

Preface

The purpose of this book is to examine the most important issue facing mankind which is his relationship with the God who created him. Without any doubt this is the most important issue for man because of its eternal consequences. Anything and everything that we are or do or have in this world is temporary. We are given a few years or a few decades in this world and then we must leave it. We must give up whatever we had in this world. On the other hand, our relationship with God has eternal impact upon us because it affects our eternal destiny. For that reason alone, it is the most important issue that faces every one of us. It should be the most important issue in the minds of everyone.

For this study we are going to use the Bible as our textbook because the Bible is the Word of God and God has given us the Bible so that we might know where we stand with the God who created us and that we might have the highest blessing. The Bible declares that the most important issue facing man is his salvation, which is the reconciliation of his relationship with God that was damaged because of his sin, the violation of the law of God. In this study we are going to examine what the Bible teaches about God's salvation program for mankind.

God created this universe

The Bible tells us how this earth and universe began. This is recounted in the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. God created the earth and this whole universe in 6 literal days of 24 hours each. The Bible has a calendar of history and teaches that this creation occurred a few thousand years ago.

Many people in the scientific community believe that the earth was created billions of years ago and that mankind evolved from simple creatures over a period of hundreds of millions of years. However, these conclusions are based upon assumptions and guess work. The actual scientific data does not disagree with the Biblical account of creation. It is only the scientists' conclusion that disagree with the Bible. Involved in their conclusions are assumptions and guesses. Errors in their assumptions and guesses have led to wrong conclusions about the age of the earth and the origin of man. A search on the Internet of "creation science" will yield many organizations that use the scientific method to show that the scientific data agrees with the Biblical account of creation.

We read the account of creation in Genesis chapter 1 of the Bible. The chapter begins with the declaration of verse 1:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

As we go through chapter 1 God explains what He did during the six days of creation. On the sixth day, God created mankind. First God created an individual man named "Adam". The Old Testament part of the Bible is mostly written in the Hebrew language and the Hebrew word "Adam" means "man". Some time later God took a rib from Adam while he was asleep and created the first woman named "Eve".

God created mankind in the image of God

We read about the creation of mankind starting in verse 26 of Genesis 1:

26 ¶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

One thing that might be confusing for us is that God uses the plural pronouns, “us” and “our”, to describe Himself. As we go through the Bible we learn that there is one God, yet God reveals Himself as three distinct persons; God the Father, God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit. This is a divine mystery that we cannot understand, but we know that it is true because the Bible declares it.

These verses that we have just read teach an amazing truth. God has made mankind in His “image” and in His “likeness”. Three times in these two verses God declares that He has made mankind in His “image.” The fact that mankind has been created in the image and likeness of God is truly amazing when we consider the language used to describe a son born to Adam and Eve. We read starting in verse 1 of Genesis 5:

1 ¶ This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

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:

We read that when Adam was 130 years old, he begat a son whose name was Seth. The Bible says that his son was “**in his own likeness, after his image**”. This is the same language that God used to describe the creation of mankind. When we think about a son and his father, we know that the two can be very much alike, not only in physical appearance, but also in personality. This gives us some understanding of what it means to be in the image and likeness of another. The truly amazing fact is that God applies this same language to describe how man was made in the image and likeness of God.

As we continue to study the Bible we learn that man has two distinct aspects to his personality. Man has a body which we can see and about which we can understand a great amount. However, the Bible also teaches that man has a spirit-essence. Sometimes the spirit is called a soul. This is the part of man that isn't as understandable. It is in his spirit-essence that man was made in the image and likeness of God.

God did not have a body, like we have a body, until about 2,000 years ago, when the Lord Jesus, who is God, took on a human nature and came to this earth to fulfill important promises that God had given. Therefore, when the Bible teaches that man is made in the image and likeness of God it is referring to his spirit-essence. This is something that we do not understand too well, but it does impress upon us a profound truth. Mankind is not just some advanced animal. Rather, mankind is very important and special to God because mankind has been made in the image and likeness of God.

Mankind and all creation were made very good

Bible trusting God to save us according to His perfect timing. Lamentations 3:25-26 declares:

25 The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him.

26 *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

May God richly bless you with His salvation.

exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Although God is in charge of who becomes saved, He also wants mankind to come to Him in prayer, begging for salvation. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to bow down before God in prayer.

God encourages us not to ignore the opportunity that God gives us to read the Bible and pray to God for mercy in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2:

**1 ¶ We then, as workers together *with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.
2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)**

As long as the day of salvation is here, God encourages us not to “**receive not the grace of God in vain**” by turning from the Bible and from prayer to God. God has to take all the action to save us, but there are great blessings in reading the Bible and praying to God for mercy.

Reading the Bible will show us more about how much we deserve the wrath of God as well as our need of salvation. It will also show us how damaging sin is to us, which will be a further motivation for us to turn away from sin. Turning from sin is a blessing for us because we were designed to receive the highest blessings by following God’s laws. These all will be further motivation for us to pray to God for salvation and the strength to turn away from sin. This activity will be additional blessing for us because we were designed to be in fellowship with the God who created us. God is merciful to save. We should read the

We learn another very important truth when we read the last verse of the creation account in Genesis chapter 1. We read in verse 31:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.* And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

This is God’s assessment of the whole creation after He had finished the six days of creation, including the creation of mankind. God’s assessment is that everything, including mankind, was “**very good.**” As we read through the six days of creation in Genesis chapter 1, God makes the declaration that what He created was “**good.**” This declaration is made six times during the six days of creation. However, after He created mankind, God pronounced that everything that He created was “**very good.**” It was not until God had created mankind that He made the pronouncement “**very good.**” This is very important because God is teaching that mankind and everything else were created very good in the sight of God. Man started out very good. This may be difficult to believe when we see all of the problems in this world, but it is true. Everything originally was very good. The problems and corruption came later.

God provides for mankind

As we continue to read the account of the creation of this world given in the book of Genesis, we read that God provided food for mankind and for all the animals. God told Adam starting in verse 29 of Genesis 1:

29 ¶ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the

earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so.

God created all of the trees and plants and those trees and plants would provide food for mankind and the animals. God gave some more information about two particular trees that He planted in verse 9 of Genesis chapter 2:

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Here we learn about the creation of the many different kinds of trees we see in this world. Also, God talks about two special trees that He created; “**the tree of life**” and “**the tree of knowledge of good and evil**”. The name of the second tree, “**the tree of knowledge of good and evil**”, is very interesting.

We read more instruction for mankind starting in verse 15 of Genesis chapter 2:

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 ¶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 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.

If we continue in sin it is easy for our conscience to get seared (1 Timothy 4:2). A few sins can lead to more and bigger sins, leading us down the path of greater sin and misery. Therefore, it is for our benefit to turn from sin and read the Bible. Reading the Bible will help us become more sensitive to the sin that is harming us. At the same time, we will learn more about God and His kingdom and will be in the environment of salvation (Romans 10:17). Reading the Bible will bring us innumerable blessings.

Revelation 7:9-10 gives a vision of heaven and indicates that there will be a “**great multitude**” comprising people from every nation that will become saved:

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

This is a great encouragement that we too might become saved. God encourages us to pray to Him for salvation. Luke 18 describes a tax-collector, called a publican in the Bible, who humbly prayed for mercy and God saved him. We read in Luke 18:13-14:

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

These truths are a great encouragement to read the Bible and pray for mercy.

Some people respond to the Bible truth that God is sovereign in salvation by adopting a fatalistic attitude which reasons: “I will live the way I want to live and if God saves me great, ...”. This kind of attitude is rebellious and should not be held by anyone who is serious about his relationship with God. If we are serious about our relationship with God we know that every sin is further rebellion against God as well as a great offense. Therefore, we are going to turn away from sin. We know that sin offends God and is very damaging to ourselves. If we desire salvation and are praying for it, yet we continue sinning we are showing ourselves that we are just a hypocrite. How can we pray to God asking to enter into His Kingdom when we despise Him by continuing in sin?

God has designed mankind and knows what is best for him. God has given the laws of the Bible to help man have the highest blessings in this world. Even though man loves his sin, it is not good for mankind to lie, cheat, steal, hold hatred, commit adultery, use foul language, etc. The Bible contains God’s rules to help man have the highest blessings. Therefore, it is for man’s benefit to turn to the Bible and turn away from his sin. It is through the hearing of the Bible that God saves, as we read in Romans 10:17: “**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**”. Reading the Bible offers mankind a double blessing. He learns to walk in the paths of highest blessing and puts himself in the environment of salvation.

God created a special place on this earth called the “**garden of Eden**”. This is the place that God designed for man. God gave Adam a job and that job was to take care of this garden. In verse 16 God tells Adam that he can eat freely of any of the trees in the garden. However, in verse 17, God places a restriction. There is one tree of which man could not eat. Man could not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If man eats of that tree, he will surely die. The Hebrew expression translated “**surely die**” contains the verb “to die” two times, so God is placing special emphasis on the fact that man would die the day he ate of the forbidden tree. God had given man abundant provision in the garden of Eden, yet God did place that one restriction: that man could not eat of the one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God describes the creation of the first woman starting in verse 21 of Genesis 2:

21 ¶ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

While Adam slept God took a rib from Adam and made the woman, Eve. This fact emphasizes how the human race is one race of people. God guided Adam to say “**This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh**”. The whole human race can finally be traced back to Adam and Eve.

God tests mankind and mankind falls into sin

Now we come to the next major event in our account of the history of mankind and this world. In Genesis 3 we read about a serpent that comes and talks to Eve. As we continue to study the Bible we learn that this serpent was indwelt by the Devil who is also called Satan in the Bible. The Devil effectively spoke through the serpent to Eve. When God created this world God also created the angels which are called “ministering spirits” in the Bible (Hebrews 1:14). Some of these angels rebelled against God and became the “devils” as described from time to time in the Bible. The chief of the devils is called Satan or simply the Devil. He is the one that spoke through the serpent that we read about in Genesis 3. We read starting in verse 1:

1 ¶ Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

people for Himself and do everything necessary to accomplish their salvation.

As we read through the Bible we find passages that say that if man believes in Christ he will be saved. Also, we find passages that command man to obey or believe in order to receive God’s blessings. These verses can give us the impression that we are in control of our salvation. However, if we examine the Bible more carefully, as we have tried to do in this study, we find that man cannot nor will he fulfill those commands before salvation because his heart is in rebellion against God. God must first save man and give him a heart that desires to serve God. Then, man can serve and obey God in a manner pleasing to Him.

Is there any hope for me?

We have seen how the Bible teaches that God does everything to accomplish salvation for man and that he can do nothing to cause or guarantee his own salvation. According to the Bible, salvation is accomplished entirely by the faith and work of Christ with no contribution by man. This means that we have no hope in ourselves for salvation. Our hope for salvation rests entirely in Christ. A great encouragement is that the Lord Jesus came to save sinners. We read in 1 Timothy 1:15:

This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

When we recognize that we are a sinner, then we know that the Lord Jesus came to save people like us. Also, God is very merciful as we read in Psalm 103:8:

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

3 Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

This passage continues through verse 13 with more blessings of obedience and God summarizes the command to not go aside from any of God's commandments in verse 14:

14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

After that in verses 15 to 68 God talks about the wrath that comes upon everyone who breaks any of God's commandments. In Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and Matthew 5:48 we have the command to walk perfectly before God. This is like the commands to repent and believe in Jesus as Savior with all the heart. Because our heart is in rebellion we do not obey any of these commands with a right heart. That is why Romans 3:20 and other passages indicate that finally we are not saved by obeying the law. That is because we will not obey it perfectly as Deuteronomy 28:1-14 requires. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 is another passage in which God commands man according to the fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God. Yet no one will obey those commands. No one seeks after God. Nevertheless, those commands are given because man is made in the image of God. This is also true of the commands to believe (Mark 1:14-15, 1 John 3:23) and the commands to repent (Matthew 3:1-2, Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 17:29-31). Those commands are given because man is made in the image of God and God commands mankind to repent and believe in Christ. However, no one will believe in his heart; no one will seek after God with all his heart. Therefore, God had to elect a

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 ¶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

We read here that our first parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God by breaking that one law that God had given them. They were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they rebelled against God and ate of that tree. This is a divine mystery how mankind, who was created very good, could rebel against God. Their rebellion against God is called sin (1 John 3:4). This was a horrible time for the human race. The Devil comes to Eve, speaking through this serpent or snake. His purpose is to deceive her and trick her into disobeying God by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The Devil mixes lies with some truth and is able to deceive Eve and she disobeys God and eats of the forbidden fruit. Adam also disobeys and eats of the tree.

The account continues from here with God confronting them for their sin. We read about some of the curses that came upon mankind and this creation because of their sin in verses 16 to 19:

16 ¶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

**17 ¶ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;
18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

In verse 16 we read that sorrow would come with children. In verse 17 God told Adam that the ground would be cursed because of their sin. They will experience sorrow in eating their food. Verses 18 and 19 give more details indicating that thorns and thistles would come forth of the ground and “**In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread**”. All of this language points to the difficulty of growing and obtaining enough food to get by in this world. We see the evidence of “thorns and thistles” in the difficulty of dealing with weeds and other hindrances to crops. God refers to all of this as His curse upon the ground because of man’s sin. As we continue studying the Bible we see that the curse of God upon this world includes diseases, natural disasters and other problems which man suffers in this corrupted world. At the end of verse 19 we read that man himself will finally return to the dust. His body will finally fail and return to the dust of the earth and he must leave this world. All of this has come about because of sin and we see the evidence of these curses in the world. With the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin entered the human race and since that time, all mankind has been very sinful. We read Romans 5:12:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

This is a command to the whole human race. It is a command to be perfect. God commands man to be perfect. However we learned earlier that the heart of man is desperately wicked and that evil comes from the heart of man and that no one seeks after God before salvation. These facts prove that no one will be perfect or walk perfectly before God. No one will obey this command. We must then ask the question: If no one will obey this command of Matthew 5:48 then why does God give this command? The answer comes when we remember what we learned in the beginning of this study. Mankind was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). From the beginning God commanded mankind consistent with how man is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 2:16-17). Even though mankind has rebelled against God, he is still made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 9:6). Mankind is not an advanced animal, he is made in the image and likeness of God. Because man is made in the image and likeness of God he must give an account of his sojourn in this world (Matthew 12:36, 18:23, Romans 14:12).

God commands man according to the fact that He is in the image and likeness of God. God commands man to be perfect in Matthew 5:48. Man will never obey this command of himself, yet God still commands man consistent with the fact that man is in the image and likeness of God. God gives us the command to walk perfectly in His law in Deuteronomy 28:1-3:

1 ¶ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

verse is talking about God's promise to also save gentiles. Upon salvation God gives repentance. These two verses teach that repentance is a gift from God. Repentance means that we stop walking in our own ways and start obeying the Bible. We might wonder how can repentance be given by God, since it involves man changing his own action. We get help with this question from Ezekiel 36:27 which we read earlier. We read there:

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

We looked at Ezekiel 36:24-27 earlier in this study. These verses show how God takes all of the action to save us. Verse 27 teaches some very important truths. We read there that God puts His Spirit within us upon salvation. The result is that God causes us to obey His statutes and His judgments, which are synonyms for the Bible. Ezekiel 36:27 effectively shows us how God gives repentance upon salvation. God causes us to walk according to His law, which is repentance. Acts 5:31 and 11:18 teach that God gives repentance upon salvation and Ezekiel 36:27 confirms and elaborates upon this truth.

God commands mankind consistent with how man is made in the image of God.

We have seen some of the verses that command us to repent and believe in Christ as Savior. Some people conclude that since the Bible gives these commands, then man must be able to fulfill them in some way. This seems logical, but we must search the Bible for truth. After giving many commands in Matthew chapter 5 Jesus states in the last verse of that chapter, verse 48:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Sometimes people focus the blame upon our first parents, Adam and Eve, for the curses and the sin problems of this world. However, the Bible assures us that all of us have sinned and gone our own way as we read in these verses:

Ecclesiastes 7:20 For *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

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

1 John 1:8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

What is the consequence and punishment for sin?

We have already learned from Genesis 3 that part of the consequence of sin is that man must live in a cursed world where he suffers difficulty in obtaining enough food, his body will finally fail and he must leave whatever blessings of God he had in this world. Other parts of the Bible explain that this curse of God includes diseases, famines, droughts and the natural disasters of which we are familiar.

We learned in Genesis 2 of another punishment for sin, namely death. We read in verse 17:

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.

Another punishment for sin is death. God said that they would die the day they sinned. We don't understand this statement because the way we use the words "life" and "death" is different than how the Bible uses them. In our minds "death" is a corpse and "life", being the opposite of death, is conscious existence. However, the Bible gives a different definition for these words. We must understand the Biblical definition of "life" and "death" for mankind in order to correctly understand the punishment for sin.

The Biblical definition of "life" and "death" for mankind

To understand the punishment for sin we must understand the Biblical definition of "life" and "death" for mankind. The Lord Jesus Christ made two remarkable statements about "life" in the book of John. We read:

John 11:25: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The Lord Jesus makes a remarkable statement in these verses. Jesus says that He is life. The Bible teaches that Jesus is eternal God. John 11:25 & 14:6 teach that Jesus, who is God, is life. We think of life as conscious existence, but Jesus, who is God, says that He is life.

The Bible applies "life" to mankind in 1 John 5:12 where we read:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Therefore, we cannot be saved by keeping the commandments of the law and this includes the commands to repent and believe in Christ as Savior. This is further proof that salvation comes through the faith and work of Christ alone. We must trust in Him to do everything to save us.

God gives faith and repentance upon salvation

We have examined some verses in which God commands mankind to believe in Christ and to repent of his sins. Yet, the Bible teaches that man cannot and will not obey these commands. His heart is in rebellion against God. As a result, God must take all the action to save. Upon salvation, God gives both faith and repentance. We saw how God gives faith from the study of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit of the Spirit are attributes that the Spirit of God develops in us after salvation. Part of the fruit of the Spirit is faith. We also read that God gives repentance upon salvation in these two verses:

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The "Israel" in Acts 5:31 is composed of all that finally become saved. Upon salvation, God gives repentance and forgiveness of sins. In Acts 11:18 the word granted is the Greek verb give. This

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 17:29-31:

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

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

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

These and other verses command man to repent and believe in Christ as Savior. These commandments are part of the law of God. They are works or deeds of the law. However, we learned in Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-6 that we are not saved by our works. Romans 3:20 gives the same teaching. We read there:

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.

The Bible teaches that we are not saved by the deeds of the law. This includes the deeds of repentance and believing in Christ, which are part of the commands of the law of God, the Bible. Man cannot be saved by keeping the law because he does not keep it perfectly. His heart, his very being, is in rebellion against God as we saw earlier in this study. This is the nature of each of us before salvation. Committing even one single sin makes us guilty of the whole law of God as we read in James 2:10:

He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

The son of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God and He is also the Son of God. This is a mystery about the nature of God, but it is true because the Bible declares it. In 1 John 5:12 God indicates that life for mankind has to do with his relationship with God who is life.

There are many verses that declare that God is life and that life for mankind has to do with his relationship to God. However, in this study we only have space to look at a few of them. In Mark 9 Jesus warns about how our sins are leading us down the pathway to hell. We read in these two verses:

Mark 9:43: And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mark 9:45: And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

At this point we want to focus on the language where Jesus talks about how we are to “**enter into life**”. Jesus is actually talking about salvation. Upon salvation, we “**enter into life**”. Do we enter into existence? No. Rather, upon salvation we enter into God, who is life. We enter into God and all of His blessings. These two verses in Mark 9 also teach that life for mankind has to do with his relationship to God and cannot mean conscious existence. We read a number of verses in the Bible in which God

talks about how upon salvation, God gives us life. For example, we read in 1 John 5:16:

If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

We read in this verse that when God saves someone that He “**shall give him life**”. If life for mankind were conscious existence, then the Bible would be teaching that, upon salvation, God gives us conscious existence. But this is not the case. Rather, upon salvation, God gives us Himself and His many blessings. We read in John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14 that upon salvation we have “**passed from death unto life**”. With the way we normally understand life and death, the phrase “**passed from death unto life**” would mean that upon salvation we have “passed from non-existence to existence”. However, this is not true. Rather, before salvation, we have been separated from God to some degree. Upon salvation, we have been completely restored in our relationship to God. We have passed unto God, who is life.

The fact that before salvation we are already dead is taught by many verses in the Bible. Some of these verses are listed below:

Romans 7:9-11:

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

We read what Jesus taught as He began His earthly ministry in Mark 1:14-15:

14 ¶ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus commands the human race to repent of their sins and to believe the Gospel. The essence of the Gospel is the Lord Jesus and His saving work. Jesus is effectively commanding the people to believe in Him as Savior. We read the same command to believe in Christ in 1 John 3:23:

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1 John 3:23 gives the clear commandment that mankind is to believe in Jesus Christ. The Bible in these two verses commands mankind to believe in Christ as Savior. The Bible also commands mankind to repent as we read in these verses:

Matthew 3:1-2:

1 ¶ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Acts 2:37-38

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

and knowing that He will fulfill everything that He has declared in His Word, the Bible. This is the good “work of faith” that the believer exercises.

With the help of these verses, we can understand Ephesians 2:8-9 more completely. We read there:

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

Man is saved by the grace of God, the free gift of God’s mercy. That salvation is “**through faith**”. We learned in Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9 and Galatians 2:16 that salvation is through the faith of Jesus Christ, and not through our faith. That is why Ephesians 2:8 says “**and that not of yourselves**”. Faith and salvation are not of the believer. Both faith and salvation are “**the gift of God**”. This agrees with Galatians 5:22-23 which teaches that faith is part of the fruit of God’s Spirit working in the true believer. Verse 9 teaches that salvation is “**not of works**”. Salvation is not of man’s work. That includes man’s work of faith as we read about in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

We have seen many verses that teach that it is the faith of Christ that saves us. Jesus Christ was faithful to do everything to accomplish the salvation of God’s people. The true believer’s faith is a fruit of God’s Spirit working in Him and that faith is a good work, the good work of daily trusting Christ to keep all His promises that He has given in the Bible.

The Bible commands man to repent and believe in Christ

Ephesians 2:1,5:

1 ¶ And you *hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Colossians 2:13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

1 Peter 4:6: For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

These verses teach that man is already dead. Many people change these verses to say “spiritually dead”, but the Bible does not use that term. The Bible simply declares that mankind is already dead. Man is dead because he is separated from God who is life.

Man in this world is alive because he is in God to some degree

This prompts us to ask another question. The Bible teaches that all men in this world are alive. If life comes upon salvation, why then are people who have no interest in Christ or salvation alive? The answer to this question comes from the book of Acts. In Acts 17 the Apostle Paul is speaking under the inspiration of God to some intellectuals in Athens Greece. He is explaining that we are not to worship idols but the true God who is a Spirit and not made by man’s hands. We read in Acts 17:24-28:

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

There are many important truths in this passage. We will focus on verse 28. Verses 26 to 28 are speaking of all mankind. In verse 28 the **“in him”** is God. God is saying that in God all of us move and have our being. The phrase **“have our being”** literally means that we are in God. Mankind in this world is not completely separated from God, who is life, and His blessings. He is still in God and he moves in God.

However, once his body fails and becomes a corpse, he no longer moves in God. Corpses do not move. Then, Acts 17:28 no longer applies to him. He is no longer in God nor moves in God. He is now completely separated from God who is life. This world is full of the blessings of God. When man's body fails, he leaves this world and is completely separated from God and His blessings. That is why the Bible talks about people dying when their body fails. When a person's body fails and it becomes a corpse then he is no longer in God and no longer moves in God.

to indwell us upon salvation. God's Spirit works in us to do His will (Philippians 2:12-13). Part of the fruit of God's Spirit working in the true believer is the development of these nine attributes. One of these attributes is faith. Some Bible translations replace “faith” with “faithfulness”, but that is a wrong translation. The Greek word used here is the word “faith” as it is translated more than 200 times in the New Testament. A faith in the Lord Jesus is a part of the fruit of God's Spirit working in the true believer after salvation. The saved person has greater faith in Christ over time. That happens as a part of the fruit of God's Spirit working in the saved person to increase his faith. Galatians 5:22-23 shows that the believer's faith is a product of salvation.

The Bible teaches that faith is a good work

We read two significant verses in the relationship between faith and work:

1 Thessalonians 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

In both of these verses God is speaking through the Apostle Paul and describing the attributes of the true believer. In both verses God talks about their **“work of faith”**. God is indicating that their faith is a good work. It is the good work of trusting Jesus for the payment of sins and trusting His promise to abide forever

becoming saved. Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9 and Galatians 2:16 teach that the faith that saves is the faith of Christ. Galatians 2:16 shows that man's faith in Christ is that Christ is the Savior and that He has the ability to save him or justify him by His own faith. The believer's faith is in Christ that He is the Savior and that He can and might therefore save us. It is the faith of Christ that saves or justifies. Because Jesus Christ is the Savior, we can have faith in Christ that He might save us according to His perfect plan.

We can understand why man's faith does not save him. Romans 10:9 says that we must believe in our heart. However, we have learned that man's heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9) and that man does not seek after God (Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3, Romans 3:10-12). If we do not seek after God, then it is evident that we do not believe in our heart. As a result man does not fulfill the law of Romans 10:9 to believe in the heart. Therefore, in order that God might have a people for Himself, God chose a people to save and justified them by His faith.

Our faith develops as part of the fruit of God's Spirit

In Galatians 5:22-23 God describes the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. We read there:

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

These nine attributes collectively are called the "fruit of the Spirit". These nine attributes that develop in the personality of the true believer are a fruit of the work of God's Spirit in that person. As we learned from Romans 8:9 the Spirit of God comes

The Biblical definition of "death" for mankind is separation from God, who is life.

What is the Biblical definition of a corpse?

This raises another question, What is the corpse? According to the Bible the corpse is a body sleeping in the dust of the earth. God refers to this in Genesis 3:19 at the end of the verse:

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The Bible gives many verses in which the corpse of man is referred to as a body sleeping or sleeping in the dust of the earth (Deuteronomy 31:16, 1 Kings 2:10, 1 Kings 14:20, 1 Kings 16:6). These verses talk about people that "sleep". From the context we know that these people are not sleeping at night while their bodies rest. Rather, the bodies of these people have failed and there is no more consciousness in them. They have become a corpse. The Bible refers to this failure of the body as the person has "slept". Their body has slept in the dust of the earth. Finally those bodies will awake to consciousness at the end of the world as we read in Daniel 12:2:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Here we read about the corpses of people as bodies that "**sleep in the dust of the earth**".

In summary, these verses show that the Bible defines God as “life”, and “life” for mankind has to do with his relationship to God. Death is separation from God and the corpse is a body sleeping in the dust of the earth. This is a short overview of this topic. More information can be found at this link on our website:

<http://www.isannihilationtrue.com/death1.htm>

The punishment for sin is death, which is separation from God

The Bible teaches that the wages or penalty of sin is death as we read in Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Biblical definition of death is to be separated from God who is life. That is the big penalty of sin; to be separated or cut off from God and His blessings. Right now mankind is experiencing some of this penalty because he is already partially cut off from God. Unsaved man does not receive the blessings of the intimate relationship with God that the true believer experiences. After man’s body fails and he leaves this world, then he will be completely cut off from God and His blessings. This a horrible punishment for mankind because sin is horrible. The Bible teaches that man, because of his sins, will be cut off from God and spend eternity suffering in the lake of fire or as it is more commonly called hell.

The Bible teaches that at the end of the world man must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of his sins as we read in these verses:

Next, God declares what justifies us. We are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ.

When the Bible teaches that we are justified by faith, Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9 and Galatians 2:16 teach that this is by the faith of Christ. Galatians 2:16 says that the saved person does believe in Jesus. However, let’s examine what this verse means by believing in Jesus. The purpose of believing in Jesus is not to save ourselves. Rather, the purpose of believing in Jesus is that we might be “**justified by the faith of Christ**”. We notice the word “**might**”. Because God is sovereign and has His election program, we cannot control our salvation. Apart from the grace of God, our heart would remain in rebellion against God. However, Galatians 2:16 teaches that those that are interested in salvation do believe in Jesus. They believe that He is the Savior and that the Bible is His Word and therefore they are praying for that salvation. They are reading the Bible knowing that God works through the hearing of His Word, the Bible, to save. We read this truth in Romans 10:17:

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Their hope is that God “**might**” save them. There is much encouragement in the Bible for these kind of people. However, because our heart is desperately wicked and, by nature, we will not seek after God, we must depend entirely upon the mercy of God to bring us to Himself.

The faith of man and the faith of Christ

Galatians 2:16 is particularly helpful in understanding the salvation program because it shows the relationship between the two faiths; the faith of Jesus Christ and the faith of the one

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

God guides the speaking of the Apostle Paul who is describing how God saves people. The true believer does not offer any of his own righteousness to provide salvation. That includes any righteousness he obtains by his faith in Christ. Paul represents the true believer that is saved by the righteousness of God “**through the faith of Christ**”. This is the Biblical definition of the righteousness of God “**by faith**”. Philippians 3:9 teaches that salvation “by faith” means “by the faith of Christ”.

We will look at one more verse that talks about the faith that saves. We read in Galatians 2:16:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

We read two times in this verse that the true believer is justified by the faith of Christ. What is interesting about this verse is that we also read about man’s faith. It talks about God’s people believing in Jesus. Galatians 2:16 begins with the point that we are not saved or justified by the works of the law. That is because we cannot keep the law perfectly. If we break one point of the law we are guilty of the whole law of God (James 2:10). Because of our desire for sin, we cannot keep the law perfectly and therefore we cannot be justified by the works of the law.

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 14:10-12:

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.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Because we all have sinned, God will find sin in everyone that appears before the Judgment Seat. As we read in Romans 14:11 we will be forced to confess to God and bow the knee before Him. This is language that means that we will finally have to recognize that God rules over us. This language of appearing before the Judgment Throne of God is further illustrated in Revelation 20:11-15:

11 ¶ 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.

12 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.

13 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.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The language of verse 11, **“from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”** indicates that this vision is occurring after this world has passed away. We see the unsaved, who are the dead, standing before God in verse 12. They are dead because they are separated from God who is life. The books that are opened is a figure of speech pointing to God’s record of every sin that has been committed. The unsaved will have to stand before God and give an account of their lives (Matthew 12:36) and they will be cast into the lake of fire according to verses 14 and 15. We read about what happens to the unsaved in the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The unsaved are tormented (consciously afflicted) forevermore. We read this same truth in Revelation 14:9-11. The language of **“the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever”** in verse 11 means that the unsaved will be suffering forevermore for their sins. This is a horrible end for mankind. We don’t understand why this is necessary. That is because we don’t understand the awful nature of sin against a holy God. Other verses teach that at Judgment Day there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12, 25:30, Luke 13:28)

Thus, the big penalty of sin is death, to be cast away from God who is life, resulting in eternal suffering. Another big penalty of

Verse 20 declares that by the deeds of the law we cannot be justified or made righteous before God. We need a Savior to make payment for our sins. Verse 21 introduces the righteousness that God will provide for His people and it comes without their contribution by keeping the law of God, the Bible. We read this same truth that man cannot keep the law well enough to obtain salvation in Romans 8:3:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

The law is **“weak through the flesh”** because man, who is flesh, is weak because of his sins and could not keep the law in order to be right with God. The law of God, the Bible, is not weak in itself. The problem is with mankind who is weak and does not keep the law of God. The solution is provided in the second part of the verse. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a man and made the payment for sins.

Romans 3:22 indicates that this righteousness of God comes **“by faith of Jesus Christ”**. Romans 3:20-22 shows that the faith by which salvation comes is the faith of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus was faithful to do everything necessary to accomplish the salvation of His people. This includes His payment for sins on the cross in 33AD and His work to apply that salvation to those given to Him by God the Father (John 6:39). Some Bible translations have Romans 3:22 and other verses saying faith in Jesus Christ, but this is not true to the Greek text of the Bible. The Bible clearly says the **“faith of Jesus Christ”**, as given in the King James Version of the Bible.

In Philippians 3:9 we read a similar teaching:

An important principle that we learn from these verses is that salvation is “**not of works**”. Man’s works contribute nothing to his salvation. Salvation is a free gift from God. We also read this important truth in Titus 3:4-6:

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

God says that salvation is “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**”. Salvation is the free gift of God and given entirely by His mercy. Going back to Ephesians 2:8, we read that salvation is “**through faith**”. This makes us think of John 3:16 and other verses that talk about believing in Jesus for salvation and we can conclude that man is saved by putting his faith in Jesus, which is another way of saying believing in Jesus. However, Ephesians 2:8 just says that salvation comes “through faith”. It does not say through whose faith it comes. Normally we think of the believer’s faith. But, the Bible talks about the faith of the Lord Jesus. We read in Romans 3:20-22:

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.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

sin is to lose the blessings of heaven. God will dwell with His people in heaven forevermore in the highest blessing. But, because of sin man has been cut off from that blessing.

Is there a solution for our sin problem?

Yes. God has provided a solution. God sent a Savior to make payment for sins so that we can be rescued from the wrath of God and experience the blessings of heaven. Throughout the Bible God talks about this coming Savior. It is interesting that in the middle of pronouncing judgment in Genesis 3, God makes a veiled reference to the coming Savior. In Genesis 3:15 God is speaking to the devil who had indwelt the serpent and God says to him:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

There is a seed of the woman that is coming. This seed will “**bruise thy head**”, God says to the devil. To bruise the head is to kill. Later on in the Bible we learn that God will kill the devil, as part of His program to provide salvation and deliver His people from the authority of the Devil. This promised seed is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man

The Lord Jesus was born as a baby to a virgin named Mary about 2,000 years ago. An angel of the Lord spoke to her fiancé, Joseph, and said to him what we read in Matthew 1:21:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The name “Jesus” means Savior and God tells us that “**he shall save his people from their sins**”. Jesus was born of a virgin, as we read in Matthew 1:23:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Jesus has no human father. God is His father. Therefore, He is the son of God. The Bible also teaches that the Lord Jesus is eternal God. We just read in Matthew 1:23 that Jesus was given the name “Emmanuel”. God provides the understanding of that name to mean “God with us”. This is one proof that Jesus is God. When He came into the world, born as a baby, He was “God with us”. Another proof that Jesus is God is given in Hebrews 1:8:

But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

The “son” here is the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, who is called “O God” and whose throne is for ever and ever. Jesus is eternal God from everlasting past to everlasting future. In addition to being fully God, Jesus is also fully man, being born into the human race. Being a man made it possible for Him to take upon Himself the sins of man and make payment for those sins, an act necessary to deliver man from the wrath of God.

2 Timothy 2:22 is giving instructions for proper conduct. Then God describes His people using the phrase “**them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**” God talks about His people calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart. The problem is that before salvation our heart is not pure, but is in rebellion against God as we have already learned. Upon salvation, God gives us a pure or clean heart. In Psalm 51:10 King David asked God to cleanse his heart from sin. We read there:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

We can pray this same prayer that King David prayed, asking God for a clean or pure heart. The Bible promises that those that call upon the Lord will be saved. However, the Bible teaches that we must call upon the Lord with a pure or clean heart. Before salvation our heart, or very nature, is not pure or clean in God’s sight. But, God permits and encourages us to come to Him in prayer asking for a clean heart. God gives that clean or pure heart upon salvation. After salvation, we can call upon God out of a pure heart.

Salvation is through faith

We have looked at verses that teach that all of the action of salvation is taken by God according to His sovereign plan of election and that man does not contribute to His salvation. However, aren’t there verses that teach that salvation is through the believer’s faith? For example we read in Ephesians 2:8-9:

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

32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

33 ¶ HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

35 ¶ Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 ¶ Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

The Psalmist is asking God to take the action to make him walk in God's ways. God takes all the action to save us and cause us to walk in His ways.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord

We read in Romans 10:13:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13 also appears to provide a way that man can get himself saved. If man calls upon the name of the Lord in prayer then this verse seems to promise that God will save him. However, God gives more information about this subject in 2 Timothy 2:22. We read there:

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Jesus grew up to become a man and ministered for about 3 ½ years, mostly in the nation of Israel. Then, He went to the cross to make the payment for the sins of all those that would finally come to trust in Him as Savior. We are going to look at many verses that talk about the Lord Jesus and His work as Savior since the whole Bible is focused upon Him and His work. Jesus is not only the Savior, He is also the God that sent the Savior. Speaking of the Lord Jesus we read in Acts 4:12:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 4:12 talks about the possibility of salvation and emphasizes that there is only one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2:5 emphasizes that Jesus Christ is both God and the only Savior or mediator before God and man:

For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

How is Jesus able to save us?

The law of God requires that each person make payment for his sins. Because God is a holy and righteous God, He must carry out the requirements of the law. Many verses teach that God is holy and righteous in all His actions. For example we read in Psalm 9:7-8:

7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

We also read in Psalms 145:17:

The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

We have already examined a number of verses that teach that the payment for sin is to be cut off from God and His blessings and suffer in the lake of fire forevermore. That is a payment that we can never complete. God solved this problem by coming to earth as a man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He took upon Himself all of the sins of all those that would become saved. We read about this in the book of Isaiah in chapter 53. The book of Isaiah was written about 700 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus and prophesies His work of making payment for sins on the cross. Speaking of the coming Savior, we read in verses 5 and 6:

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Transgressions and iniquities are sins against God. The Lord Jesus suffered for the sins of His people. Through this suffering, we are “healed” of our sin-sickness that is cutting us off from God and His blessings. Verse 6 says that the sins or iniquities of God’s people were put upon Jesus. God gives more information about how sins were put upon the Lord Jesus in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Ephesians 2:1-5 is talking about people who did become saved. Verses 2 and 3 show that before salvation those people were just like everyone else in the world. They followed the same philosophies and religions that people of the world follow. We don’t see any action on the part of these people to seek after or believe in God. Then, in verse 4 we read “**But God**”. God is the one that takes the action of salvation. Ephesians 2:1-5 teaches important truths about God’s salvation program. It shows that those that finally do become saved were no different than the rest of humanity. They were just as sinful as their neighbour who never becomes saved. This passage also shows that God is the one who takes all the action to bring about salvation.

We notice that the unsaved are described as “dead” two times in this passage (verses 1 & 5). God is placing extra emphasis on the fact that these people are dead. We can understand this when we understand that God is life and death for mankind is separation from God. Unsaved man is separated from the indwelling and guiding of God’s Spirit (Romans 8:9, Philippians 2:12-13). As a result, he continues down his own sinful path and will never seek after God (Romans 3:10-12). The word “quicken” is the old English word “to make alive”. Upon salvation, God makes us alive by giving us Christ who is life. With God indwelling us and guiding us, we walk in the ways of the Lord, obeying the Bible.

The Psalmist in Psalm 119 recognized that God needs to take all of the action to save him. We read in verses 32 to 37:

when He saves us and comes to indwell us (Romans 8:9). God works in the true believer to help him walk in God's ways (Philippians 2:12-13). This gives the true believer a new nature, also called a new heart. God promises in Ezekiel 36:27 that He will put His Spirit in the true believers. This is what we read earlier in Romans 8:9. It is the working of God's Spirit in the true believer that causes him to walk in God's ways and gives him a new nature. This is how God cleanses us from our idols. The idols represent wrong religions and philosophies that we follow before salvation. When God saves us He guides us to trust and follow only the Bible. God cleanses us with the "washing" of the Word of God to use a Biblical figure of speech (Titus 3:5).

An important truth that we learn from Ezekiel 36:24-27 is that God takes all of the action to save us. We notice how many times God refers to His actions by saying "I". God says, "I will do this and I will do that ...". We don't read about man doing anything such as coming to God. God did not wait for man to come to Him because He already saw that man would not seek God (Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3, Romans 3:10-12).

God gives His assessment of our condition and conduct before salvation in Ephesians 2:1-5:

- 1 ¶ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**
- 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**
- 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

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.

This verse is speaking of what God did to the Lord Jesus in order that God's people might be made righteous before God. Jesus was made to be sin for His people. The sins of God's people were laid upon the Lord Jesus. By making payment for their sins, Jesus ensured that God's people are "**made the righteousness of God**". Jesus made God's people righteous or acceptable in the sight of God. Our sins are leading us to the Judgment Throne. When Christ becomes our Savior, those sins are taken by the Lord Jesus and we no longer stand guilty before God. Jesus stood before the Judgment Throne in 33AD and satisfied that requirement for His people. Jesus made the full payment for those sins. Upon salvation we are no longer under the curse of the law of God. We read about this in Galatians 3:13:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is every one that hangeth on a tree*:

The "tree" refers to the wooden cross upon which Jesus was crucified. Jesus bore the sins of His people upon the cross and made payment for those sins. The Lord Jesus became accursed for His people by taking their sins upon Himself, freeing them from the guilt and curse of the law. When Jesus took upon Himself the sins of His people, He had to make payment for those sins. We read about this payment on the cross in 33AD in 1 Peter 2:24:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should

live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Jesus suffered the “stripes” of the wrath of God which “heals” God’s people of their sin-sickness. The punishment Jesus suffered included being cut-off or forsaken by God as we read in Matthew 27:46:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

This is the “death”, meaning to be cut-off from God, that Jesus endured in order to make payment for the sins of His people. It is a divine mystery how God could forsake God, but this was necessary in order for Jesus to make the payment for the sins of His people.

What happens to us when we become saved?

We have learned about how Christ’s payment for sins is applied to us upon salvation, freeing us from any guilt before the law of God. But, does anything happen to our personality upon salvation? The answer is yes. The Bible teaches that upon salvation we have become a new creature. We read about this in 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.

In responding to Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, Jesus said in John 3:3 that we must be born again:

God illustrates how He does all the work of salvation

The Bible teaches that Christ spoke in parables and without a parable He did not speak (Mark 4:33-34). Also, the whole Bible is the Word of Christ. Jesus is even called the Word (John 1:1-3, 14). Therefore, we expect to find parables throughout the whole Bible. A parable is an earthly illustration with a Gospel meaning. God gives a beautiful parable about salvation in Ezekiel chapter 36. This illustration teaches how God takes all the action in the salvation program. We read in verses 24 to 27:

24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25 ¶ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

This passage utilizes parabolic language. We read language that speaks of things of this earth but yet God is teaching Gospel truth. One way that we know this is from verse 25. God does not wash us with water to cleanse us from idols. God cleanses us from our idols or false gods by making payment for our sins and saving us. The land into which God brings us upon salvation is the Kingdom of God which has its fulfillment in the new heavens and new earth, a “land” promised forevermore to the true believers. The new heart is a new nature that God gives us

God, the Lord Jesus Christ. These people were “**ordained to eternal life**” by God. The election program was necessary because no one would choose for God. Specifically, no one would believe in his heart, that is, to believe in Christ with his whole being. This is why Jesus said in John 6:44:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

We cannot come to God unless God draws us. This is because our heart is in rebellion against God and we love our sin too much. This word “draw” is used to speak of a sovereign drawing, such as the drawing out of a sword (John 18:10) or the drawing of a net full of fish (John 21:11). It signifies that the one drawing is in charge of the one being drawn. John 6:44 reinforces the teaching that God must bring us to Himself.

God is not a respecter of persons

God is not a respecter of persons in His election program. That is, God does not prefer one gender or one race or one nation over another (Acts 10:34-35). When Jesus came to this earth, He ministered to many people that were lowly esteemed in the eyes of men, including a Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42), a tax collector, Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), a person with leprosy (Luke 17:12-19), a criminal who was being executed for his crimes (Luke 23:39-43) and an adulterous woman (John 8:1-11). These are all people who were despised in the eyes of men. Yet Jesus ministered unto them. In like manner, Jesus can save us also. There is no one who is part of a rejected class or group of people from which God does not save. This shows us that none of us is beyond the hope of salvation.

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.

Upon salvation we are born again or born from above as the verse is most accurately translated. The “above” refers to God who is in heaven, meaning we must be born of God. What does it mean that we are a new creature or that we have been born from above? We get help from Romans 8:9:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:9 teaches an important truth about the impact of salvation upon our personality. The Spirit of God, who is God Himself, comes to indwell us. As the verse says, if we do not have the Spirit of God indwelling us then we do not belong to God. God is an infinite being so we don’t have a clear understanding of what it means for God to indwell us upon salvation. However, the Bible assures us that this is true and this fact helps us to understand salvation a little more. In Philippians 2:12-13 we learn about the impact of God indwelling His people:

12 ¶ Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

In verse 12 God is instructing His people, through the Apostle Paul, to obey the Bible and to work out this salvation that God has provided with fear and trembling. Every day is a new opportunity for a saved person. But, by seeking God's help through a proper fear and respect of God and His Word, the saved person can walk with the Lord. Verse 13 shows how God acts in the saved person to cause him to obey the Bible. We read that God works in His people by guiding them to live for Him. Philippians 2:13 explains the impact of God indwelling the saved person. God is working in him to will and to act according to God's perfect plan. This causes a big change in the saved person and his daily conduct.

This agrees with what we studied earlier about the true believer passing from death unto life or entering into life or being given life. God is life and upon salvation God comes to indwell the saved person, so his spirit has passed from death unto life, which is unto God. He has entered into life and he has been given God who is "life". The fact that God indwells His people and is working in them to do God's will has a dramatic impact on their actions. The thinking of the saved person has changed so that now he wants to do the will of God, and he does carry out God's will to a large degree. This is demonstrated in Psalm 119 which gives the thinking of the true believer:

1 ¶ ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

10 ¶ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 ¶ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12 ¶ Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

16 So then *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

In Romans 9:15-16 God insists that He is sovereign in choosing those He will save. We cannot fault God for choosing a people for Himself because if God had not done so, no one would seek after God, according to the Bible. In Acts chapter 13 Paul and Barnabas are bringing the Gospel to some Jews, but they are rejecting it. Then God records for us in verses 46 to 48:

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

We see that the ones that finally came to believe in Christ were those who were ordained to eternal life. God chose and ordained those that He planned to save and those are the people that came to believe in Christ as their Savior.

The Bible teaches that mankind does not seek after God and His heart is desperately wicked. Yet God wants a people for Himself. So God has solved this problem by choosing a people for Himself and making payment for their sins through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. As we read, God insists that "**I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy**". Concerning those that become saved, God has "**chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**". They were given to the Son of

reasoning does not agree with the Bible. First, the Bible says that God is the one that chose. If God were looking down through history to see who would choose God, then man would be the one making the choice. But the Bible says that God chose. Also, as we learned from Romans 3:10-12 and other passages, the Bible says that no one will seek after God. No one will choose God. When God did look down the corridors of time, He found that no one would seek after God; no one would choose God. To us it may seem that people are seeking after God, but often times the God they are seeking is a God after their own design and not the God of the Bible. Also, God's standard is that we seek after Him with all of our heart, with our whole being and not just superficially or temporarily. We read about this in Jeremiah 29:13-14:

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

However, the Bible teaches that our heart is in rebellion and we do not seek after God with all our heart. Therefore, in order to have a people for Himself, God chose a people to save according to these verses that we have been studying. In Romans 9:15-16 God insists that He will have mercy upon whomsoever He will have mercy. We read:

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

God declares that the evidence of salvation is obedience to the Bible in 1 John 2:3-6:

3 ¶ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

God repeats several times and in different ways that the evidence of salvation is obedience to the Bible. The reason the true believer loves the Word of God and obeys it is because God indwells him and works in him to do what is pleasing to God. God has put these verses and many similar verses in the Bible so that we can understand the change that occurs upon salvation. This change is caused by God indwelling a person and working in him to do His will.

How do I become saved?

Since the Bible describes the horrors of an eternity in the lake of fire as well as the many blessings of heaven for those whose sins have been forgiven, the obvious and most important question is: how do I become saved?

The Bible talks about salvation from cover to cover so God has much to say about it. It is a difficult subject to understand, but despite this it is very important because it affects the eternal destiny of each one of us. Therefore, we want to examine this

subject carefully. To answer this question, we will start with probably the most well known verse in the Bible, 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.

The only begotten Son of God is the Lord Jesus. Those that believe in Jesus have everlasting life. The Lord Jesus is called everlasting or eternal life in 1 John 5:20. Having everlasting or eternal life means having God, who is life, and His blessings forevermore. God Himself is the big gift of salvation. The word perish is used in a similar way as death and is translated lose or lost (Matthew 10:6, 42, 15:24, 18:11, Mark 9:41, Luke 15:4, 6, 8, 9, 24, 32). A careful study of the word “perish” in relationship to mankind shows that the Bible teaches that because of his sins, man has been lost or separated from God. That is, he is cut off from God and His blessings. That is the Biblical definition of perishing.

John 3:16 seems to give the simple answer to the question; “How do I become saved?”. The answer seems to be that I believe in Christ or put my faith in Christ and then God will save me. There are other passages that seem to teach this same truth. A very well known passage is Acts 16:30-31:

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Again, we read the language that if we believe on the Lord Jesus then we shall be saved.

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

There were certain people given to the Lord Jesus by the Father. This occurred before the foundation of the world. These were those people chosen to salvation. God talks about how He elected some people from National Israel, the blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to become saved. Speaking about National Israel, we read in Romans 11:5:

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

We also read about how God elected some people from the gentile city of Thessalonica. God speaks through the Apostle Paul to the true believers in the Thessalonian church and tells them that God had chosen them to salvation from the beginning. We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

It was necessary for God to choose a people to save because as we learned in Romans 3:10-12 and other passages no one of himself will seek God.

Who chooses? God or man?

Sometimes people say that God saw those that would believe in Jesus and then chose those people. However this line of

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Skipping down to verse 11 we read:

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:

Here we read that before the foundation of the world God chose a people for Himself. He predestinated them to salvation. The Lord Jesus says in 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.

Jesus talks about those that were given to Him by God the Father. These are the ones that were chosen by God in Ephesians 1:3-5. They were given to the Lord Jesus. These are the ones that become saved. In His prayer to His heavenly Father, Jesus talks about those that were given to Him by the Father in John 17:1-2:

1 ¶ These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

We must believe in our heart

Let's look at another similar passage, but in this passage God will talk about "believing in the heart". We read in Romans 10:9-10:

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:9-10 also declares that we must believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved, but it adds that we must "**believe in thine heart**". The Bible uses the word heart as a figure of the very nature of man. John 3:16 and Acts 16:31 said that we must believe in Jesus to be saved. But Romans 10:9-10 gives more information. We must believe in our heart. This is important because we want to consider what the Bible says about the condition of our heart before salvation. We read in Jeremiah 17:9:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

This is a pretty negative statement and something that maybe we don't understand. From our perspective, there are many decent and moral people and we don't see how Jeremiah 17:9 could possibly apply to them. That is because we are all tainted by sin and do not see things from the perspective of a holy and righteous God. We must read and trust the Bible for the truth. It tells us that only God sees everything from the perspective of pure holiness. Other verses teach this same truth. When God was preparing to destroy the world by a world-wide flood in the days

of Noah, about 7000 years ago, God makes this statement in 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.

Again, God is saying that the heart of man is in rebellion against God. The condition of mankind has not changed much over time. In Matthew 15 Jesus is explaining to His disciples that it is not what goes into our mouths, what we eat, nor whether we wash our hands, that defiles us. Rather, what comes out of our mouths, what we say, defiles us because it comes from a heart that is not right with God. We read in Matthew 15:18-20:

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20 These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Jesus says that all these things come out of our heart. Here is where the problem lies in salvation. The Bible says that if we believe in Jesus we shall be saved, but the Bible says that we must believe in our heart. We must come to trust in Jesus with our whole being and not just in an outward or temporary way. The problem is that before salvation our heart, our very nature, is in rebellion against God according to the Bible. The Bible gives further information about our condition in Romans 3:10-12:

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

This is very strong language, but it is God's assessment of our condition before salvation. God says that "**there is none that seeketh after God.**" This is because our heart is in rebellion against God. We do not seek after God. Other passages give the same message that no one seeks after God (Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3). This is the problem that we have in getting ourselves saved. The Bible says that we are to believe in Christ to become saved. That is, we are to believe in Christ in our heart. However, the Bible tells us that our heart is corrupt and as a result we do not seek after God.

If no one seeks after God, how then is anyone saved?

We have read verses that talk about how we are to believe in the Lord Jesus in our heart to become saved. But, then the Bible teaches that our heart is in rebellion and that no one seeks after God. So, how does anyone become saved?

We get some help in answering this question from Ephesians 1:3-6:

3 ¶ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: