the “Done” group. Most Christians and denominations fall into the first group.

1. The “Do” Group.

The “Do” group teaches that in order to get to Heaven, you need to “DO” something to work or earn your way to Heaven! Some teach you need to be a member of their church. Others teach that you have to be baptized or that you can’t eat certain foods or have to worship on a certain day in order to get to Heaven. They teach that you need to DO some kind of “works” in order to get to Heaven.

2. The “Done” Group.

The “Done” group believes that Jesus Christ’s death was sufficient to atone for all the sins of mankind. They teach that Jesus Christ paid the price of sin on the cross, was buried, and rose again three days later, therefore, He is now able to give eternal life to all that come to Him in repentance and faith. The believer does not need to work or earn his way to Heaven.

Who is right and who is wrong?

If you think the “Do” group is correct, then you believe that you need to DO something to work or earn your way to Heaven. If that is true, then why did Jesus Christ die on the cross? If there was another way for people to go to Heaven through DOING good works, then there was no need for Jesus Christ to suffer and die on the cross.

If you believe the “Do” group is correct, then you believe that Jesus’ death on the cross was not sufficient to atone for your sins. Furthermore, you believe that you need to DO good works to help you get saved and/or keep you saved. But what does Romans 3:23 teach us?

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

According to this verse, there is no amount of good works a person can DO to earn their salvation, because all have “come short of the glory of God”. Think of a runner in a race that falls just short of the finish line. In the same way man comes up short of God’s standard of holiness. It is for this reason that Jesus willingly paid the penalty of sin for us in order to provide a way of salvation for all people. Therefore, the correct group to belong to is the “Done” group.

Law and Grace

A correct understanding of God’s Law and God’s grace is needed for a correct understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

God’s Law

There are three common errors that some Christian denominations embrace relating to the Law of God.

1. Some groups teach that men are saved by keeping God’s Law.
2. Some groups teach that you can sin as much as you want and still go to Heaven since salvation is all by God’s grace.
3. Some teach that you are saved by God’s grace, but you need to keep the Law in order to stay saved or you will risk losing your salvation.

The Law of God is sometimes referred to as the Law of Moses and contained 613 commandments. It is separated into 3 sections.

1. Commandments. These are God’s “10 Commandments”. Exodus 20:1-17.
2. Judgments. These are civil laws for the government of the nation of Israel. Exodus 21-24.
3. Ordinances. These are the religious ceremonial laws. Exodus 24-31.

God’s Law shows that all men are sinners.

Romans 3:20 – “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

A person begins to understand they are sinners when they learn God's Law. Why? No one can keep God's Law perfectly without breaking one of His commandments. God's Law causes the sinner to realize that he cannot be saved by keeping the commands of God and shows our need for Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:24 – “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

The purpose of God's Law was to legally declare man to be a sinner. It was never intended to save anyone. It is impossible for anyone to keep God's Law their whole life without breaking one commandment. For example,

1. Exodus 20:3 - Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Has God always been first place in your life? Do you really love God above all else? Or has there been times when leisure, education, a career, money, relationships, sports, or your own life were more important than God?

If you are honest, you would admit that there have been times when you set your affection on something or someone other than God. Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

2. Exodus 20:4 - Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

The second commandment warns against making an idol. An idol does not have to be made of wood or stone. You can set up an idol in your heart (Ezekiel 14:3) meaning that you made a god in your mind that suits yourself and one that you are comfortable with.

Maybe you think, "My god is a loving god who would never send anyone to Hell"? Or perhaps your god does not mind a "white" lie here or there. In reality, that god does not exist; he's a figment of your imagination. If your god is not the One revealed in Holy Scripture, then you have made an image of God to suit yourself, something the Bible calls idolatry and you have broken this commandment.

3. Exodus 20:7 - Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

Have you ever used God's name or Jesus' name flippantly like "Oh my GOD!" or "JESUS!" or alongside a four-letter curse word? If you have taken the holy name of the God, who gave you your life, and used it in that manner, that is called blasphemy and it is very serious.

The verse says here, "The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain". Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

4. Exodus 20:8 – Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Have you always honored the Lord's Day or been faithful to church attendance? Or has there been times when making money or staying home whether watching sports or relaxing was more important?

5. Exodus 20:12 - Honor thy father and thy mother.

Every time you have disobeyed your parents or had a bad attitude towards them, you have dishonored them and broken this commandment.

6. Exodus 20:13 - Thou shalt not kill.

Jesus warned in Matthew 5:22 that if you have ever been angry at someone else that you have committed murder in your heart against them. You violate God's Law by your heart attitude towards them. Every time you have been angry at someone else, you have broken this commandment and 1 John 3:15 says "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

7. Exodus 20:14 - Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Jesus said that looking on someone else with lust (sexual desire) is committing adultery in the heart. No one honestly can say they have been pure of heart their whole entire life. God has seen every impure thought you have ever had.

Every time you have looked on someone else with lust, you have broken this commandment. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 6:9 that fornicators (sex b4 marriage) and adulterers will not enter the kingdom of God.

8. Exodus 20:15 - Thou shalt not steal.

Have you ever taken something that did not belong to you, regardless of its value? This includes stealing an answer on a test, taking items home from work, or even stealing time from your boss by using your phone or computer for personal use while the boss is paying you to work.

If you have taken anything that is not yours, then you are a thief and you cannot enter God's kingdom (1 Cor. 6:10). Every time you have taken something that was not yours, you have broken this law.

9. Exodus 20:16 - Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Have you ever told a lie? Then that would make you a liar. It does not matter that you think it is a "white" lie. God considers any untruth regardless of severity to be a lie. The Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). Every time you have told a lie; you have broken this.

10. Exodus 20:17 - Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Have you ever desired anything you didn't have or didn't need? Have you ever been discounted, jealous or ungrateful? This is covetousness.

On the Day of Judgment, when God judges you based on His Law, would you be guilty or innocent? You know you will be guilty. Would you go to Heaven or Hell? God's place of punishment for the guilty is the "prison" of Hell.

You may think that God will overlook your sin because you believe that your good outweighs your bad. God is not going to judge you for the good you have done, but He will judge you for breaking His Law.

Perhaps you think that God is good and that a loving Judge will not send anyone to Hell. But if you were guilty of a crime in a civil court and said to the judge, "Judge, I am guilty, but I believe you are a good man and will therefore overlook my crime".

The judge would respond by saying, "You are right about one thing; I am a good man, and it's because of my goodness that I am going to see that justice is done, that you are punished for your crime."

The very thing that many people are hoping will save them on Judgment Day, God's goodness, will be the very thing that will condemn them. If God is good, He must punish adulterers, fornicators, murderers, liars, thieves, etc., in the "prison" of Hell.

Have you broken any of these commandments at least on time in your life? If so, then you have broken God's Law. If God were to judge you by His Law, would you be guilty or innocent? If you have broken at least one commandment in your life, then you would be guilty. Would God send you to Heaven or Hell? If you have broken God's Law then you would go to Hell.

If you are like the average person, you have lied, stolen, lusted, and have been angry with someone else. It is impossible for anyone to live their whole life without breaking one of God's commandments.

So, God's Law shows us that we are sinners, but it also shows that there is no way we can be saved by keeping God's Law. That is the purpose of God's Law.

God knew that it would be impossible for man to come to him through His Law. So, by God's grace, He made a way for all men to come unto Him.

God's Grace

What does grace mean? Grace is getting something we do not deserve. Grace is God's favor toward a sinner in which the sinner does not DO anything to earn it. The following chart compares God's Law to God's grace.

<u>Law</u>	<u>Grace</u>
Prohibits approach to God	Invites approach to God
Condemns the sinner	Redeems the sinner
Curses the sinner	Blesses the sinner
Slays the sinner	Saves the sinner
Condemns the best man	Saves the worst man
The soul that sinneth, it shall die	Believe and live
Reveals man's sin	Atones for man's sin
Gives knowledge of sin	Provides redemption from sin
Puts man under bondage	Sets a soul at liberty

Even though the believer is free from the Law, it does not mean he has the permission to sin all he wants. The Word of God declares that a Christian should live a holy life.

1 John 5:3 – “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

Something is very wrong if a Christian feels “grievous” keeping God's commands as if he was being forced to live a holy life against his will. A true believer will have a desire to live a holy life. If this desire is missing from someone who professes to be a Christian, then it may be a sign that they have never been truly saved.

Repentance and Faith

Repentance and faith are two “facets” on the “diamond of salvation” that belong to the human side of salvation. They are man’s response to the Word of God. Repentance is a turning away from sin. Faith is a turning to Jesus Christ. Both repentance and faith are necessary for salvation and both should be emphasized in Gospel preaching.

Acts 20:21 – “... repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 6:1 – “...repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God”

Mark 1:15 – “... repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Repentance

Repentance is a necessary part of the Gospel message. If there is no repentance, there is no salvation. John the Baptist preached repentance.

Matthew 3:1-2 – “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus Christ preached repentance.

Matthew 4:17 – “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Peter preached repentance.

Acts 3:19 – “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”

Paul preached repentance.

Acts 20:21 – “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The message of salvation cannot be complete without repentance. It is sad that many pastors have embraced “easy-prayerism”. Easy-prayerism holds to the view that all you need to do is say the “words” of a prayer for salvation without the need to repent or turn from your sins. They believe that if you can get the sinner to say the “words” of the prayer, even pressure them into it, that then they are saved.

As a result, many well-meaning Christians try to get sinners to say the “sinner’s prayer” thinking it will save them. They think that there is no need to see if a person understands salvation or is ready to be saved and willing to repent of their sins since, by their understanding, all it takes is saying the words of a prayer to be saved. By this method, it is too easy for the sinner to make a false profession of faith that will still lead him to Hell.

If you ask the typical American what they are trusting in to go to Heaven, you will usually hear, “I go to church, have been baptized, and am a good person.” Will any of those things get a person to Heaven? Absolutely NOT! You can see by their answers that they are trusting in their “works” to earn their way to Heaven.

Then an “easy-prayerism” Christian comes along and says “You need to be Born-Again to get to Heaven. Here, just pray this prayer with me and you will be saved!” What is the sinner thinking on the inside? He may think, “Well, I will just add being “Born-Again” to my list of church membership, baptism, and being a good person.”

The sinner prays the “sinner’s prayer” and walks away still trusting in his good works to get to Heaven. He will end up in Hell because the sinner did not repent or turn from what he was trusting in (church membership, baptism, and good works, etc.) and did not trust on Jesus Christ 100% for salvation. That is why it is so important to take the time to make sure the sinner understands what it means to be saved before leading him to salvation.

I have been the victim of an “easy-prayerism” Christian trying to pressure people into praying a prayer for salvation. I was twelve years old when a man approached me and asked me if I wanted to go to Heaven. Of course, I said yes. He said a few more things and I became very uncomfortable and wanted him to leave me alone.

He said that if I wanted to go to Heaven, I should say this prayer with him. All I wanted to do was to get away from this guy. So, I prayed that prayer just so he would go away. He told me that now I was a saved and a child of God.

Even though I prayed that prayer, I did not get saved at that time. I did not turn from my sins. I did not see myself as a hell-bound sinner that needed to be saved. My whole motivation for praying that prayer was for this man to leave me alone. He walked away thinking that I was going to Heaven, but in truth, I was still on the road to Hell.

It was not until I was 23 years old that a friend showed me from the Bible what salvation really is all about. It was then that I understood that I was a hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner. I understood that I needed to turn from my sin and turn from the things I was trusting in to get to Heaven and instead trust on Jesus Christ 100%. I am thankful that the Fargo Baptist Church stayed true to the Bible-way of salvation.

It is sad that so many pastors have embraced “easy-prayerism”. We see all around the world, many people who “profess” to be saved, but do not “possess” salvation. They may go to church, but they are still lost and on the road to Hell. Repentance is a necessary part of salvation. We see from the Bible that God commands man to repent.

Acts 17:30 – “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”

Salvation depends on repentance. If there is no repentance, there is no salvation. Jesus said in,

Luke 13:3 – “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

What does repentance mean?

Matthew 21:29 – “He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.”

In this verse, a father told his son to go work in the vineyard. The son answered, “No”, but then he repented (changed his mind) and went. You see that the son changed his mind that resulted in a change of action. Before, he said no and did not go. Then when he repented, he changed his mind, and it resulted in a change of action, he went. It means a change of mind that results in a change of action.

True repentance involves a change of mind that results in a change of action or direction (u-turn).

What does a sinner need to change his mind about? He needs to change his mind about two things.

1. Sin.

“Old Thinking” says “I enjoyed living in the pleasures of sin - in the things I did and saw”.

“New Thinking” says “I detest my sin and am really sorry for the sins I have committed.”

2. God.

“Old Thinking” says “The death of Jesus Christ on the cross had little importance to me.”

“New Thinking” says “Jesus Christ is my only hope for salvation.”

Some people often associate repentance with weeping and an outward show of sorrow. Weeping and sorrow may accompany repentance, but it does not indicate true repentance.

Many times people show a “sorrow” at being caught in their sin, or regret over the consequences of sin. This is not true repentance, but simply remorse. The Bible makes a distinction between true and false repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10 – “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

We see from this verse that godly sorrow leads to repentance that leads to salvation. However, worldly sorrow only brings remorse that does NOT lead to genuine salvation.

While repentance is an inward action, it has outward results. John the Baptist would not baptize anyone unless they showed “fruits meet for repentance” – Matthew 3:8.

The outward results of true Bible repentance are:

1. A confession of sin to God.

Psalm 32:5 – “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”

Matthew 3:6 – “And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”

2. A confession of faults to man.

James 5:16 – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, ...”

3. A forsaking of sin.

Proverbs 28:13 – “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Faith

Faith is one of the most important words in a Christian’s life.

1. We are saved through faith.

Ephesians 2:8 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; ...”

2. We are to live by faith.

Galatians 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

3. We are kept through faith.

1 Peter 1:5 – “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

What is faith?

1. Faith is NOT an intellectual agreement or a head-knowledge about God.

In the Bible, the word “to believe” and “have faith” mean the same thing. However, those two words do not have the same meaning in the English language today. The word “believe” is used today to mean an intellectual knowledge or opinion. A man may wake up in the morning and look up at the sky and say, “I believe it will rain today.” It is more of an opinion or a head-knowledge. He will not say, “I have faith that it will rain today.” Why? **Faith is a matter of trust that leads to action.** That is why Christians will often make a distinction between believing in your head (head-knowledge) and believing in your heart (faith). A mere head-knowledge about something is not faith as the following verse indicates,

James 2:19 – “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

It is a good thing to believe that God exists, but a head-knowledge about God is not enough to save a person from Hell. The verse says that the devils believe, but there is no salvation for them. The difference between believing in your head (head-knowledge) and believing in your heart (faith) can be made with the following example. A man may examine a chair and believe in his head that it will support his weight. That is only a head-knowledge. It is not faith. Faith is believing in your heart. This man’s belief becomes faith the moment he trusts the chair to support him when he sits and rests his entire body weight on the chair.



Another example that illustrates the difference between “belief” and “faith” is that of Charles Blondin, a world-renowned acrobat, who walked a tightrope across the Niagara Falls in 1859. He did many tricks across the tightrope, and many people were amazed by his skill. A man standing nearby expressed his amazement to Blondin. Blondin then asked the man, “Do you think I could carry a man across the waterfall on a tightrope?” The man was sure that he could, and wanted to see him do it. Charles Blondin then asked him, “Will YOU let me carry you across?” The man was unwilling to trust Blondin and refused. That man “believed in his head” that Charles Blondin could carry a person across the waterfall on a tightrope, but he did not have the faith or “believe in his heart” that he could do it. Faith would have been trusting



Blondin in his heart and getting on his back. Blondin’s last stunt at Niagara Falls was carrying his manager across on the tightrope. His manager had true faith.

2. Faith is NOT feelings.

Many people seek a religious experience to “feel” saved. This is not faith because the person wants to trust his feelings. Feelings can change quickly. One moment you feel happy, and later in the day you feel sad. That is why we do not base our salvation on feelings. One moment you feel saved. The next moment your feelings change and you don’t feel saved anymore. Therefore, the basis of our salvation is not feelings but on God’s Word.

3. Faith IS believing God’s Word and acting upon it.

First, we believe in our head what God says because we know He cannot lie. Then that belief becomes faith when we act upon that knowledge by trusting Him. Just like sitting on the chair or Charles Blondin’s manager getting on his back, belief becomes faith when trust is placed that leads to action. By means of faith, a man places his trust on the Word of God and acts on what God says, because God said it and God cannot lie. This is why the starting point of faith is

Hebrews 11:6 – “... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, ...”

If a man can believe there is an all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing, all-wise God, then he will have no trouble believing what He says. The faith that saves a sinner is the personal application of the work of Jesus Christ. This involves four things:

1. Knowledge.

This must come first. To be saved, we must KNOW that Christ died for our sins and that the blood He shed is a complete payment for our sin. This knowledge comes from the Word of God, which is the BASIS of our faith.

Romans 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

However, knowledge alone is not sufficient to save the sinner.

2. Agreement.

After knowledge, the sinner must agree with the truth of scripture that he is a lost, hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner.

Romans 6:23a – “For the wages of sin is death; ...”

However, agreeing with God is not sufficient to save the sinner.

3. Conviction.

This is accepting the facts agreed to in point #2 will achieve what they claim. For example, a man may say, “I am convinced that a sinner who dies without receiving Jesus Christ will go to Hell”. Or, “I am convinced that a sinner who repents of their sin and receives Jesus Christ will go to Heaven”. Even conviction is not sufficient to save the sinner.

4. Appropriation.

This means to act upon the knowledge that the sinner agreed to with conviction. It is this step that saves the sinner. For example,

“I read in the Bible that Christ died for sinners” – That is knowledge.

“I understand that God would accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for my sin” – That is agreement.

“I am convinced that if I trust Christ I will be saved” – That is conviction.

“I now act upon these facts and trust Christ personally as my Saviour as payment to God for my sin” – That is appropriation.

Sadly, many today do not take the important fourth step of appropriation. It is faith in this fourth step that moves “believing in the head” to “believing in the heart”. It is often called “Saving Faith”. It is faith that acts by trusting Jesus Christ personally as a payment to God for sin.

Sadly, most people in this world only “believe in their head”. It is not sufficient to save the sinner. Only those who “believe in their heart” are saved. It has often been said that the distance between heaven and hell may be measured to be about 15 inches which the average distance from the head to the heart.

How important is faith?

1. It is the only way to please God.

Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

2. It is the only way man can be saved.

John 3:36 – “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

3. It is the only way to live a victorious Christian life.

1 John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

New-Birth

The new-birth is another “facet of salvation”. It refers to the work of God that takes place at the moment a person is saved. God is the source of the new birth.

John 1:13 – “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

This verse teaches that man is born “of God”. It is act of God in the life of the sinner. The new birth is not a reformation. It is not living a better life. It is not a religious ritual. Some Christian denominations teach the new-birth is found through ceremonies like baptism. They wrongly believe the waters of baptism somehow wash away sin. The new-birth results in a changed life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Justification

Justification is another “facet of salvation”. It is the act of God where the sinner is declared to be righteous in God’s sight as if he never sinned. Justification does not make a man righteous, but only declares him to be righteous. The believer is never judged for his sins, because Jesus Christ paid for believer’s sins on the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Justification is a one-time act of God in the sinners life that occurs at the moment of his salvation. We are not justified based on our works.

Romans 3:20 – “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

We stand before God already proven guilty. However, based on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, the sinner is justified at the moment of his salvation.

Acts 13:38-39 – “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

The results of justification are:

1. Peace with God.

Romans 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

2. No more condemnation.

Romans 8:1 – “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

3. Forgiveness of sins.

Acts 13:38-39 – “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

4. Eternal life.

Titus 3:7 – “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Adoption

The doctrine of adoption is another “facet of salvation”. It refers to our position with God the Father. When a person is saved, he does not become a servant, but a child of God! He is adopted into the family of God. Adoption means to legally make a child born to someone else your own child that has all the same privileges of other children born into your family. Immediately at salvation, the sinner is adopted into the family of God.

John 1:12 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”

Galatians 3:26 – “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

1 John 3:2 – “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, ...”

Election and Predestination

John Calvin (1509 – 1564 A.D.) led a movement called Calvinism that changed the Bible meaning of election and predestination to mean that God has determined beforehand who will be saved and go to Heaven and who will not be saved and go to Hell. As usual, we need to ask, “What does the Bible teach about election and predestination?”

Election

The word election means to choose. Elections are held “to choose” certain people to fill legislative positions. So the question becomes, what is it that God has chosen? Has God chosen only to save certain people?

1 Peter 1:20 – “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”

From this verse, we see that before God created the world, He chose to send Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sins of the world.

Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, ...”

From this verse, we see that before God created the world, He chose to save any person who would put their faith in Jesus Christ to be “in Him”. From these two verses, we see that God chosen or “elected” to do two things:

#1 - God chose to send Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sins of the world.

#2 - God chose to save any and all who would put their faith in Jesus Christ.

That is what God has elected or chosen! Since God is all-knowing, He knew that man would sin, so He determined beforehand to send God the Son into the world at an appointed time to die for sinners.

The Bible does not teach that God chooses between individuals, as Calvinism teaches. Nowhere does the Bible teach that God chooses to save some people and reject others. In fact, the Bible teaches that God desires that all men would be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 – “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

From these verses, we see that God desires all men to be saved and does not want anyone to go to Hell. Because of this, God has provided salvation for all men through the death of Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

God has chosen to save ALL who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Predestination

What does predestination mean? It simply means to “determine beforehand”. Calvinism teaches that God has “determined beforehand” certain individuals to salvation. Is that true? As usual, we need to ask, “What does the Bible teach?”

Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,”

According to this verse, God determined beforehand that those who would be saved would be adopted into the family of God. As we already learned, at the moment of salvation, the sinner is adopted into the family of God and becomes a child of God. So according to this verse, God determined beforehand that those who would be saved would become a child of God. This verse says nothing about God predestinating certain individuals to salvation.

Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

According to this verse, what is every believer predestined to? According to this verse, every believer is predestined to an inheritance. It does NOT say that every believer is predestinated to salvation. God determined beforehand that those who would be saved would receive an inheritance. The Apostle Peter writes about this inheritance being reserved for believers in Heaven.

1 Peter 1:4 – “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”

Read carefully the following verse and answer the question, what is it that God determined beforehand?

Romans 8:29 – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

According to this verse, God determined beforehand that the lives of those who would be saved would be conformed to the image of Christ. It says nothing of God choosing certain individuals to salvation.

None of these Scriptures teach that God determined beforehand who would be saved and who would not be saved. These verses teach that God determined before he created the world that those who would be saved would receive certain benefits of salvation, such as,

1. Become a child of God by being adopted into the family of God.
2. Receive an inheritance in Heaven.
3. The believer’s life would be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

The Error of Calvinism and Arminianism

As mentioned, John Calvin (1509 – 1564 A.D.) led a movement called Calvinism. Calvinism is a religious philosophy which argues that God chooses who will be saved and who will not be saved. They teach that the unsaved man is in such bondage to Satan that he is not able to respond to God. Therefore, a sinner cannot repent unless God overpowers him and forces him to repent. They teach that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not for all men, but only for those chosen to salvation.

Arminianism was born out of opposition to Calvinism. The movement was led by the Jacobus Arminius (1560 – 1609 A.D.). Arminianism is the opposite of Calvinism. Calvinism says that salvation is 100% of God's choice and man does NOT have any choice. However, Arminianism says that salvation is 100% of man's choice. If a man chooses to believe then he is saved. At some time in the future, if he decides not to believe, he will lose his salvation. A man can go through many cycles of being saved, then lost throughout his life. You will find that most denominations that believe you can lose your salvation if you do not follow their "rules" hold to the Arminian position.

Both Calvinists and Arminianists only see the two groups. A Calvinist may say, "If you are not a Calvinist, then you are an Arminianist". An Arminianist will say, "If you are not an Arminianist, then you are a Calvinist." The fact is when all the "facets of salvation" are thoroughly examined in the Bible; it will lead you to neither the Calvinist position nor the Arminian position. It will lead you to the Bible position.

The Eternal Security of the Believer

Sadly, there are many Christian denominations that teach that you can lose your salvation. For example, Seventh-Day Adventism teaches that you cannot eat pork or you can lose your salvation. Pentecostal churches teach that you can lose your salvation. According to them, speaking in tongues is a sign that you are saved. If you are no longer able to speak in tongues, then you probably have lost your salvation. Several Protestant denominations also believe you can lose your salvation if you are not faithful.

Any Bible teacher that teaches a Christian needs to follow certain rules or risk losing their salvation is teaching a "works" based salvation message and must be immediately rejected. Thankfully, the Bible teaches that a Christian can be absolutely assured that he cannot lose his salvation. There are three basic reasons why a Christian can be absolutely assured of being eternally secure.

1. The nature of God.

God is all-powerful. The Bible teaches that God is able to keep believers saved!

2 Timothy 1:12 – "...he is able to keep ..."

Jude 1:24 – "... him that is able to keep you ..."

1 Peter 1:5 – "... kept by the power of God ..."

Furthermore, Jesus promises that He will not lose one of his own.

John 6:39 – "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

2. The nature of our salvation.

The Bible teaches that salvation is being born-again.

John 3:3 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Salvation is likened to a birth. If you could lose your salvation, is it possible to be “un-born again?” Furthermore, the Bible also teaches that salvation is a gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The receiver does nothing to earn a gift. It is freely given by the giver. A gift is not a gift if it can be taken back. These two verses teach that salvation is a gift from God. If you could lose your salvation, then salvation was not a gift from God. Furthermore, the Bible also teaches that salvation brings everlasting life.

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Everlasting means it has no ending. If you could lose your salvation, you did not have eternal life, but temporary life. Furthermore, the Bible also teaches that salvation is a present possession. It is not something you get in the future, but it is something you have right now!

John 5:24 – “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

If you HAVE everlasting life RIGHT NOW, how could you lose it? The Bible clearly teaches that those who have eternal life will never lose it.

John 10:28 – “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

The phrase “they shall never perish” is very clear that a saved person can never lose his salvation.

3. The sure promises of God.

The Bible clearly states that believers are preserved in Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:1 – “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:”

If a believer can lose his salvation, then he was not preserved and God is a liar! Furthermore, the Bible clearly states that believers are sealed.

Ephesians 1:13-14 – “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians 4:30 – “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

The “seal” in these verses refer to the common practice of that day when they would seal their envelopes closed by using a stamp on hot wax. At salvation, the Holy Spirit seals the salvation of the sinner so it cannot be lost. If a believer can lose his salvation, then he was not sealed by the Holy Spirit and therefore, God is a liar! Finally, the Bible clearly teaches that no one, not even the sinner himself, can be taken away from God.

John 10:28-29 – “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

Those who hold to “Arminian” position would argue that just as the believer chooses to be saved and puts himself in God’s hand, so he can also choose to remove himself from God’s hand to become unsaved. That would make God a liar because the Bible says no one can be taken out of God’s hand, not even the sinner himself.

The Plan of Salvation

It is very important to take the time to thoroughly explain to the sinner how to be saved. We are going to take the time now to take you through a sample “Plan of Salvation”. This guide that may be better used for Western people as it follows a Western style logical thought process. For those in Asia and Africa, this may not be beneficial to you, but you could use it as a guide to develop your own for your own culture and people group.

You don’t need to follow this guide verse by verse. The most important thing is to let God lead you to the verses to share with the sinner. I have used this plan many times and also have modified it in certain situations. Not every sinner is the same, and you may need to spend more time on a certain topic to make sure the sinner understands how to be saved.

For example, maybe the person I’m dealing with has a hard time understanding that he does not need to work for his salvation. I may use more Bible verses explaining that salvation is a free gift that only needs to be received. If I am dealing with someone who is having a hard time with the aspect of faith, I may use more Bible verses to explain what faith is so to make sure he understands.

Sample Plan of Salvation

There are three things you can know for sure...

1) That you are going to Heaven.

1 John 5:13 – “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life”

2) That your life will change when you get saved.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”

3) You will never lose your salvation.

John 10:28 - “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

Salvation is all about your relationship to Jesus Christ! Who is Jesus Christ?

John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:3 – “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Jesus is God the Son who created everything. He came to earth to save us.

Luke 19:10 – “For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”

The first step is to realize we need to be saved. How do we get to heaven?

John 3:3 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth.

John 3:6 – “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit”

Why do we need a spiritual birth? Man was originally created a three part being in God’s image.

Genesis 1:26 – “And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”

Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit. God placed Adam and Eve in the garden.

Genesis 2:16-17 – “And the lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”

Man ate of the fruit and though he didn’t die that day physically, he died spiritually! According to the following verse, when Adam and Eve had children, in whose image were they born?

Genesis 5:3 - “And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.”

Adam was made in God’s image – a 3-part being of body, soul, and spirit. However, Adam disobeyed God and died spiritually. So now he is only a 2-part being having a body and a soul, but a “dead” or “dormant” spirit. According to the above verse, Adam’s children were born in Adam’s 2-part image and not in God’s 3-part image.

That means every person born has a body, a soul, and a “dead” or “dormant” spirit. That is why we must be reborn spiritually. It is also why we have a sin nature. You don’t have to teach a child to be

selfish, lie, steal, or fight with siblings. They do those things naturally. It is also the nature of adults. The 10 commandments reveal our sinful condition.

#1 *“Thou shalt have no other Gods before me”* (Exodus 20:3).

Has God always been first place in your life? Do you really love God above all else? Or has there been times when leisure, education, a career, money, relationships, sports, or your own life were more important than God? If you are honest, you would admit that there have been times when you set your affection on something or someone other than God. Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

#2 *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image”* (Exodus 20:4).

The second commandment warns against making an idol. An idol does not have to be made of wood or stone. You can set up an idol in your heart (Ezekiel 14:3) meaning that you made a god in your mind that suits yourself and one that you are comfortable with. Maybe you think, "My god is a loving god who would never send anyone to Hell"? Or perhaps your god does not mind a "white" lie here or there. In reality, that god does not exist; he's a figment of your imagination. If your god is not the One revealed in Holy Scripture, then you have made an image of God to suit yourself, something the Bible calls idolatry and you have broken this commandment.

#3 *“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain”* (Exodus 20:7).

Have you ever used God's name or Jesus' name flippantly like “Oh my GOD!” or “JESUS!” or alongside a four-letter curse word? If you have taken the holy name of the God, who gave you your life, and used it in that manner, that is called blasphemy and it is very serious. The verse says here, "The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain". Every time you have done so; you have broken this commandment.

#4 *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”* (Exodus 20:8).

Have you always honored the Lord's Day or been faithful to church attendance? Or has there been times when making money or staying home whether watching sports or relaxing was more important?

#5 *“Honour thy father and thy mother”* (Exodus 20:12).

Every time you have disobeyed your parents or had a bad attitude towards them, you have dishonored them and broken this commandment.

#6 *“Thou shalt not kill”* (Exodus 20:13).

Jesus warned in Matthew 5:22 that if you have ever been angry at someone else that you have committed murder in your heart against them. You violate God's Law by your heart attitude towards them. Every time you have been angry at someone else, you have broken this commandment and 1 John 3:15 says "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

#7 “*Thou shalt not commit adultery*” (Exodus 20:14).

Jesus said that looking on someone else with lust (sexual desire) is committing adultery in the heart. No one honestly can say they have been pure of heart their whole entire life. God has seen every impure thought you have ever had. Every time you have looked on someone else with lust, you have broken this commandment. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 6:9 that fornicators (sex b4 marriage) and adulterers will not enter the kingdom of God.

#8 “*Thou shalt not steal*” (Exodus 20:15).

Have you ever taken something that did not belong to you, regardless of its value? This includes stealing an answer on a test, taking items home from work, or even stealing time from your boss by using your phone or computer for personal use while the boss is paying you to work. If you have taken anything that is not yours, then you are a thief and you cannot enter God's kingdom (1 Cor. 6:10). Every time you have taken something that was not yours, you have broken this law.

#9 “*Thou shalt not bear false witness*” (Exodus 20:16).

Have you ever told a lie? Then that would make you a liar. It does not matter that you think it is a “white” lie. God considers any untruth regardless of severity to be a lie. The Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). Every time you have told a lie; you have broken this.

#10 “*Thou shalt not covet*” (Exodus 20:17).

Have you ever desired anything you didn’t have or didn’t need? Have you ever been discounted, jealous or ungrateful? This is covetousness.

On the Day of Judgment, when God judges you based on His Law, would you be guilty or innocent? You know you will be guilty. Would you go to Heaven or Hell? God’s place of punishment for the guilty is the “prison” of Hell.

You may think that God will overlook your sin because you believe that your good outweighs your bad. God is not going to judge you for the good you have done, but He will judge you for breaking His Law. Perhaps you think that God is good and that a loving Judge will not send anyone to Hell. But if you were guilty of a crime in a civil court and said to the judge, "Judge, I am guilty, but I believe you are a good man and will therefore overlook my crime".

The judge would respond by saying, "You are right about one thing; I am a good man, and it's because of my goodness that I am going to see that justice is done, that you are punished for your crime." The very thing that many people are hoping will save them on Judgment Day, God's goodness, will be the very thing that will condemn them. If God is good, He must punish adulterers, fornicators, murderers, liars, thieves, etc., in the "prison" of Hell.

Romans 3:10 – “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.”

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23 explains that sin has a penalty:

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death (hell)...”

We cannot get to heaven by keeping God’s Law the 10 Commandments. If we are honest, we would all admit that we have broken each commandment multiple times in our life. The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to be saved by doing good works.

Galatians 3:24 - “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”

The 10 commandments show us that we are sinners and need a Savior. You will never get to heaven by doing good works.

Titus 3:5 – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”

Romans 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

Yet getting to heaven is not automatic just because Jesus died for your sins! Salvation is a gift that must be received.

Ephesians 2:8 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”

That means that baptism has nothing to do with being saved. Romans 6:23 explains,

Romans 6:23 – “... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Some people believe they are saved and will go to Heaven because their parents are Christians. That is not true. No one will go to Heaven because their parents were Christian or grew up in a Christian home. Each person needs to decide for himself.

John 1:12-13 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

This verse says that only those who “receive him” get saved. That is a choice of each person whether to receive Jesus as their Savior or not. I have four children. Although they are growing up in a Christian home, they are not saved and will need to decide for themselves to be saved or not.

Furthermore, this verse says that they were born “not of blood” meaning that just because the parents may be saved, that the children are NOT automatically saved. The faith of the parents does NOT cause the children to be saved. The children need to decide that for themselves.

How does a person know when they are ready to be born again? They know they are ready to be saved when they are willing to repent of sin.

Acts 3:19 – “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

II Peter 3:9 – “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Luke 13:5 – “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”

Repentance means to be willing to turn away from your sin, your religion, and anything you were trusting in to get you to Heaven. Are you willing to turn from your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus paid the full price on the cross for your sins? Though God hates sin, he loves you and sent Jesus to die for your sins.

Romans 5:8 – “But God commendeth (proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”

If God is convicting you of your need of forgiveness, and you would like to be saved (born again), the final step is to ask God for the gift through a simple prayer.

Romans 10:13 – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”

Notice the promise of this verse from a God who cannot lie.

Titus 1:2 – “God...cannot lie”

Do you believe that God will save you simply because He said He would? Christ will save you if you are willing for Him to become the Lord of your life.

If you know that you are ready, you can pray and ask God to save you in your own words such as:

“Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner. I know there is nothing I can do to save myself from the penalty of my sin. I am willing to turn from my sin in repentance and trust in what Jesus Christ did on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe Jesus died on the cross. He was buried, and three days later, He rose from the dead. I now am trusting Jesus Christ with all my heart. Please forgive me of all my sin and save me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

The Doctrine of Last Things

The time period known as “The Last Days” refers to the time period between Jesus’ first coming and His second coming and described in Matthew 24:4-14 characterized by:

1. False Christianity.

Matthew 24:5 – “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

Matthew 24:11 – “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”

2. Natural disasters.

Matthew 24:7 – “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.”

3. Religious persecution.

Matthew 24:9-10 – “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.”

4. A world full of sin.

Matthew 24:12 – “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

5. Extensive Gospel preaching.

Matthew 24:14 – “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

Our assurance that Jesus Christ will return is based on His first coming. If the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming were fulfilled literally and accurately, then the prophecies concerning Christ’s second coming will be fulfilled literally and accurately too. There are 8 times more prophecies relating to the second coming of Christ than to His first coming. He will surely come again. From these prophecies, we can say that Jesus Christ will return:

1. Personally

Acts 1:11 – “This same Jesus...”

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – “The Lord Himself...”

John 14:3 – “I will come again...”

2. Bodily

Acts 1:11 – “... shall so come in like manner...”

Philippians 3:21 – “... his glorious body...”

3. Visibly.

Hebrews 9:28 – “... look for Him...”

Revelation 1:7 – “... every eye shall see him...”

Matthew 24:30 – “...they shall see the Son of man...”

4. At any moment.

The believers in the church at Thessalonica expected Christ's return at any moment.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 – "... we which are alive and remain..."

5. Before the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells of a coming kingdom of Christ on earth for 1,000 years. It will be a time of peace and righteousness upon the earth when Satan will be bound and the Lord Jesus shall be King.

Revelation 20:2-3 – "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Revelation 20:6-7 – "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,"

6. Divided into two-stages. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will occur in two phases.

A. The Rapture.

The term "Rapture" refers to the time when all believers on the earth will be "caught up" into the air to be with Jesus Christ forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 – "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

In this first stage, Jesus Christ will return only to the clouds to take all the believers with Him to Heaven. Over the next seven years, God's wrath will be poured upon the earth and many unbelievers will die in the terrible disasters God sends. This period is called the Great Tribulation. It will also be a time when many people get saved. During this seven year period, believers in Heaven will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

B. The Revelation

Seven years after the Rapture, the Revelation of Jesus Christ will occur. It refers to the time when Jesus Christ will physically return to the earth and establish His kingdom. He will rule and reign for 1,000 years.

Revelation 19:11-16 – "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 20:6-7 – "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,"

7. Before the Great Tribulation.

The prophecy of “The Seventy Weeks” found in Daniel 9, teaches that there will be a period of seven years between the Rapture and the Revelation. During this time, the Great Tribulation will occur on the earth and the Judgment Seat of Christ in Heaven. The Great Tribulation is a time of God’s wrath on the earth where many unbelievers will die in the terrible disasters God sends.

The Big Lie

Satan is working to bring a one-world government and one-world religion together so he can be set up as the “god” of this world. The Bible teaches that Satan will accomplish this task just before or just after the Rapture. He will have a man lead the one-world government. The Bible calls him the Anti-Christ. Satan will also have a man to lead the one-world religion. The Bible calls him the False Prophet.

It is not hard to see the workings of Satan to bring about the one-world government and one-world religion. The clues are all around us for those who are observant. All the countries of Europe have united their economies together in the EU. The countries of S.E. Asia are uniting their economies and plan to open ASEAN very soon. There is even talk of the countries of USA, Canada, and Mexico uniting their economies similar to the EU and ASEAN. So, if you look around, you can see the world’s governments slowly coming together.

It is the same with the religions of this world. There is a movement to unite all the world’s religions together. Since, Christianity has so many different denominations; there is also a movement to bring all the denominations together into one “church”. Then, in time, this one Christian church would merge into other religions creating a one-world religion.

Christians have often asked, “How can all the religions in the world, including Christianity, merge into one religion since they are so different and teach so many different ways of salvation?” The answer is – The Big LIE! Satan will have prepared one BIG lie that will neutralize all the world’s religions so that they can all come together into a one-world religion that he will control.

The believers in the church at Thessalonica were under a tremendous amount of persecution, that they thought they were in the Tribulation Period – the period between the Rapture and the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church to assure them they are not in the Tribulation Period and then goes on to describe the events leading up to the Tribulation Period.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 – “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The son of perdition is the Anti-Christ that Satan will have leading the one-world government. This verse tells us Satan’s motive is to receive worship from man so that he can be like God. This next verse describes how Satan will deceive mankind.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 – “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”

The word “Wicked” has a capital “W” meaning that it is a name. It is another name for the Anti-Christ, the leader of the one-world government and will describe his character. The Anti-Christ will have a lot of power and the ability to produce miracles that will deceive the people into believing a lie.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 – “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”

The Anti-Christ will have one BIG LIE to deceive the people of the world. In fact, the lie is so BIG and so deceiving that Jesus said if it were possible, it would even deceive the saved.

Mark 13:22 – “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”

Christians have often wondered, “What is this BIG LIE?” This lie is so big that in one instant, all the religions in the world will become useless and ineffective. It will force people away from their religion and bring all people into a one-world religion.

I have a theory what this big lie is. It is only my opinion. There is no proof that this is the big lie. There are many pastors that agree with this opinion. However, we could be wrong about it. I only tell you my theory to show you how it is very possible for Satan to instantly cause all the world’s religions to become useless. Although, it may not happen according to my theory, it will happen one way or another. I only tell you to warn true believers to stay true to the Word of God and not to allow Satan and the evil men of this world to deceive you into believing a lie.

We already studied about the spirit world in the doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons. We saw examples in the Bible where good angels were able to take on human flesh, talk, rest, eat, etc. with man. One example was in Genesis 18 when angels came to visit Abraham. So, although we don’t how spirits can enter the physical world, we know they can.

Genesis 6:1-2 – “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

In the verse above, I believe the “sons of God” refer to the fallen angels that joined Satan in his rebellion against God. Some of these fallen angels had sexual relations with human women which produced unusual children as the next verse tells us.

Genesis 6:4 – “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

The children born from these relations became very wicked giants. The Hebrew word for these giants is Nephilim. The Nephilim were half-breeds. Their “father” was a fallen angel and their mother was human. There is an interesting verse in the New Testament that may refer to these fallen angels that had sexual relations with human women.

Jude 1:6 – “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

Some people understand this verse to mean that God judged the fallen angels that had sexual relations with human women that produced the giants – Nephilim. These fallen angels are chained in a “prison” waiting for the time when God will cast Satan and all the evil angels into the Lake of Fire.

Why would the fallen angels want to produce their own offspring – wicked Nephilim? The answer is simple. If the Nephilim could corrupt man enough so that they die off by disease or war, then God could not send Jesus Christ into the world to provide man a way of salvation. As a result of the work of the Nephilim, the world became full of wickedness.

Genesis 6:5 – “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

You know the rest of the story. God sent a world-wide flood to destroy man from off the face of the earth, but saved Noah and his family alive. I believe the events recorded in Genesis 6 was Satan’s first attempt to produce a special race of Nephilim to be used in his service to defeat God and set himself up as “god” of this world and receive worship from man.

People began to repopulate the earth after the flood. Several hundred years passed by. After Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he sent 12 men to spy out the “Promised Land” the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants. Ten of those spies returned with a bad report and said,

Numbers 13:33 – “And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

It is my opinion that sometime after Noah and his son’s died; fallen angels started having sexual relations with human women again. This was Satan’s second attempt to produce his own race of giants - Nephilim to help him corrupt man so God could not send Jesus Christ into the world to provide a way of salvation. When the Israelites came into the Promised Land, God ordered the Israelites to destroy the people who inhabited this region including men, women, and children. Was it because God knew who the people really were and what their purpose was for?

The Israelites did not obey God and allowed many of the people in the land to live. The Nephilim continued to have children. Hundreds of years later, we read about giants at the time of King David. Many Christians have heard or read the story about David killing the giant Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. Years later, some of David’s soldiers defeated other giants including Goliath’s brother in 2 Samuel 21.

It is my opinion, that Satan made a second attempt to create a race of Nephilim for his specific purpose of becoming the god of this world. According to Genesis 6, these Nephilim are giants and possess great power and wisdom. It is also my opinion, that Satan is now making a third attempt to create a race of Nephilim to help him to become the “god” of this world. How is he doing this?

Over the last 40-50 years, there have numerous news reports of UFO alien abductions. The reports are basically the same. Usually a woman, but sometimes a man, would be abducted by “alien” looking creatures. Most of them report that they are in some kind of scientific laboratory where alien “scientists” are focusing in on the reproductive organs of the abducted. Many are forced to have sex with the aliens and conceive a child who would then be taken out of the womb and placed in the care of an alien scientist. Some people have reported that they have seen large rooms of children that are “half-human and half-alien”.

What is very interesting is that although the humans that have been abducted do not know each other and are separated by time and distance, they give a very similar physical description of the aliens and also their experiences are very similar.

I firmly believe that the Bible teaches that there are no alien life forms in outer space. Mankind on planet earth is the only race of physical beings that God created. It is my opinion, therefore, that these “alien” looking creatures are simply fallen angels that have taken on flesh. Furthermore, it is my opinion that these “aliens” or fallen angels are attempting to produce their own race of Nephilim. These Nephilim children are being grown and raised in secret locations and will be revealed to the world at a specific time in the future.

The companies that produce TV shows and movies are under the influence and control of Satan. Over the last few years, there are more and more movies and TV programs about fallen angels coming to earth and interacting with humans. These movies and TV shows are “programming” people to be accustomed to the idea of an alien race living among the humans.

So, what does this have to do with the BIG LIE that will make all world religions become useless and ineffective in an instant and cause people to leave their religion and join the one-world religion? It is my personal opinion that Satan is preparing a supposedly “alien” race that is actually not alien life forms at all but rather Nephilim that the fallen angels created.

At a determined time, either just before or just after the rapture, these Nephilim will appear in “space ships” to man on the earth. They will tell a lie and say that they are the “gods” of the universe. In this scenario, they could tell one of two possible lies.

The first story is that they could say the “God of the Christians” does not exist, but they are one ones who planted life on earth thousands of years ago in a science experiment. Over the years, they have observed and interfered in human history only when needed to keep man from destroying themselves. It is possible that they may even LIE and “claim” Jesus Christ and other religious leaders of Islam and Buddhism were actually one of their own scientists to help direct mankind to better them.

The second possible story is to say that the “God of the Christians” was actually one of their own rebellious scientists who secretly seeded the earth with humans. The aliens would say that this scientist was a cruel person that wanted force humans to follow His rules and trap them into “worshipping” Him only.

In either of the above two scenarios, the end result is going to be the same. The people of the earth will SEE the aliens and space ships along with HEARING their explanations (lies) to the people of the earth. How will that affect the Christian message?

Most unsaved people will believe the LIE of the Nephilim that “God of the Christians” does not exist or is an evil scientist. Therefore, the unsaved will not believe the Bible because either the Christian’s God does not exist or he is simply a scientist and not God.

This BIG LIE will effectively neutralize all the religions in the world in a moment, because it is shown before all the earth that each religion is wrong. In a very short time, most religions will dissolve and merge into one new religion – the religion of the Satan, the Anti-Christ, and the Nephilim. This will help Satan to accomplish his task of becoming the “god” of this world. However, according to the Bible, it will only be for a very short time, in fact, less than 7 years.

Again, this is only my opinion. It may happen like this or similar to it, or it may not. Either way, it helps Christians to see easily how a one-world religion can come to be. If this event were to come to pass, it would be very difficult for TRUE Christians to evangelize and tell people the message of salvation since most unsaved people will believe the Christian’s God either does not exist or is an evil

scientist. What the people of the earth will SEE and HEAR from the Nephilim will be more believable than believing God's Word by faith.

In conclusion, this section has been only my opinion. It is only speculation with no real facts to support it. However, do the things I wrote cause you to doubt God? Truly, it only strengthens my faith in God. Remember, God is in control. God will win in the end. Satan hates God and hates everything God loves including man. It is only one last attempt to keep man from believing God and coming to Him for salvation before the Revelation of Jesus Christ. You can rely on God's Word! Believe God's Word no matter what your eyes see and ears hear, because God's Word is the only source of truth!

Future Judgment of God for Believers

The time is coming when every child of God will be judged at the "Judgment Seat of Christ". It will occur after the Rapture and before the Revelation. Every Christian, without exception will be judged.

2 Corinthians 5:10 – "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Romans 14:10 – "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

This is NOT a judgment for salvation – to determine who goes to Heaven and who to Hell. This judgment is for believers only. Therefore, it is not a judgment for salvation, but for SERVICE.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 – "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

According to this verse, whatever work abides the fire, the believer will receive a reward. The Bible calls these rewards "crowns", and there are five mentioned in the New Testament.

1. The Crown of Life. This crown is for the faithful Christian who remains true despite difficult circumstances in their life.

James 1:12 – "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

2. The Crown of Victory. This is also known as the "incorruptible crown". It is for the Christian who lives a victorious Christian life.

1 Corinthians 9:25 – "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

3. The Crown of Glory. This crown is reserved for faithful pastors.

1 Peter 5:4 – "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

4. The Crown of Righteousness. This crown is for those who love and long for the return of Christ.

2 Timothy 4:8 – *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

5. The Crown of Rejoicing. This crown is for those who faithfully lead people to salvation.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 – *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”*

Future Judgment of God for Unbelievers

This future judgment is known as the “Great White Throne of Judgment”. This final Judgment is recorded in Revelation 20:11-15. Christians have no part in this Judgment of God. It involves those in hell awaiting the second resurrection to be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:11-15 – *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

This terrible Day of Judgment is NOT to determine who is and who is not saved. That issue was already determined before death. There is a difference between “Hell” and the “Lake of Fire”. Hell is like a jail cell where the prisoner awaits trial. The Great White Throne of Judgment is the trial itself and the Lake of Fire is the prison where the sentence is executed.

The Millennium

The Word of God reveals that an age of peace and righteousness is coming.

Micah 4:3 – *“And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”*

The Book of The Revelation teaches this period will last for 1,000 years, hence the word “millennium”. It will follow the Second Coming of Christ. It will be an earthly kingdom, where the Lord Jesus Christ will rule from the city of Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:16-17 – *“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”*

There are some interesting facts about this kingdom.

1. King David will reign as co-Regent over Israel.

Ezekiel 34:23 – “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.”

2. The Apostles will reign over Israel.

Matthew 19:28 – “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

3. Christians will have governmental duties (Matthew 25:14-30).

The Great White Throne of Judgment will occur after the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

The Eternal State

The soul of man cannot die, but will spend an eternity somewhere. The eternal destiny of man is determined before death. Every individual determines by his or her acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ where eternity shall be spent. There are only two places, Heaven and Hell.

Hell and the Lake of Fire

The place of Hell is a scriptural fact. This place of torment is mentioned 88 times in the Word of God. During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ warned men of Hell more than He ever taught about Heaven. Hell is a prepared place.

Matthew 25:41 – “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

God deliberately prepared this awful place for fallen angels. Hell was not prepared for man, for God is not willing that any should perish. However, those people who never receive God’s salvation will be sent to Hell along with the fallen angels.

Hell is a painful place. The story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is a true story. It shows Hell to be a place of torment and pain. The man in this passage could see, hear, feel, and thirst. There is physical pain for he said in verse 24 – “I am tormented in this flame”. Moreover, there is mental pain. Abraham told him in verse 25 – “... remember ...”. The lost people in Hell will remember every sin, every opportunity to be saved, every church service, every warning to turn from sin! What a tremendous amount of mental anguish. Hell is a place of eternal pain. It will never end. There is no “second chance” when eternity begins. The Lake of Fire is the permanent place for all unsaved people and fallen angels after the Great White Throne of Judgment.

Before Christ’s rose from the dead, Hell was the place of the dead. It was separated into two compartments. One being the place of fire and torment and the second place was a place of paradise. What did Jesus tell the thief on the cross?

Luke 23:43 – “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

According to Luke 16:26, the two compartments were separated by a great abyss.

Luke 16:26 – “And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”

This explains the passage concerning the Lord Jesus Christ going to Hell recorded in Acts 2.

Acts 2:27, 31 – “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption... He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

During the 3 days in the tomb, Jesus went to the Paradise section of the region of the dead – as He had promised the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). However, after Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, Paradise has changed location to be now with the Lord in Heaven!

Heaven

The Bible assures the Christian of a home in Heaven, but the Bible does not describe Heaven very much. The major passages dealing with Heaven are the last two chapters of the Bible – Revelation 21 & 22. From these chapters we can say the following about Heaven.

Heaven is a literal place prepared for believers. Jesus said,

John 14:2-3 – “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Heaven is a happy place.

Revelation 21:4 – “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Heaven is a holy place.

Revelation 21:27 – “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

Heaven is an inhabited by saved people.

Revelation 21:24 – “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”

Danger of False Doctrine

Scripture clearly affirms that God is truth, that God speaks truth and that God cannot lie. Scripture also affirms that Satan is a liar and the father of lies and deceives people. God reveals Himself as truth and Satan is revealed as a liar. There is conflict on the earth between the truth of God and the lies of Satan. The people of God have always been plagued with false doctrine. The invasion of false teachers has been something which the people of God have endured throughout history. Every believer must be aware of false teachers and their lies.

In Acts 20 the Apostle Paul warned the believers in Ephesus that after he left, false teachers would rise from within and come from without the church to destroy the work of God in the city of Ephesus.

Acts 20:29-31 – “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

There is more false teaching today than ever before. There are churches that deny the trinity, deny that Jesus Christ is God, believe the Bible has errors, deny salvation by grace alone through faith, and teach counterfeit gospels. Below are just a few examples of false teaching that have infiltrated Christianity.

Calvinism

We studied Calvinism in the doctrine of God and the doctrine of salvation. As a review, John Calvin (1509 – 1564 A.D.) led a movement called Calvinism and started a denomination called Reformed Church. Calvinism is a religious philosophy which argues that God chooses who will be saved and who will not be saved. They teach that the unsaved man is in such bondage to Satan that he is not able to respond to God. Therefore, a sinner cannot repent unless God overpowers him and forces him to repent. They teach that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not for all men, but only for those chosen to salvation.

From our study, we learned that God does not choose who will be saved and who will go to Hell, but we did learn that God chose to do two things.

- #1 - God chose to send Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sins of the world.
- #2 - God chose to save all who would put their faith in Jesus Christ.

God has chosen to save ALL who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. We learned that God does not determined beforehand who would be saved and who would not be saved, but rather that God determined (Bible used “predestinated”) that those who would be saved would receive certain benefits of salvation, such as,

1. Become a child of God by being adopted into the family of God.
2. Receive an inheritance in Heaven.
3. The believer’s life would be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

For a more thorough review, you may need to go back and rewatch those lessons.

Charismatic Movement

In the early 1900’s, the Pentecostal Movement started and by 1970 the Charismatic Movement grew rapidly in many churches. Although similar, there is a difference. The Pentecostal Movement turned into a denomination of Christianity whereas, the Charismatic Movement sprung up within churches among several denominations.

As we studied in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” are grouped into two categories: Sign Gifts and Serving Gifts. The Sign Gifts were temporary and have ceased. The Serving Gifts are permanent and still in operation today. Both the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements are characterized by the “gift” of speaking in tongues and healing.

We know speaking in tongues was a temporary gift and no longer operational today. According to 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, the gift of speaking in tongues ceased when the Bible was completed. The gift of healing is also emphasized in this movement. The Bible opposes the practices of people who “claim” to have the ability to heal people. God is all-powerful and He is able to heal the physical body, IF it is His will. There are many examples in the Bible of Christians who were not healed.

For a more thorough review of the errors of the Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements including speaking in tongues and healing, please review the videos from the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Ecumenism

Things that are different are not the same. What makes a Baptist Church different from every other church? It is doctrine. A Baptist does not believe the same as the Christian Missionary Alliance, the Catholic Church or the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. It is doctrine that makes the denominations different.

Ecumenism is a movement to bring all the different denominations together into one denomination. As studied in the doctrine of Last Things, Satan is working to bring about a one-world religion. Since Christianity has so many denominations, he must work to bring it into one denomination so that it can be merged into the other religions in the world.

It is a movement that attempts to compromise truth and influence churches to drop doctrinal differences. For example, they want Baptists to embrace sprinkling and pouring as legitimate modes of Baptism. In other words, they want Baptists to accept as members those who have been poured or sprinkled in another church. Baptists have a choice. Will individual Baptist pastors and churches hold to the truth of the Bible that baptism is only by immersion from a church that has church authority? Or will they reject it so that they can join together with other Christian groups and denominations?

There is a tremendous amount of pressure from Catholic and Protestant churches for Bible-believing Baptist to compromise their doctrine and “join” the group. But in order to join them, a Baptist would have to depart from the Word of God and embrace their doctrinal error. Doctrine is very important. Our Baptist doctrine makes us different and should be embraced not rejected for the sake of unity with unbiblical denominations.

A Baptist pastor makes a very serious error when he invites a pastor from another denomination, like Christian Missionary Alliance, to come and speak at his Baptist Church. Although there may be some beliefs that are same, they are different. The Baptist pastor takes the risk of church members embracing false doctrine by inviting a pastor from another denomination to come and speak. By doing so, the Baptist pastor is also giving his approval to what the guest speaker believes and is also promoting ecumenism, Satan’s goal of bringing all the denominations together into one corrupt denomination.

Seventh-Day Adventism

In the 1800’s, William Miller predicted that Jesus Christ will return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. He had many followers and he led the Adventist Movement. When Jesus did not return, he recalculated the date to be October 22, 1844. When Christ did not return, William Miller admitted his error and abandoned the Adventists Movement. However, Mrs. White continued the movement and in 1963 founded the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Some of their errors are:

1. In 1980 they declared that the writings of Mrs. White were inspired like the Bible. They put her writings to be equal with the Bible despite God's clear warning to not add to His Word (Revelation 22:18).
2. The Sabbath Day. They believe the proper day to worship God is on Saturday.
3. The doctrine of soul sleep. They believe that at death, the soul of the believer does not immediately go to Heaven, but rather "sleeps" in the grave until the time of the resurrection.
4. The destruction of the wicked. They believe that at death, an unsaved person does not spend an eternity in hell, but rather just ceases to exist.

Jehovah Witnesses

Charles Taze Russell founded Jehovah Witnesses in 1879. He started a publishing company called "The Watchtower" to promote their false teaching. Some of their errors are:

1. They completed their own translation of the Bible called "The New World Translation". It has several mistranslations, additions, and subtractions as well as paraphrases of the Word of God.
2. They deny the Trinity.
3. They do not believe Jesus Christ is God, but rather was created by God.
4. They deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. They believe that God provided salvation through Christ's life, not his death.
6. They believe that in order to be saved, you need to belong to their group and be faithful to teach their doctrine.
7. They deny the existence of hell. Unbelievers will cease to exist at death.

Mormons

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or the Mormons as they are generally called was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830. He claimed to have received a vision from God who said the true gospel message has been lost and he was chosen to restore it. He also claimed an angel by the name of Moroni appeared to him to direct him some "golden plates" that contained the "true" gospel. Joseph Smith wrote a book called the Book of Mormon from these plates. However, no one has ever seen these plates other than Joseph Smith. He said that they "mysteriously disappeared from the earth". Therefore, there is no way he can prove what he said is true.

God's Word teaches that after the Bible was completed, God does not communicate to man through dreams, an angel or audible voices any more, but only through His Word. Who are you going to believe, a man who "claimed" to receive a vision from God or God's Word?

Some of the errors of the Mormon are:

1. Mormons claim to follow the Bible, but they will quickly admit that the Book of Mormon has more authority than the Bible.

2. They believe in many gods. There is not one God.
3. At death, a man becomes a “god” of his own planet. Mormon women will spend an eternity bearing “spiritual” children to physical bodies on this planet.
4. They believe that Jesus is not God, but a created being.
5. They believe Jesus and Lucifer are brothers.
6. They believe that Christ’s death on the cross was only sufficient to save if they remain faithful until the day of their death.
7. Only Mormons can be saved.
8. A man should have many wives.

Conclusion

Baptists are described by what we believe and by what we do. While other Christian denominations may share some of our beliefs and practices, there are certain beliefs and practices that make Bible-believing Baptists distinct. While not a complete list, here are a few Baptist distinctives using the acrostic B-A-P-T-I-S-T

B – Biblical Authority. Baptists believe in the absolute authority of the Word of God. Every word of God was given by inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) and has been perfectly preserved in perpetuity and in purity. In the English language, God preserved His Word in the King James Version of the Bible. The preserved Word of God is the Baptists rule of faith. If it is Bible truth, then it is Baptist doctrine.

A – Autonomy of the Local Church. Bible-believing Baptists believe that Jesus Christ established His church during His earthly ministry and gave the authority to baptize and start new churches to His church. Bible-believing Baptists believe that they are the true descendants of the church Jesus Christ established and therefore are the only ones to church authority to baptize and start new churches.

P – Priesthood of the Believer. Baptists also believe that every believer has full access to God through Jesus Christ without the need for a man or organization to stand between believer and God.

T – Two Ordinances: Baptism (by immersion with church authority) and the Lord’s Supper

I – Individual Soul Liberty. This means that every believer has the right to freely express opinions, is personally responsible to obey the Word of God, and accountable to God for his actions.

S – Saved, Baptized members.

T – Two offices: Pastor and Deacon

S – Separation: Church and State, Personal, and Ecclesiastical

Although you have finished this course, your journey of faith has only begun.

