

# Salvation of the Soul

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## Introduction

"The subject, 'The Salvation of the Soul,' has been neglected, even ignored, by too many Bible students because of their equating 'soul' and 'spirit.' The Holy Spirit separates 'spirit,' 'soul,' and 'body' (I Thess. 5:23). God is a Trinity; and man, created in the 'image' and 'likeness' of God, is likewise a trinity.

"The spirit is redeemed the moment one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ; the body will be redeemed at the return of the Lord; and the soul will be redeemed at the judgment seat of Christ (John 3:6; Rom. 8:23; II Cor. 5:10).

"The 'soul' is the life in the body of flesh, the natural life of a creature that has blood (Lev. 17:11). The 'life' which we live 'in the flesh' after we have been saved is that of the soul, and we will be rewarded or chastened according to that life.

"Hebrews 10:39, James 1:21, and I Peter 1:9 are written to tell how the 'soul' can be saved."

Rev. A. Edwin Wilson

Pastor, Missionary

Lubbock, Texas

"The Biblical teaching on the Salvation of the Soul is the great motivator for Godly Christian living."

Pastor Dick Abrahamson

Bethel Baptist Church

Green Bay, Wisconsin

"To grasp an understanding of the doctrine of God's Salvation of our Soul is to truly hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Pastor Ken Horn

First Baptist Church

Plains, Texas

"I know of no other teaching which more clearly reveals the proper link between Faith and Works in the Christian life."

Greg Parker

Truth and Bible Bookstore

Kent, Washington

## 1: Salvation — Past, Present, Future

For by grace are ye saved [lit. 'you have been saved'] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8, 9).

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish [lit. 'to the ones perishing'] foolishness; but unto us which are saved [lit. 'who are being saved'] it is the power of God (I Cor. 1:18).

Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of [lit. 'for the sake of the ones about to inherit'] salvation (Heb. 1:14)?

Salvation in the Word of God is spoken of in three tenses: past, present, and future. Christians have been saved; Christians are being saved; and Christians are about to be saved. The previously quoted verses provide examples of how Scripture deals with these three aspects of salvation. In Eph. 2:8, 9 salvation is a past, completed act; in I Cor. 1:18 salvation is a present, continuous work; and in Heb. 1:14 salvation is a future, inherited possession. Since the Word of God presents salvation in a framework of this nature, it is vitally important in Scriptural interpretation to first ascertain to which of these three any given passage pertains.

In Eph. 2:8 the words in the corrected text, "you have been saved," are a translation of two Greek words which form what is called in the Greek text a "periphrastic perfect." The "perfect" tense refers to an act completed in past time with the results of this act extending into the present and existing in a finished state. The "periphrastic" construction places additional emphasis on the present, finished state and refers to the persistent results in present time of the past, completed work. Salvation in this verse is wrought by grace through faith, accomplished completely in past time, and is the present possession of every believer. This present possession, in turn, constitutes an active, continuing, ever-abiding salvation. The eternal security of the believer cannot be expressed in stronger terms than the periphrastic construction of the perfect tense in Eph. 2:8, for the present results of the past action, in this case, must continue forever.

I Cor. 1:18, however, presents things concerning salvation which are entirely different than what is presented in Eph. 2:8. Rather than the tense in the Greek text referring to a past, completed act, the tense refers to a present, continuous work. The former has already been completed, and the latter has yet to be completed. Then in Heb. 1:14, the wording in the Greek text refers to something which is about to occur. Nothing is past or present; the reception of this salvation is placed, in its entirety, in the future. Thus, one can immediately see that insurmountable problems will arise if distinctions are not carefully drawn between past, present, and future aspects of salvation.

The salvation referred to in Heb. 1:14 is not only to be realized in the future, but it is also an inherited salvation. This fact further distinguishes between the salvation Christians are about to receive and the salvation Christians have already received, for the salvation which we presently possess is not inherited. Our present salvation was obtained as a free gift during the time we were alienated from God. We, as aliens, were in no position to inherit salvation, for we were completely outside the family of God.

In the Scriptural framework, inheritance is always a family matter. In the Old Testament, “sons” were first in line to receive the inheritance, with “daughters” next. If there were no sons or daughters in the immediate family, the inheritance passed to the nearest family member or members designated by the law of inheritance (Num. 27:8-11).

In the New Testament, however, family members outside of “sons” are not in view, for there will be many “sons” when the inheritance is received. Consequently, an individual must first be a “child” of the Owner before he can be considered for the inheritance: “If children, then heirs...” Then, before the inheritance is received, the adoption must occur, placing the individual in the position of a “son” (Rom. 8:17-23, Gal. 4:1-7). Understanding salvation past, present, and future is a necessary key to understanding our present position “in Christ” relative to the inheritance “reserved in heaven” for the faithful. The complete scope of salvation involves the Spirit of God performing a present work in Christians, based on a past, completed work, in view of an inheritance to be realized in the future.

### **The Tripartite Nature of Man**

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. 5:23).

Man is a tripartite being comprised of spirit, soul, and body; and the salvation of man within its complete scope (past, present, and future) concerns the salvation of man’s complete entity. In the study of Scripture it is revealed that each of these three parts of man is subject to salvation at different times. Thus, to understand salvation in its complete scope, one must first understand certain things about man’s tripartite nature. Salvation in relation to this tripartite nature then becomes the issue.

In the first chapter of Genesis we learn that man was created in the “image” and “likeness” of God. The word translated “God” in the Hebrew text is Elohim. This is a plural noun, which indicates three or more; and we know from revelation pertaining to the Godhead that Elohim refers to three and no more — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Since Elohim is a trinity, for man to be created in the “image” and “likeness” of God, he too must be a trinity. Unlike the dichotomic animal kingdom (created outside the “image” and “likeness” of God) possessing only bodies and souls, trichotomic man (created in the “image” and “likeness” of God) possesses body, soul, and spirit.

Jesus is Elohim manifested in the flesh; and having been made in the “likeness” of man (but apart from man’s fallen nature), He, as man, must also be a trinity (John 1:14; Phil. 2:7). This tripartite nature of Christ, in Whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9), was clearly revealed at the time of His death. At this time Jesus yielded up His spirit, which went back into the presence of His Father in heaven (Luke 23:46; cf. Eccl. 12:7; Acts 7:59); His soul went into Hades, the place of the dead in the center of the earth (Acts 2:27); and His body was removed from the Cross and placed in Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb (Matt. 27:57-61). This separation persisted until the soul and spirit re-entered the body at the time our Lord was raised from the dead.

Thus, Elohim is a trinity; Jesus, Elohim manifested in the flesh, is likewise a trinity; man, created in the “image” and “likeness” of Elohim, is also a trinity; and a complete redemption provided by the triune God must, of necessity, pertain to man as a complete being. Man’s complete redemption must encompass spirit, soul, and body.

#### **1. Past, Present, Future ... Spirit, Soul, Body**

When man sinned in the garden in Eden, the complete being of man — spirit, soul, and body — became in a fallen state. God had commanded Adam concerning the fruit 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” (Gen. 2:17). After Satan had deceived Eve into eating of the fruit of this tree, she then “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Immediately following this, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:1-7).

As soon as the fall occurred, man lost the covering of pristine glory which had previously clothed his body, and he, for the first time, found himself separated from God. He tried to replace this covering with fig leaf aprons; and then, apparently realizing the inadequacy of a covering made by his own hands, he, in his fallen state, sought to hide from God. God, finding man in this condition, completely rejected man’s efforts to provide a covering for his sin, i.e., man’s feeble efforts to atone for his own sin. Then, to bring man back into a right relationship (although not his previously unfallen state — something still future even today), God provided a covering consisting of animal skins (Gen. 3:21). This necessitated the shedding of blood; and herein lie basic, unchangeable truths concerning the state of fallen man and the means which are necessary to effect his redemption.

#### **a) Spirit**

Man’s sin in the garden in Eden produced death. Man died the day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Since his body continued to live, revealing that his soul — the life-giving principle in the blood (Lev. 17:11; cf. Gen. 9:4) — remained unchanged, it is evident that it was his spirit which died. The spirit nature is that part of man which links him directly with God. “God is spirit,” and man’s worship of God must be “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The death of Adam’s spirit separated him from God, and this death “passed upon all men” (Rom. 5:12). Scripture speaks of an unsaved person as being “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). With an unredeemed, inanimate spirit, he is alienated from God (Eph. 2:12); but once the person has been saved, he is then spoken of as having passed “from death unto life” (John 5:24). This aspect of salvation is effected through the birth from above, and once accomplished, it is completely passive. The salvation experience which man enters into at the time of the birth from above is a spiritual birth: “...that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6b).

#### **b) Soul**

The salvation of the soul, on the other hand, must never be associated with the passive aspect of salvation. Scripture carefully distinguishes between the soul and the spirit, never using the words interchangeably (cf. I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12). Scripture also carefully

distinguishes between a past, completed work of salvation, which pertains to the spirit, and a present (to be completed in the future) work of salvation, which pertains to the soul. Man's reception of the salvation of his soul is never spoken of as being passive, but always future:

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:9).

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe [are faithful] to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39).

The statements and exhortations in these verses pertain to Christians alone — those whose spirits have already been saved and whose souls are in the process of being saved.

### c) Body

The salvation of the body presents very little problem for the majority of Christians. Very few contend, contrary to Scripture, that the body has either already been redeemed or is in the process of being redeemed. Scripture places the redemption of man's body entirely in the future (Rom. 8:23).

The Christian's body is presently in a continuous state of deterioration. The body grows old and weakens with time, and the body is subject to sickness, disease, and eventually death. This must ever remain the case so long as the body remains unredeemed. The "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and the unredeemed body must pay the price which sin requires.

Within this unredeemed body lie two opposing entities, each seeking dominion — a redeemed spirit, and an unredeemed soul. The unredeemed soul is housed in an unredeemed body, and the two are mutually compatible. But the redeemed spirit housed alongside an unredeemed soul in an unredeemed body experiences no compatibility at all. Compatibility is not possible, for "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14). This heterogeneous union is what produced the cry of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 7:24, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

## 2. Soulical, Spiritual, Carnal

According to the Word of God, every man can be categorized as being either soulical, spiritual, or carnal. The word "soulical" pertains to non-Christians, and the words "spiritual" and "carnal" pertain to Christians.

### a) Soulical

"But the natural [soulical] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

The Greek word translated "soul" throughout the New Testament is *psuche*. This word has to do with the "natural life" of the individual. The soul is the seat of a person's emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious existence. The Greek word translated "natural" in I Cor. 2:14 is *psuchikos*, a form of the word *psuche*. *Psuchikos* is the "natural" or "soulical" life (self-life) which man has in common with the animal kingdom. The soulical man is dominated or ruled by his soul, which includes all the experiences, desires, emotions, sensations, likes, and dislikes within the personal life of the individual. Such likes, dislikes, etc. will vary from individual to individual, but all emanate from the soul-life of man. The soulical man is alienated from God and, thus, possesses no way to grasp spiritual truth. His spirit must be born from above before he can possess spiritual discernment.

### b) Spiritual

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual..." (I Cor. 3:1a).

The Greek word translated "spirit" throughout the New Testament is *pneuma*. This word is used in the New Testament referring to the Holy Spirit, man's spirit, angels (both fallen and unfallen), a state of mind or disposition, wind, and breath. Examples in Scripture of the last four are Luke 8:55; John 3:8; I Cor. 4:21; II Tim. 1:7; Heb. 1:7; I Peter 3:19.

Man's spirit is the seat of the higher Divine life pertaining to his God-conscious existence. The Greek word translated "spiritual" in I Cor. 3:1a is *pneumatikos*, a form of the word *pneuma*. The spiritual man is one who is controlled by the Spirit of God acting through his own spirit. The spiritual man, unlike the soulical man, controls his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his still-present, man-conscious existence. He brings his unredeemed body under subjection and exerts control over the soulical man. This, of course, is not performed within his own power, but within the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is an experience open to redeemed man alone.

Unredeemed man, although a trichotomic being, fails to rise above the dichotomic animal kingdom in his natural or soulical existence. He lacks a redeemed spirit with the accompanying indwelling Holy Spirit and, consequently, remains alienated from God. Thus, an existence outside the soulical for unredeemed man is not possible.

### c) Carnal

"...but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (I Cor. 3:1b).

The Greek word translated "carnal" is *sarkikos*. This is a cognate form of the word *sarx*, which means "flesh." *Sarkikos* is the opposite of *pneumatikos*. The carnal Christian is, thus, "fleshly" as opposed to "spiritual." He is one who allows himself to be controlled by his soul rather than by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He, as the soulical man, follows his personal emotions, feelings, and desires. He, however, unlike the soulical man, has been born from above and is capable of grasping spiritual truth. But, unlike the spiritual man, this truth has not been received. The carnal Christian, without an impartation of spiritual truth flowing into his human spirit, remains immature and fleshly.

Within this structure of the impartation of spiritual truth to redeemed man alone lies the great lesson concerning unredeemed man's relationship to the Word of God. It is utterly futile for unredeemed man to either himself attempt to understand the Word of God or for redeemed man to attempt to teach him the Word of God. Scripture is "spiritually discerned," and a man must be born from above before he is in a position to understand the things of the Spirit. The soulical (unredeemed) man, completely alienated from God, cannot understand these things, and they appear to him as no more than "foolishness."

Herein also lies the reason why the things of the Spirit have been hidden from the "wise and prudent," but revealed unto "babes" (cf. Matt. 11:25). Certain intelligentsia of the age, even though saved and in a position to understand the Word of God, too often seek spiritual discernment in the light of worldly wisdom. And, although those who seek spiritual discernment in this manner may be looked upon as

great spiritual leaders, theologians, expositors, etc., they, in the final analysis, cannot understand these things and can only be sadly lacking in the very realm in which they are held in high esteem. While at the same time, “babes” (Gr. *napios*, those who are still on the milk of the Word and have not grown enough to even partake of solid food) can, through the leadership of the Spirit of God, understand more about these same spiritual truths than the “wise and prudent” who reject the Spirit’s leadership.

#### Redeemed Man

Redeemed man today occupies a unique position not held by the regenerate prior to the age in which we live. This unique position is spoken of in Scripture by the expression “in Christ.” The position “in Christ” is acquired at the time of the birth from above, and, consequently, is held equally by all Christians

##### 1. In Christ

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [lit. ‘new creation’]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17).

When an individual is born from above he, at that moment, becomes a “new creation” in Christ. “Old things [things pertaining to the former creation — whether in Adam or in Jacob]” cease to exist, and “all things [things pertaining to the new creation in Christ]” come into existence. Through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ an unsaved individual — whether Jew or Gentile — becomes an entirely new creation, a part of the “one new man” (Eph. 2:15). This is a positional standing and is based entirely on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. Thus, nothing can ever be added to or taken from this standing. It can never be altered in any fashion, and its completeness and durativeness are as complete and durative as Christ’s finished work. Within this standing, man realizes the salvation which he presently possesses — the salvation of his spirit.

In order to effect man’s eternal redemption, the Spirit of God deals with unsaved man solely on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary. Once an individual accepts this finished work, realizing the salvation of his spirit, the salvation issue then shifts from the salvation of his spirit, to the salvation of his soul. The salvation of the spirit becomes a past, completed work and is never dealt with as an issue beyond this point. All Scriptures dealing with carnality or unfaithfulness of Christians, resulting in forfeiture or loss, must pertain to issues surrounding the salvation of the soul, NEVER the salvation of the spirit. Redeemed man is a “new creation” in Christ, and things pertaining to the former creation have passed completely out of existence, leaving no possibility that these things can ever reappear.

Once the salvation of the spirit has been effected, making it possible for the indwelling Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control an individual’s life through his own spirit, then man’s unredeemed soul occupies the center of attention. The salvation of the soul, unlike the salvation of the spirit, is conditional. The salvation of the soul is dependent on the life one lives after his spirit has been saved. It is dependent on the individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life through his own spirit.

An individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth and control his life progressively grows into a spiritually mature Christian. In this manner he exerts control over his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. This man will ultimately realize the salvation of his soul (life). On the other hand, an individual who refuses to allow the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth and control his life remains a carnally immature Christian. Consequently, he cannot help but be controlled by his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. This man will ultimately realize the loss of his soul (life).

##### 2. Salvation Issue

The shift of the salvation issue from the spirit to the soul at the time of the birth from above necessitates a corresponding shift from the salvation message which an evangelist has been called to deliver (which concerns the salvation of the spirit) to the salvation message which a pastor-teacher has been called to deliver (which concerns the salvation of the soul). This must ever be the case, for that which is past ceases to be the issue, and that which is present and future becomes the issue. The only message to be carried to the unsaved is the “gospel of Christ.” This is the good news that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” This message alone is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:3, 4). But once the unsaved individual has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, experiencing the salvation of his spirit, the message must then change. The individual is now being dealt with on an entirely different plane, and the issue at the forefront is no longer the salvation of the spirit, but the salvation of the soul.

The pastor-teacher possesses a calling which is entirely different than the calling of an evangelist, for his ministry is among saved individuals who are capable of grasping spiritual truth. He has been called to teach rather than evangelize. He is to “feed the flock of God” (I Peter 5:2). He is responsible, under the leadership of the Spirit of God, to provide spiritual nourishment for those Christians placed under his care. And the only thing which God has provided for the pastor-teacher to use in feeding the flock of God is the Word of God. As he expounds this Word under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, saved individuals placed under his care receive this Word into their human spirits. The Spirit of God then takes “the engrafted [implanted] word” and effects spiritual growth unto maturity, with the end result being the salvation of their souls (James 1:21).

The tragedy in Christian circles today is the light regard which pastors of Churches have for fulfilling the very purpose of their entire ministry. The end result of this will be that multitudes of immature, carnal Christians will appear in the presence of the Lord at the end of the present dispensation with redeemed spirits, redeemed bodies, but wasted and, thus unredeemed souls (lives). Their eternal salvation will remain unaffected, but, with the forfeiture, or loss of their souls, they will be unable to realize the inheritance presently “reserved in heaven” for the faithful. Consequently, they will occupy no positions among the “many sons” who will be brought unto glory.

#### **Concluding Thoughts:**

Failure to understand and distinguish between the salvation which we presently possess and the salvation to be revealed when our Lord returns has wrought untold confusion in Christian circles. Scriptures dealing with the salvation to be revealed are applied to the salvation which we presently possess, and man originates the doctrine that it is possible for a saved person to be lost, thus, not only casting reproach upon the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ on Calvary, but also doing violence to numerous portions of the Word of God. Others

recognizing that the loss of one's eternal salvation is not possible, but still failing to understand distinctions between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul, take many of these same verses and apply them to the nation of Israel or to unregenerate individuals, whether Jew or Gentile. Applications of this nature not only remove the Spirit's exhortations and warnings to redeemed individuals, but erroneous interpretations in one area will often, for the sake of consistency, lead to erroneous interpretations in another area. Thus, the importance of understanding distinctions between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul becomes self-evident.

Let it be forever stated: Redeemed man has come into a position from which he can never be removed. But this same redeemed man, in this position, is directly responsible to his Creator; and, at a future date, he will either inherit as a joint-heir with his Lord or suffer loss in the presence of his Lord. The former will be realized through the salvation of his soul, or the latter will, instead, be realized through the loss of his soul.

## **2: If Any of You**

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man [lit. 'If any one,' i.e., 'If any of you'] would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life [soul] shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life [soul] for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [soul]? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life [soul]? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds (Matt. 16:24-27, ASV).

In Matthew, chapter sixteen, coming into the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took his disciples aside on several occasions and continued to teach them, as before, revealing things to come. Beginning with verse thirteen, immediately after His warning to beware of the leaven (false doctrine) or the Pharisees and Sadducees, this revelation falls into four categories, which are all interrelated:

- a) The True Identity of Christ (vv. 13-16, 20).
- b) The Inception of the Church (vv. 17-19).
- c) The Crucifixion of Christ (vv. 21-23).
- d) The Salvation of the Soul in Relation to the Coming Kingdom (vv. 24-27; cf. v. 28; 17:1-9).

Overall Scope of Events

- a) "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The disciples, as evidenced by Peter's confession, believed that Jesus was the Christ (v. 16); but the masses in Israel believed otherwise (vv. 13, 14). The word "Christ" (or "Messiah," as translated from the Hebrew text) means Anointed One. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and the complete ministry of Christ (past, present, and future) encompasses all three of these offices. As Prophet (past), "Christ died for our sins"; as Priest (present), "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us; and as King (future), "he shall reign forever and ever."

Insofar as Peter himself was concerned, his confession really involved only the latter, the kingly office, rather than all three, for the disciples at this time did not grasp the fact that the Cross and the present dispensation would precede the kingdom (vv. 21-23; cf. 17:3, 4, 22, 23; 20:17-19; Luke 9:30, 31). Peter acknowledged Jesus as God's Son immediately following his acknowledgement of Jesus as the "Christ." Sonship implies rulership, and this is exactly what Peter had in mind; but the fact remains: An acknowledgement of Jesus as the "Christ," God's Son, must, in reality, involve His complete, threefold office. Christ's future ministry as King, within the Scriptural framework in which it is set forth, cannot exist apart from a finished work in His past ministry as Prophet and a continuing work (to be completed in the future) in His present ministry as Priest. This is the primary reason for Jesus' severe rebuke of Peter in Matt. 16:23. Peter, unknowingly in verse twenty-two, denied part of what he, in reality, had previously confessed in verse sixteen (cf. Matt. 26:63, 64).

- b) "I will build my church."

The revelation of the Church at this particular point in the ministry of Christ is placed within a setting in which its inception, based on the events of Calvary, anticipates the coming kingdom. Matthew's gospel is the only gospel placing the emphasis specifically upon Jesus as "King." The other gospels present His kingship in a similar, extensive manner, but the overall emphasis is placed upon other facets of His person and work; and all four gospels together present a complete, composite picture of Christ. Interestingly enough, the record of Christ's mention of the "Church" appears in Matthew's gospel alone (16:18; 18:17), which is no mystery if one understands the true nature of the Church and its relationship to the kingdom.

Christ died for the Church; he presently liveth to make intercession for the Church; and the Church will reign as consort queen with Him during the coming age. The Church was called into existence for definite and specific purposes, and these purposes are not only intimately associated with the coming kingdom, but the complete fulfillment of these purposes cannot be realized until the day Jesus exercises His office as King.

The events in Matthew, chapter sixteen occurred shortly after Israel's "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" and Christ's departure from the "house" — house of Israel (chs. 12, 13). And, for all practical purposes, even though the announcement was not given until later (Matt. 21:43), the kingdom of the heavens had already been taken from Israel and was to be offered to a separate and distinct "nation." This new "nation," the Church (I Peter 2:9, 10), would, in turn, do what Israel had failed to do — bring forth the "fruits thereof [fruits relating to the kingdom]." Thus, attention called to the Church in connection with the kingdom of the heavens at this point in the ministry of Christ, to be later more fully revealed through the Apostle Paul, is at the exact juncture where one might expect revelation concerning the Church within the scope of God's revealed program for the ages.

- c) "He must ... suffer ... and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Next in order beyond the announcement concerning the coming inception of the Church lies Christ's announcement concerning His approaching sufferings, death, and resurrection. The Church, which will be the bride of Christ during the coming age, could not be brought into existence apart from Calvary. The events of Calvary wrought redemption for man; and these same events, in accordance with Old Testament typology, also provided the means whereby the bride could be fashioned.

The basic principles relating to the formation of the bride and the redemptive work of the Son in relation to the bride are set forth in the first three chapters of Genesis and remain unchanged throughout Scripture. Adam was the first man upon this earth. He was also a type of Christ, the Second Man, the Last Adam (Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:45-47); and the experiences of Adam in relation to Eve prefigure the experiences of Christ in relation to His bride. Eve was created in Adam at the very beginning, but was not brought into existence as a separate entity until a point later in time. Adam was put to sleep, his side opened, and from this opened side God took one of his ribs and formed Eve. Eve was taken out of Adam and then presented back to Adam for a helpmate. In the highest sense Eve was still part of Adam's body, and, when presented back to Adam, God looked upon both as "one flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24).

The bride has existed in the Son from eternity. The bride's existence and salvation date from "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8). The bride, however, was not brought into existence as a separate entity until the Son was put to sleep and His side opened. This took place at Calvary. The Son died, and His side was opened. Out of this opened side came forth "blood" and "water" (John 19:34) — the two elements necessary to bring into existence the bride, separate from the body, but still part of the body. (The "water" speaks of cleansing after the application of the "blood.") Once the complete, redeemed bride has been brought into existence, "not having spot, or wrinkle...without blemish," the bride will be presented back to the Son, and in the highest sense both shall be "one flesh" (Eph. 5:26-32).

God's past work in bringing Eve into existence and His present work in bringing His Son's bride (the Church) into existence, based on the events of Calvary, must be studied in the light of one another. In Gen. 2:22 God took a rib from Adam's side and "made he a woman." The Hebrew word translated "made" in this verse is *banah*, which means "to build." Eve was created in Adam at the beginning, later taken out of Adam, built into a bride, and then presented back to Adam. In Matt. 16:18 Christ said, "...upon this rock I will build my church." The Church, created in Christ from eternity, is presently being taken out of the body and built into a bride. The time when this process will be completed and the bride presented back to the Son lies in the future.

Just as Eve was taken out of Adam's body, the bride of Christ will be taken out of the Son's body. The entire body over which He is the Head consists of all the saved in this present dispensation. But the bride is a smaller group which is presently being called out of the larger group, i.e., called out of the body. All of the saved are "called" and form part of the body, but only the "called out" — those taken out of the body — will form the bride of Christ. The bride is a selection out of a selection: "For many are called, but few are chosen [lit. 'few are called out']" (Matt. 22:14).

Note that man had no part in God's work surrounding the formation of Eve — from the time of her creation in Adam, to the time when she was presented back to Adam. Nor can man have a part in the formation of the Son's bride. Jesus said, "I will build my church." The word "Church" itself comes from a compound Greek word (*ekklesia*) which means "called out." The clear teaching of Scripture attests to the fact that the Church is being built from individuals who are removed out of the saved, not out of the world. Those taken from the world are the "called," and those taken from the saved, the body, are the "called out" (the Church). The Church is the body of Christ in the same sense that Eve was the body of Adam. She was bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23). All of Eve was of the body, but she was not all the body. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). All of the bride is of the body, but not all the body.

D) "Whosoever..." "...whosoever will lose his life [soul] for my sake shall find it.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:25b, 27).

Following the revelation of "Jesus" as the Christ, the coming inception of the "Church," and the coming "sufferings," "death," and "resurrection" of Christ, revealed events continue with the announcement concerning the "salvation of the soul" in relation to the coming "kingdom" (vv. 24-27). The last verse in chapter sixteen along with the first nine verses in chapter seventeen then continue with the subject of the kingdom.

The entire program of God during the preceding dispensations, along with the present dispensation, moves toward the climactic dispensation having to do with this present earth — the Messianic Era. During Old Testament days the salvation of the soul in relation to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom was open to Israel. Numerous Old Testament saints, desiring positions in this heavenly kingdom, governed their pilgrim walk accordingly. And these Old Testament saints, in that coming day when the kingdom is under the rule of their Messiah, Jesus the Christ, will realize these heavenly positions (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28, 29).

However, with the removal of this offer from Israel and the subsequent setting aside of the nation, the offer today is being extended to an entirely new creation — the "one new man" in Christ. Individuals from this new creation in Christ can govern their lives in such a manner during the present time, as individuals from the old creation in Jacob could during past time, so as to qualify for positions in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom. They will, at that time, as certain Israelites from the prior dispensation, realize the salvation of their souls (lives).

Heb. 2:3 reveals that the message concerning "so great salvation [salvation of the soul]" was first announced by the Lord. This message, however, within the text has to do with an announced salvation for a particular people outside Israel ("we [Christians]"), not with a completely new message per se. The salvation of the soul was a subject of Old Testament Scripture (Prov. 11:30; Ezek. 3:17-21; 14:14-20), and numerous Old Testament saints, as Moses, "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." They looked beyond their earthly inheritance to a heavenly inheritance. They desired a higher calling, a "better country," and they will have a part in the "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:10-16, 26, 32-40). They will realize the salvation of their souls in relation to the heavenly inheritance, with the remainder of the nation (the vast majority) realizing their earthly inheritance in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The message concerning the salvation of the soul in relation to a "nation" (the Church) which was not Jewish, first announced by the Lord, was not understood by the prophets. They "inquired and searched diligently" concerning something which was beyond their day and, thus, not for them — coming into possession of this salvation through being "partakers of Christ's sufferings" (I Peter 1:9-12; 4:12, 13).

Jesus alluded to the new “nation” which would inherit “so great salvation” in Matt. 12:46-50 by referring to a new relationship not conditioned on lineal descent (descent from Abraham), and Jesus made known to His disciples additional facts concerning this new entity through the parables in Matt. 13:1ff and His revelation of the Church in Matt. 16:18ff. The full revelation concerning this separate, distinct “nation,” the Church, was later vouchsafed to the Apostle Paul and is called in Eph. 3:3 “the mystery,” referring to something heretofore unrevealed. Revelation concerning the mystery “first began to be spoken by the Lord,” the message was “confirmed unto us by them that heard him,” and the full revelation was later given through the Apostle Paul.

Matt. 16:13ff outlines the transfer of the salvation of the soul in relation to the kingdom of the heavens from Israel to the Church, and these verses constitute one of the pivotal sections in Matthew’s gospel. Matthew, chapter twelve is the beginning pivotal section, and chapters thirteen and sixteen continue this same trend of thought, providing additional revelation. The announcement is then made in chapter twenty-one concerning the removal of the kingdom from Israel, and the events of Calvary follow, allowing the Church — the new recipient of the offer to occupy heavenly positions in the kingdom — to be brought into existence.

### **If Any Disciple**

The text from Matt. 16:24-26, dealing with the saving or the losing of the soul, has erroneously been removed from its context by numerous individuals over the years and used relative to the unsaved and the message of evangelism. These verses, however, have nothing to do with the unsaved or the message of an evangelist. Truths brought out in these verses relate to the saved alone, those who have already been evangelized.

Within the text, Jesus is speaking to His disciples. The words, “If any man,” in verse twenty-four could be better translated, “If any one,” i.e., “If any of you [disciples].” The word “man” is not in the Greek text but has been supplied by the translators. The disciples were saved individuals, and the message concerning denying oneself, taking up one’s cross, and following Christ (things not possible for the unsaved to accomplish) was directed to them. Nor can verses twenty-five and twenty-six, which refer to the saving or the losing of the soul, be separated from verse twenty-four. The word “For” connects verse twenty-five with verse twenty-four, and the same word again connects verse twenty-six with both preceding verses. Denying oneself, taking up one’s cross, and following Christ in verse twenty-four is the manner in which the salvation of the soul is effected. And the inverse of this is true concerning the manner in which the loss of the soul is effected.

Within the context, as we have seen, Jesus is dealing with things relative to the kingdom of the heavens (v. 19). His Messiahship (vv. 13-16, 20), the Church (vv. 17-19), the Cross, allowing the Church to be brought into existence (vv. 21-23), and the salvation of the soul in relation to the coming kingdom (vv. 24-27) constitute the subject matter at hand. One thought leads into another, with the latter, the salvation of the soul in relation to the coming kingdom, being the end or goal toward which all things move. Note how plainly and unmistakably the salvation of the soul (vv. 24-26) is connected with the coming kingdom (v. 27) rather than with eternal life. The word “For” (same word which begins vv. 25, 26) appears once again, connecting verse twenty-seven with the preceding verses. Thus, verses twenty-four through twenty-seven can only be looked upon as an indivisible unit in Scriptural interpretation.

#### a) Deny Oneself

To deny oneself is to deny the fleshly impulses of the soul — the self-life. The unredeemed soul housed in an unredeemed body is to be kept under subjection through the instrumentality of man’s redeemed spirit. Through the impartation of the Word of God into man’s redeemed spirit, individuals, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, progressively grow into spiritually mature Christians; and, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Christians growing in such a manner are able to deny the fleshly impulses of the soul, keeping their bodies under subjection. This subjective state of the soul in relation to the spiritual man can be graphically illustrated from Old Testament typology in the lives of Sarah and Hagar. Hagar (the bondwoman), despised in the eyes of Sarah (the freewoman), had fled into the wilderness. But the angel of the Lord finding her by a spring gave the command, “Return to thy mistress [Sarah], and submit thyself under her hands” (Gen. 16:4-9). That which is under the bondage of sin must ever be submissive to that which has been removed from this bondage.

Sarah’s and Hagar’s sons (Isaac and Ishmael) are set forth in both Genesis and Galatians as typifying the man of spirit (Isaac) and the man of flesh (Ishmael). The soul (self-life) of man (in association with the flesh) must ever be submissive to the spiritual man. Hagar was blessed, but only subsequent to her submission to Sarah (Gen. 16:10); and man in his self-life will be blessed, but only subsequent to the submission of the soul to the Spirit. Blessings relating to the self-life (soul) will occur at the time of the salvation of the soul. The great issue, then is the man of flesh and the man of spirit both striving for control of the Christian’s life (soul), with the salvation of the soul being realized only through control of the self-life by the spiritual man.

#### b) Take Up One’s Cross, and Follow Christ

The “Cross” was the instrument of death, and taking up one’s cross is dying to self, the self-life. Christians are told, “If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). The man of flesh, the deeds of the body, exhibited through one’s self-life must be kept in a constant state of dying. The old man is, so to speak, to be affixed to the cross and not be allowed to move about. If mortification after this fashion occurs, the man will live (he will experience the salvation of his soul); however, if mortification after this fashion does not occur, the man will die (he will experience the loss of his soul).

The words “take up” and “follow” in verse twenty-four appear in two different tenses in the Greek text. The first has to do with a one-time act, but the latter has to do with continuous action. That is, Christians are to “take up” the cross at the beginning of their pilgrim walk, never laying it down, and, in this manner, “follow” Christ continuously throughout the pilgrim walk.

The same basic thought is set forth in Rom. 12:1 where Christians are told, “...present your bodies a living sacrifice.” The word “present” has to do with a one-time act to be performed at the beginning of the pilgrim walk, never to be repeated. As the Old Testament priest placed the sacrifice upon the altar and left it there, the New Testament priest is called upon to do the same with his body. The body is to be placed upon the altar through a one-time act, and the body is then to remain upon the altar in a continuous state of sacrifice, never to be

removed. “Continuous dedication” in the Christian life is the correct Biblical perspective. “Rededication” — as men often use the term — is, on the other hand, completely out of place, for such cannot exist in the Biblical framework of the pilgrim walk.

#### **For Whosoever ...**

The word “whosoever” is verse twenty-five refers directly back to verse twenty-four. The thought is, “Whosoever of you [disciples]...” Verses twenty-five and twenty-six further amplify what has already been stated in verse twenty-four, and, along with verse twenty-seven, form the Lord’s Own commentary on this verse.

The word translated “life” twice in verse twenty-five and twice again in verse twenty-six (ASV) is from the Greek word psuche, which means either “soul” or “life.” A number of translations (e.g. KJV, NASB, NIV) render the word psuche “life” in verse twenty-five but “soul” in verse twenty-six. Since “soul” and “life” are synonymous terms, translating psuche as “life” in one verse and “soul” in the next verse cannot really be considered inaccurate. But not everyone has access to the Greek text or understands that “soul” and “life” are synonymous terms; and an inconsistent translation of this nature has, over the years, served to foster confusion in the interpretation of these verses. Any Christian who refuses to “deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow” Christ during the present day (v. 24) — synonymous with “whosoever will save his life” (v. 25) — “shall [in the coming day] lose it” (v. 25), i.e., experience the loss of his soul.

On the other hand, any Christian who will “deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow” Christ during the present day (v. 24) — synonymous with “whosoever will lose his life for my sake” (v. 25) — “shall [in the coming day] find it” (v. 25), i.e., realize the salvation of his soul. The inverse of the place which the soul occupies during the Christian’s present pilgrim walk will be true during the coming reign of Christ. A Christian who saves his soul today (allows his self-life to gain the ascendancy, to rule) will lose his soul in that coming day, and a Christian who loses his soul today (keeps his self-life under subjection, refuses to allow the soul to rule) will gain his soul in that coming day.

#### **Profit ... Exchange**

The words “profited” and “exchange” in verse twenty-six have to do with building or refusing to build upon an initial investment. Christians alone are in view. Only the saved are in possession of this initial investment and, thus, in a position to profit. The very ultimate in man’s goals, aims, and ambitions — gaining the entire world in the self-life — is set over against forfeiting one’s life for the sake of Christ, with profit being accrued only in the latter. There can be no profit in the former, for the Christian has no initial investment in this realm. His initial investment is associated with the man of spirit alone. Profit accrued on the initial investment will result in the salvation of one’s soul, but no accrual on the initial investment will result in the loss of one’s soul. “Profit” and “Exchange” are the subject of several parables on stewardship which the Lord gave during His earthly ministry, and a brief review of two of these parables, the parable of the pounds and the parable of the talents, will illustrate what is meant by these expressions in Matt. 16:26.

In the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27), a certain Nobleman (the Lord), before departing into the “far country,” delivered “ten pounds” unto His “ten servants” and commanded them, “Occupy till I come.” “Ten” is the number of ordinal completion, signifying all the Lord’s business delivered to all His servants. The “pound” is a monetary unit of exchange, and all the servants of the Lord were to trade and traffic in all the Lord’s business until He returned. Those who did so realized a profit, using the initial investment; but the servant who refused to use the initial investment realized no profit at all. Upon the Lord’s return, the one’s profiting from the initial investment were rewarded, but the one who realized no profit suffered loss.

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) presents another picture of this same truth. A certain Man (the Lord) called “his own servants,” delivered unto them “his goods [talents],” and then departed into the “far country.” The talent, as the pound, is a monetary unit of exchange, pointing to the Lord’s business. The servants of the Lord, as in the parable of the pounds, were to trade and traffic in the Lord’s business during His time of absence. And, as in the parable of the pounds, those servants who used the talents realized a profit from the initial investment, but the servant who refused to use the initial investment realized no profit at all. Upon the Lord’s return, the ones profiting from the initial investment were rewarded, but the one who realized no profit suffered loss.

#### **Concluding Thoughts:**

The salvation of the soul is clearly set forth in Matt. 16:24-27 as emanating from works following the salvation of the spirit and has to do with rewards in the coming kingdom. Salvation completely apart from works applies to the “spirit” alone, and salvation in connection with works applies to the “soul” alone. The former must first be realized before the latter can come into view at all, for, through the salvation of the spirit (Eph. 2:8, 9), Christians have been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

(The Epistle of James is the great epistle on faith and works in connection with the salvation of the soul. This subject is developed more fully in Chapter V.)

#### **3: The Implanted Word**

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted [implanted] word, which is able to save your souls (James 1:18, 21). “Redemption” is the great issue of Scripture, but redemption includes far more than the salvation which we presently possess. Redemption begins with unredeemed man who is both alienated from God and dwelling on an earth which is under the bondage of sin; and redemption terminates with redeemed man dwelling as a joint-heir with his Messiah, ruling over an earth removed from the bondage of sin. God’s great purpose in man’s redemption is to ultimately place him in the position for which he was originally created: “Let them have dominion...” (Gen. 1:26, 28). Anything short of this goal is short of God’s purpose for redeemed man.

The Hebrew word translated “dominion” in Gen. 1:26, 28 is radhah, which means to “rule.” This is the same word translated “rule” in Psa. 110:2, referring to Christ ruling the earth in the coming age as the great King-Priest “after the order of Melchizedek.” He, however, is not to rule alone. He will have many “companions” (Heb. 1:9; 3:14) ruling as joint-heirs with Him, and God’s purpose for redeemed man today is to ultimately bring him into this position.

Our text in James 1:18, 21 encompasses the complete scope of redemption — past, present, and future. The word translated “begat” in verse eighteen is a medical term in the Greek text which refers to the actual birth itself. The individuals in this passage (the writer included himself) had been begotten from above, realizing the salvation of their spirits. Then, through the birth from above, these individuals were placed in a position (“in Christ”) where they could ultimately realize the salvation of their souls by following that which is outlined in verse twenty-one.

The issue in relation to alienated, unredeemed man has to do with the salvation of his spirit; and the issue in relation to redeemed man, who possesses a right relationship with God, has to do with the salvation of his soul. In one sense of the word, we have been saved (salvation of the spirit) in order to bring us into a position where we can be saved (salvation of the soul). The former has to do with eternal verities and the latter with millennial verities. Through the salvation of our spirits we come into possession of eternal life; but only through the salvation of our souls do we come into possession of the inheritance awaiting the faithful.

### **Therefore, Putting Away ... Receive ...**

In James 1:21 there is really only one command in the wording of the Greek text. The verse should literally read, “Therefore, putting away all filthiness and all prevailing wickedness, in meekness receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” Following the salvation of one’s spirit, an individual (Christian) is commanded to “receive the implanted word,” for this Word alone is able to effect the salvation of his soul. However, a Christian is to receive this Word only after he has set aside the things which would hinder the reception of this Word.

The words “filthiness” and “wickedness,” although appearing in the English text to refer basically to the same thing, set forth two entirely different thoughts in the Greek text. The word translated “filthiness” comes from a root word which has to do with earwax. These Christians’ ears, so to speak, were filthy. There were obstructions which prevented the Word of God from flowing through, and they were to remove these obstructions so they could hear. They were then to put away all “wickedness” in their lives. This is simply a general term which carries the thought of “anything opposed to purity.” After they had removed the obstructions from their ears so they could hear the Word of God, they were then to put away any impurity in their lives which would hinder the reception of this Word. Receiving the implanted Word in this fashion would then ultimately result in the salvation of their souls.

The word “implanted” has to do simply with that which is placed on the inside. The channel, as we have seen, is the ear. According to Rom. 10:17, “...faith cometh by [‘out of’] hearing, and hearing by [‘through’] the word of God.” The Word flows through unobstructed auditory canals into a saved human spirit. The Holy Spirit then takes this Word, and, as all hindrances (all impurities) are set aside and the spiritual man is allowed to exert full control, He effects spiritual growth unto maturity.

The teaching in James 1:21, or for that matter the Book of James as a whole, must be understood in the light of the subject matter at hand — the salvation of the soul. In order to properly understand the Word of God at this point, one must not only have an understanding of the salvation which he presently possesses, but he must also have an equally good understanding and comprehension of the salvation which he is about to possess. Entire books in Scripture deal with this future salvation (e.g. Hebrews; James; I, II Peter; I, II, III John; and Jude). The writer of Hebrews calls the salvation of the soul “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3). It is the greatest thing God could ever design for man, for it includes joint-heirship with His Son over all things during the coming age. And there is no real understanding of the Christian life, present or future, if one ignores that which Scripture reveals concerning the salvation of the soul.

### **Growing Unto Salvation**

“Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking,

As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation” (I Peter 2:1, 2, ASV). The ASV has been quoted above because the KJV does not include the translation of two important and explanatory Greek words in verse two. These two words, *eis soterian*, appear at the very end of the verse and actually sum up and conclude the thought of the entire verse, for within these two words lies the revealed reason for growth unto maturity. *Eis soterian* should be properly translated either “unto salvation” or “with respect to salvation.” Then the question naturally arises, “What salvation?” It can only be the salvation of the soul, for not only is that the subject matter dealt with in I Peter (cf. 1:9, 10) but we do not grow “unto” or “with respect to” the salvation which we presently possess.

The salvation of the spirit was effected in past time completely apart from any accomplishment, effort, etc., of man. Nothing can ever be added to or taken from this salvation, for it is based entirely on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. The Christians’ standing in Christ can never be changed or altered in any fashion. All Christians remain on an equal plain within the scope of this salvation. A newborn babe in Christ, a carnally immature Christian, and a spiritually mature Christian all occupy identical positions insofar as the salvation of the spirit is concerned. Christian growth is brought to pass on the basis of the salvation of the spirit, but there is no such thing as growing “unto” or “with respect to” this salvation.

The command in I Peter 2:2, although applicable only to newborn babes, has to do with the same central thought as the command in James 1:21: “...long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation,” and “...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” One results in a growth “unto salvation,” and the other results in the “salvation of your souls” (cf. I Peter 1:9). Both begin at the same point (a reception of the Word of God into man’s saved human spirit), progress in the same manner (spiritual growth), and end at the same point (salvation).

The commands in both James 1:21 and I Peter 2:2 are preceded by parallel statements: “Wherefore lay apart [lit. ‘laying aside’] all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness...” (James 1:21a), and “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking...” (I Peter 2:1). Nothing must be allowed to interfere with the reception of the Word of God as Christians mature day by day. This is the reason Christians are exhorted over and over in the New Testament to separate themselves from the things of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Sin in one’s life will impede the reception of the Word of God; and sin harbored in one’s life will impede the reception of this Word to the extent that an individual may fail to grow “unto salvation.”

The problem of sin in the Christian's life today, in view of the coming salvation of the soul, is the reason for the present high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Christians reside in a body of death with the ever-present old sin nature in a world under the control and dominion of Satan and his angels. Residing in the present world system after this fashion, Christians come under constant attack from the archenemy of their souls; and failure in the pilgrim walk, producing defilement in their lives, can and does occur.

Christ, as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, is performing a present, continuous cleansing on our behalf; and this is accomplished solely on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat (Heb. 9:11, 12). Forgiveness and cleansing from "all unrighteousness" occur as Christians "confess" their sins (I John 1:5, 6, 9; 2:1, 2). The reason for Christ's present ministry concerns the salvation of the soul, as the reason for His past ministry concerned the salvation of the spirit. God's complete purpose for man cannot be realized apart from the salvation of both.

Milk ... Meat ... Strong Meat

In the terminology of Scripture itself, milk is for babies, and meat is for those who have experienced sufficient growth to leave the milk and partake of solid food. Both milk and meat (solid food) are indispensable elements as one progressively grows from an immature infant into a mature adult, and nourishment to produce proper growth in both the physical and spiritual realms must come from the correct source.

a) In the Physical Realm

The analogy concerning a newborn Christian's spiritual needs for the "milk which is without guile" is drawn from the physical needs and desires of a newborn baby. Almost immediately following birth the baby instinctively begins seeking nourishment from his mother. His needs are very basic: food, warmth, and security. These are all satisfied at the breast as he longs for his mother's milk. This milk is pure, easily digested, and contains all the necessary components for the early growth of the entire body, especially the brain and nervous system. The mother's milk is a living organism which cannot be duplicated. Man's best efforts to reproduce this milk are described by the terms "most like," or "near to."

A child in his physical growth does not continue on milk indefinitely. The child's growth always moves toward a day when he is able to leave the milk and continue on solid food. The solid food which the child first begins taking is a type which is more easily masticated and digested. But as the child grows, the teeth become more firmly entrenched, the digestive system matures, and the day arrives when the child becomes mature enough to handle any type solid food.

b) In the Spiritual Realm

God revealed Himself to Abraham as "El Shaddai ['Almighty God']" (Gen. 17:1). El is the singular form of the Hebrew word for "God," and Shaddai is a derivative of the word shad, which means "breast." In this respect, God literally revealed Himself to Abraham as the "All-Powerful, Breasted God," i.e., the All-Powerful God Who nourishes, gives strength, and satisfies. This appears to be the primary thought behind the words El Shaddai when used with God's Own people in view.

God's revealed Word to man, derived from the "All-Powerful, Breasted One," is the means through which God nourishes, strengthens, and satisfies His people throughout the pilgrim walk. The newborn Christian, because of his new nature, is to instinctively long for the "spiritual milk which is without guile"; and the more mature Christian is, in like manner, to instinctively move on into the "meat" and "strong meat" of the Word. This Word is "quick ['alive'], and powerful" (Heb. 4:12) and contains everything necessary for Christian growth unto maturity. The weaning process in Christian growth pertains only to the "milk," not the source. It is not possible for any Christian to receive nourishment apart from the "All-Powerful, Breasted God."

Proper Christian growth begins with "milk," progresses to "meat," and then moves on to "strong meat." In Hebrews, chapter five the writer of this book severely rebuked certain Christians for their inability to handle anything but "milk." They had been saved for a sufficient length of time that they should not only have progressed from milk to meat, and then to strong meat, but they should also have progressed to the point where they could teach. However, through their lazy, careless manner of living, they were still on the milk of the Word and had not progressed in their Christian growth beyond the point of needing to be taught.

The subject matter at hand in relation to "strong meat" in Hebrews, chapter five is the Melchizedek priesthood. The writer of this book had "many things" he would like to have said concerning this priesthood, but these things had to do with a realm of Biblical doctrine beyond what these Christians were able to comprehend. The things associated with the Melchizedek priesthood had to do with strong meat, and these Christians were still on milk. They were unable to partake of meat, much less strong meat drawn from the teachings surrounding the Melchizedek priesthood.

These Christians were said to be "dull of hearing" (v. 11). The thought from the wording of the text is that they didn't necessarily begin this way as newborn babes, but before they had grown to the point where they could leave the milk of the Word, they became sluggish in hearing the Word of God. They, as brought out in James 1:21, had allowed wax to build up in their ears, and they were not hearing properly. The Word of God was not being received into their human spirits, and, apart from the reception of this Word, there could be no growth toward maturity. The only way to rectify this existing situation was to remove the obstructions from the auditory canals, lay aside everything opposed to purity, and "receive with meekness the implanted word..."

The word translated "dull" in Heb. 5:11 is from the same word in the Greek text translated "slothful" in Heb. 6:12: "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." These Christians were exhorted to not be like the ones in chapter five; and the given purpose had to do with faith, patient endurance, and a future inheritance. The word translated "patience" has to do with patiently enduring over a long period of time. In this case, the entire Christian life is in view. These Christians were to receive the Word of God in a continuing manner throughout their entire pilgrim walk. The reception of this Word would, in turn, produce a walk by faith and progressively result in Christian maturity. And, while patiently enduring trials and testings during the pilgrim walk after this fashion, they were to look ahead to the inheritance which would be realized at the end of their faith, at the time of the salvation of their souls (cf. I Peter 1:4-9).

The Neshamah

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [Neshamah] of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

The roots of all Biblical doctrine have been established in the Book of Genesis. This is the book of beginnings; and all Scripture beyond this point must, after some fashion, reach back and draw from this book. In the account of the creation of man we are given an insight into certain truths concerning “life” derived from God. These truths will, in turn, provide light on the subject matter at hand — the reception of the Word of God in relation to the salvation of the soul (life).

The creation of Adam from the dust of the ground, and the removal of a rib out of Adam’s side, occurred on the sixth day of the restoration account in Genesis, chapter one. But the methods God used to bring about both Adam’s creation and the formation of Eve from a portion of Adam’s body were not revealed in the recorded account until following the seventh day in chapter two. Most of the second chapter is taken up with certain specifics concerning what had previously occurred on the sixth day in the preceding chapter, and this account is rich beyond degree in Biblical study. The second chapter of Genesis is the point where the origin of numerous Biblical doctrines can be traced, and these doctrines cannot be properly understood apart from this chapter.

The means which God used in both man’s creation and the subsequent impartation of life into His new creation are given in Gen. 2:7. There first existed a lifeless form which had previously been fashioned from the dust of the ground. Creation itself did not produce life in this form. Rather, God imparted life to man following his creation. This life was produced by means of the breath of God, and it is here that “life” in relation to man is first mentioned in Scripture.

The Hebrew word translated “breath” in Gen. 2:7 is Neshamah. The Neshamah of God produced “life.” The word “God” in this verse is a translation of the plural noun, Elohim, indicating that not only the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit were instrumental in producing life. Thus, man’s life in the beginning was derived from the triune God through what is called the Neshamah.

Gen. 2:7 provides insights into things far beyond the simple fact that God created man and then imparted life into man. This verse provides insights into man’s salvation today — both the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul. First, the impartation of life to unredeemed man, who is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1), must follow the pattern (type) established in Genesis. He, as Adam prior to the Neshamah of God, is lifeless; and his life must be derived through the same means as Adam’s life. Second, once this life is imparted, it must be retained and also sustained; and, as will become evident in this study, Scripture teaches that life is not only imparted through the Neshamah of God, but life is also continued and sustained through the Neshamah of God.

A first-mention principle has been established in Gen. 2:7, and life which man derives from God must always be acquired through the same means set forth in this verse. God alone initially “imparts” and subsequently “continues” and “sustains” life; and this is always accomplished, in its entirety, through the Neshamah of God.

#### a) Impartation of Life to the Unsaved (Salvation of the Spirit)

Unregenerate man today comes into a right relationship with God solely through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary. Through the work of the Holy Spirit man passes “from death unto life” (John 5:24). The word “Spirit” in the Greek text is Pneuma, a word which also means “breath.” It is used in this sense in the New Testament by life being produced through “breathing in,” or death being wrought through “breathing out.” In Luke 8:55 life was restored to a young girl by her “spirit [breath]” returning, and in Luke 23:46 Christ terminated His life on the Cross by giving “up the spirit [lit. He ‘breathed out’].” The Holy Spirit is the One Who generates life in lifeless man, and the expression used in both the Hebrew and Greek texts relative to this life being produced is “breathing in.” God, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, “breathes life into” unregenerate man today.

Since type and antitype must agree in exact detail, the impartation of life to Adam in Genesis, chapter two must, of necessity, have occurred in the same fashion that the impartation of life to unredeemed man occurs today. Lifeless man during the present time derives life from God through the work of the Holy Spirit, and lifeless Adam in the Genesis account must have derived life from God in the same manner. Teachings drawn from the original type in relation to man’s redemption necessitate this same conclusion. The original type is found in the first chapter of Genesis (vv. 2b-5), and Gen. 2:7 is a subsequent type, providing additional details. This verse, providing the first mention of “life” in relation to man, must be in complete agreement with and understood in the light of revelation in the original type.

The portion of the original type under consideration at this point is Gen. 1:2b, 3: “...darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” These verses outline the beginning of the restoration of a creation which was brought into a state of ruin through an act of Satan (the earth becoming a chaos because of his aspirations to be “like the most High” [Isa. 14:12-14]). These verses, in turn, set forth in type the beginning of the restoration of a creation which was brought into a state of ruin through another act of Satan (man becoming in a ruined state through trying to be “as God” [Gen. 3:5, 22]).

The established pattern (type) relative to the restoration of a ruined creation is set in the first chapter of Genesis, and the restoration of man today — a subsequent ruined creation — must follow the established pattern. The Spirit of God moved in the first chapter of Genesis, effecting a beginning of the earth’s restoration. And the first thing recorded immediately following the Spirit’s movement was the placement of light alongside the previously existing darkness, with a division established between the light and the darkness. The Spirit of God, in like manner, moves today, effecting a beginning of man’s restoration (the salvation of his spirit). And the first thing which God does for man is to place light alongside the previously existing darkness (a new nature is placed alongside the old nature), with a division established between the light and the darkness. Then, to complete the type, the six days of work used to restore the earth in Genesis point to the six days (6,000 years; cf. II Peter 3:8) of work God is presently using to restore man; and the Sabbath rest following the six days in the Genesis account points to the Sabbath rest (the 1,000-year Messianic Era) which will follow the present six days (cf. Ex. 31:12-17).

Note the words of the Apostle Paul in II Cor. 4:6; 5:17:

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ...

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [‘creation’]...”

There can be no doubt that these verses in II Corinthians, chapters four and five are a direct allusion to the account of the restoration of the ruined creation in Genesis, chapter one. And Gen. 2:7, a subsequent type from a different facet concerning unregenerate man (life produced in that which is lifeless), is an account portraying the same truth. The Spirit of God wrought order out of chaos in Genesis, chapter one; the Spirit of God — the Neshamah — produced life in Genesis, chapter two; and the Spirit of God brings order out of chaos, produces life, in unregenerate man today.

#### b) Impartation of Life to the Saved (Salvation of the Soul)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16, 17, NIV).

Once life has been generated, life must then be continued and sustained. Life is generated through “breathing in” (initial work of the Spirit), retained through the “breath remaining” (indwelling work of the Spirit), and sustained through a “continued breathing in.” Sustenance for life, a “continued breathing in,” is what is involved in II Tim. 3:16. This verse, studied in the light of Gen. 2:7, is the key which will unlock the door concerning the Neshamah of God in relation to saved man, demonstrate the power of the Word of God, and reveal the reason Christians are commanded to “receive the implanted word.”

The word “God-breathed” in II Tim. 3:16 is a translation of the compound Greek word *Theopneustos*, which is simply the word for “God” (*Theos*) and the word for “breath,” or “Spirit” (*Pneuma*) added. Thus, the translation “God-breathed” is not only a very literal translation, but, in the light of Gen. 2:7, it is the best of all possible translations. The “Word of God” is, thus, here identified with the Neshamah of God — the breath of God. The Word of God was given through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21), and is the element which the indwelling Holy Spirit uses to sustain the life which He Himself originally imparted and presently continues. Thus, the Neshamah of God refers to both the Spirit and the Word. “Life” emanates from both (II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 4:12; James 2:26), and the relationship existing between both prohibits any separation.

The Word of God, because of its very origin and nature, is the only thing which the Holy Spirit, Who gave the Word, can use to effect man’s spiritual growth toward maturity. The Neshamah of God (the Holy Spirit) Who imparted life uses the Neshamah of God (the implanted Word) to sustain this life. The Word of God alone is able to make one “wise unto salvation” (II Tim. 3:15); this Word alone can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring about the Christian’s walk by faith, which will ultimately result in the salvation of his soul.

(The “Neshamah” of God, relating to saved man and the salvation of his soul, is continued in Chapter IV.)

## **4: The Breath of God**

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath [‘Neshamah’] of life; and man became a living soul (Gen 2:7).

All Scripture is God-breathed [‘*Theopneustos*’] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (II Tim. 3:16, NIV)

(Background material for “The Breath of God” can be found in Chapter III.)

Man’s “life” following his creation in the beginning was produced by the “breath [‘Neshamah’] of God” (Gen 2:7). This establishes a first-mention principle in Scripture concerning “life” in relation to man, and this principle remains unchanged throughout all subsequent Scripture. Man’s life throughout time and eternity, as in the Genesis account, must always emanate from God; and this life cannot be produced, continued, or sustained apart from the Neshamah of God.

In Scriptural terminology, the Neshamah is identified with both the “Holy Spirit” of God and the “Word” of God. Life, which comes from God alone, is always produced through “breathing in.” Remaining within basic teachings drawn from the types in Gen. 1:2-5; 2:7, God, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, “breathes life into” unredeemed, lifeless man today. Once imparted, life in redeemed man is then retained and sustained through the same principle — the breath of God remaining in man, and God continuing to breathe into man. Through the abiding presence of the breath of God (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit during the present dispensation), the believer remains secure in his positional standing before God; and through a continued impartation of the breath of God (the Word of God flowing into man’s saved human spirit), the believer receives nourishment for spiritual growth unto maturity. “Scripture,” unlike any other writing, is alive: “For the Word of God is quick [‘alive’], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...” (Heb. 4:12a). “Life” can be attributed to Scripture only on the basis of the fact that the “oracles of God” emanated from the Giver and Sustainer of life. Scripture is “God-breathed.” It is the Neshamah, the “breath” of God. This is what sets Scripture apart from all other writings. “Thus saith the Lord” is alive, not subject to error, and will endure forever. “Thus saith man” is, on the other hand, lifeless, subject to error, and will endure only for time.

Thus, the Holy Spirit today initially imparts life to man who is “dead in trespasses and sins,” continues this life through indwelling the believer, and sustains this life via the living Word of God flowing into man’s saved human spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit takes the Word of God received into man’s saved human spirit, and, through man’s spiritual perception, changes the Water to Wine (cf. John 2:1-11). A continued process of this nature — revealing the things of the Spirit to the man of spirit through man’s spiritual perception — progressively results in growth unto maturity.

The great difference between redeemed man and unredeemed man is possession or non-possession of life derived from the “breath” of God. Unregenerate man, who is spiritually dead, is alienated from everything associated with the “breath” of God, for that which has no life is completely incompatible with that which has life. Thus, the Word of God is not for him; it is alien to his fallen nature, the only nature which he possesses. Regenerate man, on the other hand, possesses life which was “breathed in.” He possesses a new, nonalienated nature;

and, on this basis, there can now be a continuance of life “breathed in.” Thus, the Word of God, because it is the very life-giving “breath” of God, is for redeemed man alone.

Redeemed individuals are divided into two classes in Scripture — “spiritual,” and “carnal” (I Cor. 3:1, 2). Both possess life which was “breathed in,” are capable of spiritual discernment, and are in a position to allow God to continue “breathing in” life.

But the carnal Christian rejects the leadership of the Spirit. He follows the fleshly man rather than the spiritual man, and, although his eternal salvation is secure through the “breath” of God remaining in him (based on Christ’s finished work), he experiences no growth; he does not allow God to continue “breathing in” life. The spiritual Christian, on the other hand, follows the leadership of the Spirit. He allows God to continue “breathing in” life, and, through his spiritual discernment, as led by the Holy Spirit, he is able to grasp the great truths of the Word of God and progressively grow unto maturity.

A continued inflow of the breath of God into man following his redemption will result in what Scripture calls the “filling of the Spirit” and the “metamorphosis.” These are actually two different experiences in the lives of Christians which occur in a progressive, concurrent manner. These experiences, however, are so closely interwoven that one cannot occur without the other, and neither can occur apart from the Word of God. The remainder of this study will be taken up with the “breath” of God producing a Spirit-filled Christian and, at the same time, working the metamorphosis in his life.

#### Filled with the Spirit

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an experience which occurs after one has been born from above. At the time of the new birth an individual is immersed in the Holy Spirit, becoming a part of the “one body,” the “one new man,” in Christ (I Cor. 12:13 [“by” should be translated “in”]; Eph. 2:15). The Holy Spirit, from this point forward, indwells the believer, forming a “temple of God” — an earthly tabernacle in which Deity dwells (I Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20). But the Spirit filling the tabernacle is an experience in the life of a Christian which occurs after the Spirit indwells the tabernacle. Christians, ones in whom the Spirit dwells, are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18); and the Biblical manner in which this is accomplished today is clearly revealed to be in connection with life continuing to be “breathed into” man following the initial “inbreathing” which produced life.

Scripture reveals an inseparable relationship between being filled with the Spirit (the Neshamah) and dwelling deeply in the Word of God (the Neshamah). This is clearly taught by comparing Scripture with Scripture in Ephesians and Colossians. These two books are companion epistles which parallel one another in a number of places.

One such place is in the section in Ephesians where Christians are commanded to be filled with the Spirit and in the section in Colossians where Christians are commanded to let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

In Ephesians Christians are told,

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:18-20).

In Colossians Christians are told,

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:16, 17).

Note the contextual parallel between “Be filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians and “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” in Colossians. Both result in the same thing. One is substituted for the other in its respective, parallel counterpart. And the clear inference from this parallel, in conjunction with related Scripture, leads to only one conclusion: A Christian who is filled with the Spirit is one who allows the Word of Christ to dwell in him richly in all wisdom. The indwelling of the Spirit is wrought through God initially “breathing life into” an individual, and the filling of the Spirit is wrought through God subsequently continuing to “breathe life into” an individual. The “God-breathed” Scriptures flowing into man’s saved human spirit — a continued impartation of life into man — progressively, through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, produce a Spirit-filled Christian. Note further the relationship of husbands and wives, children and parents, and servants and masters in the verses immediately following these two sections in Ephesians and Colossians. Wives show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by their submission to their husbands, “as unto the Lord” (cf. Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18). Husbands show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by their love for their wives, “even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it” (cf. Eph. 5:25-33; Col. 3:19). Children show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by their obedience to their parents, “in the Lord” (cf. Eph. 6:1, 2; Col. 3:20). Fathers show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by provoking not their children to anger, but bringing “them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (cf. Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). Servants show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by being obedient to their masters according to the flesh, “with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” (cf. Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25). Masters show that they are filled with the Holy Spirit by treating their servants just and equal, “knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (cf. Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1).

God desires that all Christians be filled with the Spirit, and the manner God uses to bring this to pass is clearly revealed in His Word. There must be a continued “breathing in” of life into the one who has initially been given life through the “breath” of God, and this cannot be accomplished apart from the “God-breathed” Oracles.

In view of this, it is no wonder that the living Word of God — the Neshamah — remains under constant attack by Satan, his emissaries, and those who do his bidding. The Word of God is either what it claims to be or there can be no continued “inbreathing” of life into redeemed man. Apart from this continued “inbreathing” of life, redeemed man could not grow spiritually. Throughout the entire pilgrim walk, every Christian would remain in a carnally immature state rather than growing in a spiritual manner unto maturity.

Such a Christian would be indwelt by the Spirit, but, apart from the living Word, he could not be filled with the Spirit. He would remain carnal, immature, and powerless. Nor could he ultimately realize the salvation of his soul, for there would be no continued inbreathing of life to bring this to pass.

Consequently, apart from this continued “inbreathing” of life, God could not ultimately bring “many sons” unto glory to occupy the numerous positions of power and authority as joint-heirs with Christ in the coming kingdom. The “many sons” whom God will bring “unto glory” are those who will be adopted — placed as sons — at the end of the present age; and “sonship,” implying rulership, will be entered into only by those Christians who realize the salvation of their souls.

#### The Metamorphosis — Present

“Be not conformed to this world [‘age’]: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

In this verse there is a negative command followed by a positive command: “Be not conformed ... but be ye transformed...”

##### 1. Be Not Conformed

The Greek word translated “conformed” is *sunschematizo*. This is a compound word with the preposition *sun* (with) prefixed to the verb form of the word *schema* (outline, diagram). The English word “scheme” is a transliterated form of the Greek word *schema*. The word has to do with a schematic outline, and the thought inherent in this compound Greek word is not to outline or diagram your life in accordance with the present age.

During the present age there is a world kingdom in which the Gentile nations rule the earth under the control and dominion of Satan, the “god of this age.” Fallen man is ruling the earth, which is under a curse, directly under the one (Satan) who has disqualified himself to rule. Everywhere one looks there’s something wrong with the structure of the present kingdom: The Gentile nations are out of place, Israel is out of place, and Satan and his angels are out of place. These conditions have continued unchanged in part for the past 6,000 years (since the fall of Adam, which resulted in the entire creation coming under the bondage of sin) and in their entirety for the past 2,500 years (since the beginning of the times of the Gentiles). And no change will be effected until Christ returns and takes the kingdom.

The rightful place for Satan and his angels is in the lake of fire; the rightful place for Israel is dwelling in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy, at the head of the nations; and the rightful place for the Gentile nations is dwelling in their respective lands, out from under the dominion of Satan, in a position subservient to Israel. When Christ returns and takes the kingdom, He and His glorified followers, rather than Satan and his angels, will rule from the heavens over the earth. Satan and his angels (cast out of the heavens prior to this time) will be chained and imprisoned in the abyss (awaiting consignment to the lake of fire 1,000 years later), the curse will be lifted, and Israel will be placed in her own land as the supreme nation on earth. All the Gentile nations entering the kingdom will then occupy subservient positions to Israel and be under the dominion of Christ and those who rule as joint-heirs with Him.

Presently, “the whole world lieth in wickedness [lit. ‘in the evil one’]” (I John 5:19b). The positional standing of the believer is “in Christ,” and the position occupied by the world is “in the evil one.” These positions are diametrically opposed, one to the other. Scripture clearly commands the believer, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...” (I John 2:15a). Why? Because the world lies “in the evil one.” The entire present system is under his control, and sway; and, whether the world realizes it or not, the programs, aims, ambitions, and aspirations of the incumbent ruler are being carried out within the present system. These will all be culminated under the reign of the man of sin during the coming Tribulation, immediately before Satan’s removal from his present position.

Thus, it does not become Christians to involve themselves in the affairs of this present age. By so doing, they are, in effect, defiling their high calling “in Christ” through stepping down into an arena occupied by those “in the evil one.” Christ, rejected by the world, is in a place removed from the world. And Christians are to share this rejection by and separation from the world with Christ. It is not possible for Christians to involve themselves in the affairs of this present age and at the same time share Christ’s rejection by and separation from the world.

##### 2. Be Ye Transformed

Following the command, “Be not conformed to this age,” the Christian is commanded to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The Greek word translated “transformed” is *metamorphoo*. This is the word from which the English word “metamorphosis” is derived. This word refers to an inward change brought about completely apart from the power of the individual himself. The individual Christian is powerless to bring about this metamorphosis.

In II Cor. 11:14 Satan is said to be “transformed into an angel of light.” In the Greek text the word “transformed” is not the same in Rom. 12:2 (referring to the Christian) as it is in II Cor. 11:14 (referring to Satan). The Greek word used in II Cor. 11:14 is *metaschematizo*. This word refers to an outward change brought about through one’s own power. Satan, thus, seeks to counterfeit the work of the Spirit by substituting an outward change in place of the inward change. And the nature and source of this pseudo change often go unrecognized.

Christians who seek to bring about the change of Rom. 12:2 themselves will always effect a *metaschema* (outward change) rather than a *metamorphosis* (inward change). At the time of the birth from above the Spirit of God began a work in the Christian which He will continue “until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). No effort on the part of Christians can help the Spirit of God effect this change.

Man’s way finds man actively involved seeking spirituality through either quitting certain things or doing certain things, subsequently producing a *metaschema*. But God’s way finds man passive, and God performs a work in the individual, ultimately producing the *metamorphosis*. The endless list of do’s, do not’s, and taboos formed by Christian groups have to do with a *metaschema*, not a *metamorphosis*. Any effort on the part of Christians to help the Spirit of God bring about the transformation of Rom. 12:2 will always result in pseudo-spirituality. God’s way is an inward change wrought through the power of the Spirit, not an outward change wrought through the power of the individual.

##### 3. The Renewing of Your Mind

Note according to the text how this inward change, the *metamorphosis*, takes place: “...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The word “renewing” is a translation of the Greek word *anakainosis*; and the action of the preceding verb (“transformed”) directs

attention to a continuous renewing process, one which is to keep on taking place. In II Cor. 4:16 we are told that “the inward man is renewed [lit. ‘is being renewed’] day by day.” This renewing process is to keep on taking place day in and day out for the entire duration of the pilgrim walk here on earth.

In Col. 3:10 we are told how the renewing of the mind is accomplished:

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed [lit. ‘is being renewed’] in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

Note the word “knowledge” in this verse. The regular Greek word for “knowledge” is *gnosis*, but the word used in Col. 3:10 is *epignosis*. This is the word *gnosis* (knowledge) with the prefix *epi* (upon). *Epignosis*, thus, means “knowledge upon knowledge,” i.e., “mature knowledge.” The word translated “renewed” is a past participle of *anakainoo* (the same word used in Rom. 12:2 and II Cor. 4:16) and could be better translated “being renewed.” The only place a Christian can acquire this mature knowledge, which allows the Spirit of God to work the metamorphosis in his life, is in the Word of God.

Christians must allow God to continue “breathing in” life. The living, God-breathed Word must be allowed to flow into man’s saved human spirit or there can be no metamorphosis. The renewing of the inward man “day by day,” through receiving the “implanted word,” producing the metamorphosis in one’s life, is the manner in which the salvation of the soul is presently being effected.

Note that receiving the “implanted word” in James 1:21 and I Peter 2:2 is preceded by “laying aside” everything opposed to purity. It is the same with the metamorphosis in Rom. 12:2. The words, “be not conformed to this age [lit. ‘stop being conformed to this age’],” appear prior to the words, “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The ones “in Christ” are commanded to remove themselves from that which lies “in the evil one” prior to receiving the “implanted word,” which will effect the metamorphosis in their lives. Thus, Rom. 12:2; James 1:21; and I Peter 2:2 all teach the same thing relative to laying aside everything opposed to purity prior to receiving the “implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

The Metamorphosis — Future

“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 16:28-17:5).

The change presently taking place in the lives of Christians is inward. But within the culmination of the work of the Spirit in that future day of Jesus Christ, the change will include the outward also. The metamorphosis actually cannot be completed apart from this culminating, outward change. The Spirit of God “which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

The day will come when we will put off “the body of this death” (Rom. 7:24). That will be the day when He will “fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory” (Phil. 3:21a, ASV). The work of the Spirit in this part of the metamorphosis is set forth in Matthew, chapter seventeen.

That which occurred on the Mount, when Jesus was transfigured, is a foreview of things which are yet to occur. The same Greek word (metamorphoo) translated “transformed” in Rom. 12:2 is translated “transfigured” in Matt. 17:2. As Peter, James, and John appeared with Jesus on the Mount, Jesus was transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appeared and stood in His presence. In Matt. 16:28 Christ had revealed that certain disciples would not die until they had seen “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” In Matt. 17:1-5, after six days, on the seventh day, certain disciples (Peter, James, and John) saw “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

Peter, as he wrote years later concerning this experience, said: “...we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty [‘his greatest regal magnificence’ — a superlative in the Greek text]” (II Peter 1:16).

Peter then went on to state that the time this eyewitness account occurred was “when we were with him in the holy mount” (v. 18). Biblical revelation leaves no room to question what is foreshadowed by the events on the Mount, recorded in Matt. 17:1-5.

The “six days” (Matt. 17:1) foreshadow the entire time comprising the day of man. “Six” is man’s number. These six days extend from the creation of Adam to the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. Each one of these days is 1,000 years in length (II Peter 3:5-8). Man’s Day comprises this 6,000-year period, and at the end of Man’s Day the Lord’s Day will begin. The Lord’s Day comprises the seventh 1,000-year period dating from the creation of Adam. Seven is God’s number. It will be “after six days” — after 6,000 years — that the Son of man will be seen “coming in his kingdom.”

The “high mountain” (Matt. 17:1) foreshadows the coming kingdom. A “mountain” in Scripture, when used in this sense, refers to a kingdom (cf. Psa. 2:6; Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 2:35). The coming kingdom of our Lord is not referred to by just any mountain, but by a “high mountain.” Jesus appeared in a transfigured body. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, also in transfigured bodies. Moses had died, and had been raised from the dead. Elijah had never died, but had been removed from the earth alive. Peter, James, and John, out from the nation of Israel, appeared in natural bodies and were elevated above all those at the foot of the mount. And the “bright cloud,” the Glory of God, overshadowed them all.

In the coming kingdom, Jesus will appear in this same transfigured body. Just as Moses (who was raised from the dead) and Elijah (who was removed from the earth without dying) appeared with Christ in transfigured bodies, so will Christians in that future day appear with Christ in transfigured bodies like unto the body of Christ. When the Lord Himself descends from heaven to take His Church out of the world, “...the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air...” (I Thess. 4:16b, 17a).

The Church, associated with Christ in the kingdom, will be comprised of resurrected believers (typified by Moses) and believers who have never died (typified by Elijah). The nation of Israel (typified by Peter, James, and John) will be here on earth in natural (soulical)

bodies. As these disciples were elevated above all those at the foot of the mount, the nation of Israel will be elevated above all other nations. And the Glory of God, the “bright cloud” which overshadowed them all, will be restored to Israel.

One day when the Lord returns for His Church, the Holy Spirit will complete the metamorphosis. Christians will be delivered from the “body of this death” and will receive bodies which will possess an entirely different life-giving, animating principle than we experience today. The Neshamah of God — the Holy Spirit Himself — will provide this life in the completion of the metamorphosis (I Cor. 15:40-45).

All Christians will be changed in the outward manifestation of the metamorphosis, for the resurrection and rapture, with the accompanying change of the body, are not contingent upon the inward change during the present time. The outward change is conditioned upon one’s positional standing (“in Christ”) alone. But Christians experiencing the outward change apart from the prior inward change will realize the loss of their souls (lives). They will enter into the presence of the Lord with redeemed spirits, redeemed bodies, but lost lives. Consequently, they will occupy no position among the many sons who will be brought unto glory.

## **5: Faith Made Mature**

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect [‘made mature,’ ‘brought to its goal’]? (James 2:14, 20-22).

James 2:14-26 opens with two self-answering questions, and the structure of these questions in the Greek text requires that both be answered in the negative (the Greek negative, “me,” appears in the latter question [designating a “no” response], and the integrally, inseparable nature of the two questions shows that the first must be answered in the same sense). The first question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with profit, and the second question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with salvation. These two questions could possibly be better understood by translating the verse, “My brethren, if anyone says he has faith, but does not have works, he cannot profit, can he? Faith [apart from works] cannot save him, can it?”

A translation of this nature must be recognized or one will miss the main message in the Epistle of James and be forever lost in a sea of misinterpretation when dealing with this book. There is a definite relationship between faith and works in Scripture, but this relationship has nothing to do with the salvation which we presently possess. Eternal salvation, the present possession of every believer, is wrought by grace through faith, completely apart from works. An unredeemed person cannot perform works to be saved, and a redeemed person cannot perform works to either stay saved or to show that he has been saved. The necessity of the complete absence of works in relation to one’s eternal salvation is just as applicable following the time one is saved as it is prior to the time one is saved. Works cannot enter in at all, else salvation would cease to be by grace through faith (Rom. 11:6).

James in his epistle, teaching a justification on the basis of works, does not deny that man is justified by grace through faith, apart from works. To the contrary, James acknowledges this fact (1:17, 18), and the entire message of his epistle is built upon this fact. Justification by works in James cannot enter in until man has first been justified by grace through faith. Then, and only then, can works appear.

Paul and James

Over the years numerous Bible students who have understood that man’s justification must be by grace through faith, completely apart from works (Eph. 2:8, 9), have been perplexed by the Epistle of James, for James teaches that man cannot be justified apart from works. This so perplexed Martin Luther, with his emphasis on justification by grace through faith from the Book of Romans, that he declared the Epistle of James to be “an epistle of straw,” questioning whether or not it should be included among the canonical books.

Most attempts among Bible students today to reconcile justification apart from works in the Pauline epistles with justification by works in the Epistle of James revolve around the thought that “Paul deals with justification in the eyes of God, and James deals with justification in the eyes of man.” In other words, a man is saved by grace through faith, apart from works, in the eyes of God; but he performs works after he is saved, showing, in the eyes of man, the reality of his salvation. This type approach to works in James is used by many in an attempt to prove the reality or nonreality of one’s conversion by the presence or absence of works. “Living” faith, as opposed to “dead” faith in James (2:17, 20, 26), is often equated with what some call “saving” faith. The thought is then set forth that if a man possesses “saving [‘living’]” faith, he will evince this fact through good works in the eyes of man. However, if a man who claims to be saved does not show evidence of his salvation via works in the eyes of man, this proves that he was never really saved in the first place. All he ever possessed was a “nonsaving [‘dead’]” faith.

The entire concept of justification by works in the eyes of man is fallacious from one end to the other, and so is the concept behind calling “dead” faith a “nonsaving” faith (“dead” faith will be discussed later in this study). A man cannot show, via works, the reality of his justification by grace through faith. If he could, then justification would cease to be by grace through faith. Works, after some fashion, would have entered into an area where works cannot exist. The pure gospel of the grace of God would have been corrupted, for “if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. 11:6).

The key to a correct understanding of the Epistle of James lies in recognizing that the central message of this book deals, not with the salvation which we presently possess (salvation of the spirit), but with the salvation to be revealed at the time of our Lord’s return (salvation of the soul). God does not deal with Christians today in relation to the salvation of their spirits. This is a past, completed act, never to be dealt with as an issue beyond the point of the birth from above. God deals with the regenerate solely on the basis of the fact that they have been saved, never in relation to the salvation which they presently possess. The place which “works” occupy in James must be understood in this perspective. “Works” must appear only in the realm of God’s present dealings with Christians. Consequently, they can never pertain to the salvation of the spirit, but they must always pertain to the salvation of the soul alone.

Paul is writing about one thing, and James is writing about something entirely different. One is a past, completed issue, having already been dealt with by God; and the other is a present (to be completed in the future) issue, presently being dealt with by God. One is

completely apart from works, and the other is through the medium of works. And any attempt to reconcile salvation apart from works (pertaining to the salvation of the spirit) in the Pauline epistles with salvation by works (pertaining to the salvation of the soul) in James, with man's eternal salvation alone in view, will always prove detrimental to sound Biblical study.

#### Profit ... Salvation

The key words in James 2:14 are "profit" and "save." These two words are linked together in such a manner — not only here, but elsewhere in Scripture — that one cannot be realized apart from the other. That is, apart from an accrual of "profit," salvation cannot be realized; or, to state it another way, an accrual of "profit" leads to (is for the purpose of) the realization of salvation (at a future date). And James specifically states that neither can be realized by faith alone. Works must enter in and have their proper place. One cannot profit apart from an initial investment, and one is in no position to procure the salvation of which James speaks apart from presently possessing salvation. The Greek word translated "profit" is derived from a root word which means "to increase"; and the thought of an "increase" does not enter into the picture until one has an initial supply, making an "increase," or "profit," possible. "Profit" is always something in addition to that which one already possesses. Initial investments, from which individuals can profit, are possessed only by the Lord's Own servants (Christians). There is no such thing as the word "profit" being used in this sense in connection with the unsaved, for they have no initial investment in this realm.

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) provide two of the best Scriptural examples concerning "profit" on an initial investment in relation to the Lord's servants during the present day and time. As brought out in these parables, the Lord has delivered all His goods to all His servants and has left them with the command, "Occupy till I come." The servants of the Lord are to trade and traffic in the Lord's business during His time of absence. Those who do so, under the leadership of the Lord, will realize a "profit" (cf. Matt. 25:16, 17, 19-23; Luke 19:15-19). Through realizing a profit, or increase, on the initial investment, they will save their souls (cf. Matt. 16:24-27). On the other hand, those who refuse to use the initial investment will not only remain profitless but they will, as a consequence, suffer "loss" (cf. Matt. 25:18, 19, 24-30; Luke 19:15, 20-26). They will experience the loss of their souls (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

"Profit" in the Epistle of James turns on the thought of works in connection with faith: "Faith without works is dead" (2:17, 20, 26), and there can be no profit in connection with a "dead" faith. In order for profit to accrue, there must be a "living, active" faith.

"Dead" faith in the Epistle of James has nothing to do with either unsaved man or with the salvation which saved man presently possesses. The thought that "dead" faith is a "nonsaving" faith possessed by unsaved man is completely erroneous. There is no such thing as a "nonsaving" faith in relation to the unsaved. Faith either exists or it doesn't exist. In the case of unsaved individuals, faith does not exist; and in the case of saved individuals, faith always exists, and this faith will continue to exist forever.

Faith, even though "dead," is still there. Faith, possessed by all Christians, cannot pass out of existence. Scripture specifically states that "faith, hope, charity [love]" continue to abide after other things (e.g. tongues) have passed out of existence (I Cor. 13:13). Faith can be very active, or it can be weak, anemic, and even dead; but faith is still there, and a weak, anemic, or dead faith can be revived, or made to live, and become very active.

The very fact that faith in James, chapter two is "dead" bears evidence concerning another fact: This faith must, at one time, have existed in a "living" state. The analogy in James 2:26 is sufficient to demonstrate this truth: "For as the body without the spirit [breath] is dead, so faith without works is dead also." A body which is void of "breath" is dead, and faith which is void of "works" is also dead. Both were at one time living. The departure of "breath" is connected with death in the body, and the departure of "works" is connected with death in faith.

In order for life to be restored to either a dead body or a dead faith, there must be a reversal of the process which produced death — "breath" must be restored to the body (Luke 8:55), and "works" must be restored to faith (James 2:17-26). However, for works to be restored to faith, there must first be the impartation of "breath," as in the resuscitation of the body. The breath of God — the Neshamah, the Theopneustos, the living Word of God — must flow into man's saved human spirit, providing sustenance for the spiritual man. Then, through the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit, as He takes the Word, turning the Water to Wine, the spiritual man is caused to move about; and works which ensue from this movement of the spiritual man are connected with a living, active faith.

Thus, in actuality, life is restored to both a dead body and a dead faith through the same means — "breath." This is in keeping with the law of first mention concerning life in relation to man in Gen. 2:7. "The breath of life" must always be the factor when man is involved (ref. Chapter III).

Aside from the "implanted" Word — the Neshamah — ultimately producing works which are connected with faith, exactly what is a "dead" faith as opposed to a "living" faith? The word "dead" appears in the English version (KJV) in connection with faith in James 2:17, 20, 26; but in a number of the older Greek manuscripts the word for "barren" or "fruitless," rather than the word for "dead," appears in verse twenty. In these manuscripts one would read, "...faith without works is barren?" (Although most scholars prefer the older manuscript rendering, its validity need not be debated. The same truth is taught elsewhere in Scripture [cf. II Peter 1:5-8].) "Barren" faith (v. 20) is equated with "dead" faith (vv. 17, 26), and the inverse of this would be true concerning "living" faith (i.e., "fruitful" would be equated with "living"). Fruit-bearing is the result of works, and barrenness is the result of no works — the same as "living" or "dead" faith.

"Dead" faith in James, chapter two refers to faith possessed by the redeemed alone. Fruit-bearing is in view (thus, unsaved individuals cannot be in view); and works, producing fruitfulness, a "living" faith, must be present to realize a profit on the initial investment, ultimately resulting in the salvation of the soul.

#### Faith ... Works

When James speaks of works in connection with faith, what type works does he have in mind? What works must Christians perform in order to be seen possessing a "living" rather than a "dead" faith? If one remains within the text of James' epistle itself, such questions can be easily resolved. James provides two examples drawn from Old Testament history concerning exactly what he has in mind, and from these two examples Christians can ascertain "what works" are to be performed today.

James' first example is derived from Genesis, chapter twenty-two: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (v. 21). James' second example is derived from Joshua, chapter two: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (v. 25).

Abraham was justified by works through one act, and Rahab was justified by works through another, entirely separate, different act. These two examples stand in almost stark contrast to one another, undoubtedly by Divine design. The actions of Abraham, the father of the faithful, offering the supreme sacrifice on Mt. Moriah, constitute one example; and the actions of Rahab, a harlot, providing lodging for two Jewish spies in Jericho, constitute the other example. Insofar as justification by works in their individual actions is concerned, no distinction is drawn. Note the word "Likewise" (v. 25) which James used to compare Rahab's justification with Abraham's justification. Both were equally justified by works.

The key to the matter lies in the fact that both Abraham and Rahab acted by faith. Both occupy a position among the faithful in Hebrews, chapter eleven, where these same two incidents are recorded (Heb. 11:17-19, 31). To act by faith, one must act in accordance with the revelation of God. Acting by faith is simply believing what God has to say about the matter and governing one's life accordingly.

In the case of Abraham, God instructed him to offer his son as a burnt offering upon a particular mountain in the land of Moriah. Abraham believed God, acted accordingly, and was, through this act, justified by works.

In the case of Rahab, God had revealed certain things concerning the nation of Israel. She knew what had happened to the Egyptians, the kings of the Amorites, and possibly far more. She also knew that God had given the land in which she dwelled to the children of Israel, and she knew that they were about to take possession of this land. Knowing the revelation of God concerning these matters, she acted accordingly. She hid the spies, helped them escape from Jericho, and, by so doing, she was justified by works.

Both Abraham and Rahab acted in accordance with the revelation of God concerning that which they were to do in two separate matters. Abraham was called upon to do one thing, and he was faithful to his calling. Rahab was called upon to do something entirely different, and she, "likewise," was faithful to her calling. Through "faithfulness" to what God had called them to do, both were justified by works.

Thus, the answer is provided concerning "what works" James has in mind. Works in James, chapter two, brought over into the lives of Christians today, are simply those works which God has called individual Christians to do. God has always called individuals to do different things at different times (e.g. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, etc.), and those whom He calls are to be faithful in the task/tasks whereunto they have been called.

Justification by works in James is wrought through being faithful to one's individual calling. This, of course, presupposes that the person has acted in accordance with James 1:21 — "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted [implanted] word..." James 1:22 then instructs Christians to be "doers of the word and not hearers only," which is something that cannot be accomplished apart from acting in accordance with the preceding verse.

The parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 provides an example of this same type faithfulness to one's calling. In this parable each servant was entrusted with an amount "according to his several ability" — one five talents, one two talents, and another one talent. "Talents" are a monetary unit of exchange, an initial investment to be used by the recipient to gain an increase, profit. The servant with five talents was expected to use all five; the servant with two talents was expected to use both, but he was not called to use more than the two; the servant with one talent was expected to use that talent, but he was not called to use more than the one talent.

The servants possessing the five and two talents were faithful to their individual callings, and each received identical commendations upon their Lord's return. The servant with the one talent, however, was unfaithful to his calling and received punishment rather than commendation. Had he been faithful in his area of responsibility, he would have received the identical commendation experienced by the other two servants. The entire thought turns on the fact that rewards will be passed out or punishment will be meted out commensurate with an individual's faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the task/tasks God has called that individual to do.

#### The Goal of Faith

"Faith" is made mature, brought to full development, reaches its goal through works (James 2:22). The relationship between faith and works rests on this principle; and if one understands the revelation of God at this point, he will never again experience trouble in the area of faith and works.

The Greek word translated "perfect" in James 2:22 is *teleioo*, which refers to the "goal," "consummation," "full development," "end" of what is in view. In this case, "faith" is in view, and works constitute the vehicle through which faith is brought to full development, with a goal in view at the termination of this development.

The "goal" of faith is spelled out in no uncertain terms in I Peter 1:9: "Receiving the end [Gr. *telos*] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." The Greek word *telos*, translated "end" in I Peter 1:9, is the root form of the work *teleioo*, translated "perfect" in James 2:22. "Faith" is brought to maturity, full development through works for one great purpose — in order that the one possessing this faith may, in the coming day, realize the salvation of his soul and occupy a position as joint-heir with Christ in His kingdom.

All Christians have been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10), and God has outlined the works which he wants us to do. As the ones "in Christ" follow the leadership of the Lord in their respective callings, performing these works, their faith is, "day by day," progressively being brought to full development. This is not something which occurs over a short period of time, but, rather, something which occurs over the entirety of the pilgrim walk. This is something which occurs in conjunction with the metamorphosis and the filling of the Spirit. The Neshamah, the Word of God flowing into man's saved human spirit, progressively (through the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit) produces the metamorphosis and the filling of the Spirit. At the same time, works emanating from this entire process progressively bring "faith" to its full development (ref. Chapters II, III). All of these things are working together in the lives of Christians in order to produce Spirit-filled, mature Christians who will realize the purpose of their calling — the goal of faith, the salvation of their souls.

Concluding Thoughts:

All “judgment” will be on the basis of works, and all “rewards” or “punitive actions” emanating from judgment must, likewise, be on the basis of works. The coming judgment of the saints — the time, place, purpose, and outcome — is a major subject of Scripture, and this is an area in which all Christians who have been saved for any length of time at all should be quite knowledgeable. One’s failure to properly understand this area of study can invariably be traced directly back to his failure to understand the correct relationship between faith and works.

a) Basis for Judgment — Works

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by [‘in’] fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by [‘through’] fire” (I Cor. 3:11-15).

The time of this judgment will be at the end of the present age. The place of this judgment will be in heaven. The purpose of this judgment will be to “try every man’s [Christian’s] work of what sort it is.” The outcome of this judgment will be that some Christians will be shown to possess works comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones,” while other Christians will be shown to possess works comparable to “wood, hay, stubble.” The Christians’ judgment will occur before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven following the removal of the Church from the earth; and this judgment will probably occur before the Tribulation begins on earth. (There will be an interval of time, of apparent short duration, between the removal of the Church and the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Week [Rev. 4:1-6:1]. The ratifying of the covenant between Israel and the man of sin marks the beginning of this period, not the removal of the Church.)

Christians will be judged on the basis of their works in view of whether these works did or did not bring one’s “faith” to its goal — the salvation of one’s soul. Works comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones” will be shown to have brought faith to its proper goal; works comparable to “wood, hay, stubble,” however, will be shown to have failed to bring faith to its proper goal. Those shown to be in possession of works which brought faith to its proper goal will receive a “reward” (v.14), but those shown to be in possession of works which failed to bring faith to its proper goal will suffer “loss” (v. 15).

The word “loss” in I Cor. 3:15 is from the same Greek word translated “lose” in Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36, “be cast away” in Luke 9:25, and “I have suffered the loss” in Phil. 3:8. The thought behind the use of this word in these passages is to “forfeit” something already in one’s possession. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke it is the forfeiture of one’s soul. And this is exactly what is in view in I Cor. 3:15. This is the only thing which could be in view, for the one who suffers loss will have no rewards to forfeit. He will be left with his life (soul) alone; his works will all be burned. And, in the light of related Scripture, an individual suffering loss at the judgment seat of Christ will experience the loss of his soul.

b) Basis for Recompense — Works

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward [‘recompense’] every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27).

This is the same thought previously set forth in I Cor. 3:14, 15 concerning Christians before the judgment seat of Christ. All events at the judgment seat will be based on works, with “rewards” or “loss” emanating from the trial of one’s works: “The ‘fire’ shall try every man’s work...”

In Hebrews, chapter eleven the reception of future rewards, promises are clearly taught to be on the basis of faith, with no mention of works. The relationship, of course, is that works emanate from one’s faithfulness to his calling; and works bring one’s faith to the goal of his calling. In this respect, understanding the proper relationship between faith and works, rewards can be said to emanate from works in one place and faith in another. There is no conflict at all.

We have been saved to produce “good works” resulting in Fruit-bearing, with a purpose and goal in view. Happy are those Christians who understand this purpose and goal, governing their lives accordingly, looking out ahead to the day when “he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37).

## **6: Hope — Inheritance — Salvation**

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [‘living’] hope by [‘through’] the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved [‘preserved’] in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Peter 1:3-5).

Peter in his epistles, as James in his epistle, directs his message to the regenerate, not the unregenerate. Peter’s message is for the “elect,” those who have been “begotten” from above, those in a position to receive the Word of God into their saved human spirits, those who have been called “out of darkness into his marvellous light,” those who have “obtained mercy,” those who are “strangers and pilgrims” on the earth, those who have “obtained like precious faith with us” (I Peter 1:2, 3, 23; 2:1, 2, 9-11; II Peter 1:1). The Epistles of I, II Peter have been written to encourage Christians who are being tried and tested by holding up before them prizes, rewards, compensations. The subject matter in these epistles, set forth at the very beginning, concerns a present “living hope,” a future “inheritance,” and a future “salvation”; and encouragement for proper conduct in trials and testings is derived from a “knowledge” (cf. I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2-8) of God’s revelation concerning these things.

A Present, Living Hope

Christians have been “begotten” from above unto a “living hope” through the “resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Christ lives, and Christians will live with Him. But this fact is not the object of one’s hope. Hope is described as “living” because of resurrection, but a Christian’s hope lies in things beyond resurrection. These things are revealed in the text to be an “inheritance” and a “salvation.”

“Hope,” “inheritance,” and “salvation” are inseparably linked in Scripture. It is only because we are saved (passive, salvation of the spirit) that we can possess “hope.” And hope looks ahead to the reception of an inheritance within a salvation (future, salvation of the soul) to be revealed.

Christians are commanded to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Peter 3:15b). Since this hope pertains to a future inheritance and salvation, one’s “reason” for this hope must also be futuristic in scope. Thus, to respond in accordance with I Peter 3:15, Christians must be knowledgeable concerning scriptural teachings pertaining to the salvation of the soul.

The Christians’ hope is a subject found numerous places throughout the Pauline epistles, Hebrews, and the general epistles. Two of the best books to help Christians understand exactly what is involved in the hope which they possess are the Books of Hebrews and Titus. Both books deal with the same subject matter as I, II Peter.

a) “Hope” in Hebrews

In Heb. 6:11, 12 a Christian’s hope is associated with “faith,” “patience [‘patient endurance’; long waiting during the pilgrim walk for postponed promises],” and the “inheritance” set before Christians. This hope is to be held with “diligence” until the “end” with a “full assurance” that the hope of one’s calling will be realized. The “end [Gr. telos]” in this passage is the same “end” set forth in I Peter 1:9: “Receiving the end [Gr. telos] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” The end in both instances has to do with “faith” brought to perfection, maturity through “works” (cf. James 2:22).

In Heb. 6:18-20 the “hope” set before Christians is stated to be an “anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” Christ Himself resides beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies; and His future ministry, “after the order of Melchizedek,” rather than His present ministry (after the order of Aaron), is in view (v. 20). An anchor, firmly secured, will moor a ship that it might withstand the movements of currents, winds, etc., and remain in a certain place; and the anchor of our souls, firmly secured in the very presence of Christ beyond the veil, provides protection from the onslaught of the enemy in order that we might be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). The salvation of our souls is in view, and just as a ship in mooring is continually being drawn toward the place where its anchor lies, we are continually being drawn toward the place where our anchor lies — unto Christ and His Melchizedek priesthood.

The Book of Hebrews is built around five major warnings, and, prior to the writer’s comments concerning “hope” in chapter seven, he had previously introduced the Christians’ “hope” in the second warning (chs. 3, 4) by showing the relationship between hope and faithfulness. The central portion of the second warning, introducing “hope,” is Heb. 3:6: “But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” This hope within the text has to do with the house of Christ; and within the context (chs. 3, 4), in order to teach Christians the deep things of God in this area, there is a parallel between the house of Christ and the house of Moses. This parallel constitutes a type-antitype treatment of Israelites under the leadership of Moses with Christians under the leadership of Christ. The experiences of the Israelites under Moses have their counterpart in the experiences of Christians under Christ. All have been “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [‘ages’] are come” (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

Christians are presently members of the house of Christ in the same sense that those who appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs in Egypt during the days of Moses were members of Moses’ house. An earthly inheritance lay before the Israelites under Moses, and a heavenly inheritance lies before Christians under Christ. Through unfaithfulness to their calling, the majority of Israelites within the accountable generation under Moses were overthrown (cut off from the house of Moses); and through unfaithfulness to their calling, the majority of Christians under Christ will also be overthrown (cut off from the house of Christ). Neither type nor antitype has to do with eternal verities. They were overthrown on the right side of the blood in the type, and thus will it be in the antitype. “Many are called [as the entire accountable generation under Moses], but few are chosen [lit. ‘called out,’ as Caleb and Joshua]” (Matt. 22:14).

The key words in Heb. 3:6 pertaining to hope are “confidence” and “rejoicing.” The Greek word translated “confidence” (parresia) has to do with being “bold,” or “courageous”; and the word translated “rejoicing” (kauchema) has to do with the “object of boasting,” a “thing of pride.” Christians are to be bold, courageous as they journey toward their heavenly inheritance; and they are to exult in the hope set before them. They are to display this hope as the very object of the salvation which they possess in such a manner that the One Who secured this hope for them will receive the praise, honor, and glory.

b) “Hope” in Titus

The Epistle of Titus centers around the Christian’s relationship to both “hope” and “the coming age,” for it is in the coming age that the hope of our calling will be realized. Hope in Titus 2:13 is called “that blessed hope” and is associated with the “appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (ASV). The rendering of the Greek text actually makes hope synonymous with the appearing of this glory. Christians are the ones who possess this hope, as they are the ones who are to be partakers of Christ’s glory when it is revealed. In this respect, participation in the coming glory of Christ will be the realization of one’s present hope, for one cannot be separated from the other.

The word hope is also used in this same framework in its two other appearances in Titus (1:2, 3:7). In Titus 1:1, 2 hope is associated with a “mature knowledge of the truth [‘acknowledging’ (v. 1) is epignosis (mature knowledge) in the Greek text],” and with “aionios life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (v. 2). In Titus 3:7 this “hope” is reserved for the justified alone, and it has to do with an inheritance:

“That being ‘justified’ by his grace, we should be made ‘heirs’ according to the hope of aionios life.”

The Greek word aionios appearing in Titus 1:2, 3:7, translated “eternal” in most English versions, does not itself mean “eternal.” The Greek language actually contains no word for “eternal.” Aionios can be, and many times is, used in the sense of “eternal”; but this meaning is derived from its textual usage, not from the word itself. Aionios refers to “a period of time,” usually thought of as “an age.”

The only way the Greek language can express “eternal” apart from textual considerations is by using the noun form of aionios (aion) in the plural (“ages” [e.g., Luke 1:33; Heb. 13:8]), or by using aion twice in the plural (“unto the ‘ages [aionas]’ of the ‘ages [aionon]’”) [e.g.,

Rev. 1:6, 18; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5]). A person using the Greek language thinks in the sense of “ages,” with eternity being thought of in the sense of “endless ages,” i.e., “aeons,” or “the aeons of the aeons.”

Aionios life in Titus 1:2; 3:7 — a hope associated with an inheritance set before the believer — must be understood contextually to mean “age-lasting,” referring to the coming age, the Messianic Era. “Eternal life” cannot be in view at all. Neither “hope” nor “inheritance” is used pertaining to eternal life which Christians presently possess, but both words are used numerous times concerning Christians and their relationship to the coming kingdom, which is what is involved in the Book of Titus. The hope (blessed hope) set before every Christian is simply that he/she may, at the judgment seat of Christ, be found qualified to occupy one of the numerous, proffered positions with Christ in His kingdom. A Christian — already in possession of eternal life — may or may not realize this hope, for such depends entirely upon one’s faithfulness during the present pilgrim walk.

#### A Future Inheritance

The future inheritance of the saints (I Peter 1:4), mentioned numerous times in Scripture, must be understood from the standpoint of the inheritance surrounding the birthright. The word translated “birthright” in the New Testament is from the Greek word *prototokia*, a plural noun which should be properly rendered, “the rights of the firstborn.” This word points to the fact that the birthright consists of a plurality of rights, which are all to be inherited.

The rights of the firstborn in the Jewish economy in the Old Testament consisted of three things: 1) ruler of the household under and for the father, 2) priest of the family, and 3) reception of a double portion of the father’s estate. Every Jewish firstborn son was in line to receive this inheritance; but, according to the Record, this inheritance was forfeitable. The positional standing as firstborn son did not itself guarantee that the inheritance would be received. A firstborn son, through rebellious actions, could forfeit the rights of primogeniture.

Two classic examples of the forfeiture of the birthright by firstborn sons are given in the Book of Genesis, the book wherein the roots of all Biblical doctrine lie. One is the account of Esau, and the other is the account of Reuben.

#### a) Reuben and the Birthright

Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, was in direct line to inherit the rights of primogeniture; but because of one grave sin committed during his life, Reuben forfeited these rights. Reuben’s sin, resulting in the forfeiture of his birthright, was sexual impropriety of a nature which dishonored and shamed his father: “Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine” (Gen. 35:22).

Because of this one sin, years later when Jacob called his twelve sons into his presence shortly before his death to relate what would befall them “in the latter days,” Reuben heard the words:

“Thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father’s bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch” (Gen. 49:3, 4).

The tribe of Reuben, as Jacob prophesied, did not excel. From this tribe came no judge, no king, and no prophet. That which Reuben lost, he lost forever. But he himself remained a son of Jacob and was blessed in measure, but not as the firstborn.

Reuben’s birthright was divided among three of his brothers. The tribal rulership was bestowed upon “Judah”; the priestly office was bestowed upon “Levi”; and the double portion of the father’s estate was given to “Joseph.” The tribe of “Judah” became the kingly line; the tribe of “Levi” became the priestly line; and the tribe of “Joseph” received the double portion through Joseph’s two sons, “Ephraim” and “Manasseh,” who each received a full inheritance (I Chron. 5:1, 2).

During the Kingdom Age the status created by Reuben’s sin will still abide. The King will be of the house of Judah (Rev. 5:5); the priests will be of the family of Zadoc, the Levite (Ezek. 44:15, 16; 48:11); and the double portion will be held by the house of Joseph, through Ephraim and Manasseh (Ezek. 47:13; 48:4, 5).

#### b) Esau and the Birthright

Esau, as Reuben, forfeited his birthright. In Esau’s case the entire inheritance went to his younger brother, Jacob. Esau forfeited his birthright to satisfy a fleshly gratification. He sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob, for a single meal (Gen. 25:27-34). Since the rights of the firstborn had ultimately been promised to Jacob (Gen. 25:23), some doubt that Esau ever actually possessed these rights. However, Esau was no pretender to the rights of the firstborn. The Greek word translated “sold” in Heb. 12:16 (referring to Esau and the birthright) is inflected in a tense implying that the article sold belonged to Esau alone, and he was fully aware of his actions when he sold his birthright to Jacob.

In Gen. 25:34 we read that Esau “despised his birthright.” The Greek word in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament translated “despised” implies that Esau regarded the birthright as a paltry, a mere trifle. Esau regarded the birthright as practically worthless, and sold his rights as firstborn with the thought in mind that what he was selling was of no real value. It was only later, at a time when it was too late, that Esau realized the value of what he had sold. As in Reuben’s case, the forfeiture of the birthright did not affect his sonship, but it did affect forever his relationship to Isaac as firstborn. After Jacob had been blessed as the firstborn in the family, Esau, apparently for the first time, realized the value of what he had lost. Esau then tried to retrieve the birthright, but the Scripture records that “he found no place of repentance.” After Esau realized the value of the birthright and the finality of that which had occurred, he pleaded with his father, Isaac, to change his mind and bless him also. Esau cried out to Isaac: “Hast thou but one blessing, my father: bless me, even me also, O my father.” And it is recorded that “Esau lifted up his voice, and wept” (Gen. 27:38).

The word “repentance” means to change one’s mind. Esau sought to effect a change of mind on the part of his father, but “he found no place of repentance,” i.e., “he found no place for a change of mind.” The American Standard Version of the Bible (1901 ed.) has possibly the most accurate rendering of Heb. 12:17 to be found in any of the translations presently appearing on the market. This verse in the American Standard Version reads, “For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.”

Isaac could not change his mind. The birthright had been forfeited and was beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

#### c) Christians and the Birthright

Every Christian is presently a firstborn child of God awaiting the adoption, to be followed by the reception of the inheritance belonging to firstborn sons. As in the Old Testament, this inheritance consists of three things: 1) a position as ruler, 2) a position as priest, and 3) reception of a double portion of the estate. The position of ruler has to do with occupying a position of “power over the nations” with Christ during the coming age (Rev. 2:26, 27). God’s original purpose for the creation of man in the beginning involved rulership over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28), and following the complete redemption of man (body, soul, spirit) and the removal of the earth from its present position (under a curse), this purpose will be realized. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29). God will not change His mind concerning the reason He brought the earth out of its ruined state and called man into existence in Genesis, chapter one. Redeemed individuals from the lineage of the First Adam will, in the coming age, with the Last Adam, rule over a restored, inhabited earth.

The position of priest has to do with a combined kingly-priestly function which will be exercised by Christians at the same time they are given “power over the nations.” Christians are presently “priests,” but are not presently “kings and priests.” This position is reserved for the coming age (cf. I Peter 2:9; Rev. 5:10). Our present ministry as priests, as Christ’s present ministry as High Priest, is connected with the tabernacle in heaven (cf. Heb. 9:11, 12; 10:19, 20; I John 1:5-2:2). But this status of existing conditions will continue only until the end of the present dispensation. During the coming dispensation (or age) Christ’s ministry will no longer be connected with the tabernacle, for He will, prior to that time, come out of the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and appear to Israel on earth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. And the Christians’ ministry at that time will also no longer be connected with the tabernacle. Christians in that day will appear with Christ in glory. They will appear in the position of “kings and priests” with the great “King-Priest” and will rule with Him during the day of His power.

The reception of a double portion of the estate has to do with both heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom. Christians are to rule from the heavens over the earth as joint-heirs with Christ. Occupying such positions really means possessing an inheritance which is associated with both the heavens and the earth. God has promised His Son, “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen [Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa. 2:8). This earthly inheritance and possession is open only to God’s Son and those who rule from the heavens as “joint-heirs” with Him. Thus, a rule from the heavens over the earth will incorporate this double portion. Every Christian is in line to receive the inheritance belonging to the firstborn; but, according to the Record, this inheritance is forfeitable. The positional standing of the Christian “in Christ” does not itself guarantee that this inheritance will be received. A firstborn child of God, through rebellious actions, can, as firstborn sons in the Old Testament, forfeit the rights of primogeniture.

The fifth and last of the five major warnings to Christians in Hebrews (12:14-17) concerns the account of Esau and the forfeiture of his rights as firstborn. This warning has been placed in the Book of Hebrews in a type-antitype arrangement, as the wilderness journey of the Israelites in chapters three and four, to sternly remind Christians that the things which befell Old Testament saints can also befall New Testament saints. The Israelites in the wilderness were in line to go in, conquer, and take possession of the land. They were in line to realize their earthly inheritance. But the entire accountable generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was overthrown in the wilderness. Through disobedience those comprising this generation were denied their inheritance. Esau was in line to receive the rights belonging to the firstborn, but he, through disobedience, was rejected. Esau was denied the rights of primogeniture — his rightful inheritance within the family. Christians on their pilgrim journey, with a heavenly inheritance in connection with the rights of the firstborn in view, can, through disobedience, also be overthrown and be denied their inheritance “reserved in heaven.”

“To deny the parallel is to overthrow inspiration: to ignore the parallel is to silence Scripture: to admit the parallel is to disclose a momentous peril to the believer in Christ” (D. M. Pantou).

#### A Future Salvation

The underlying theme throughout the Epistles of Peter involves our present hope which is centered in the salvation to be revealed, wherein Christians will realize the inheritance “reserved in heaven” for firstborn sons. During our present pilgrim walk, anticipating “that blessed hope” set before us, we are being “kept [guarded] by the power of God through faith” for the purpose of realizing the salvation of our souls and occupying positions as joint-heirs with God’s Son during the coming age. The entire program of God for Christians today moves toward this end.

As the living hope possessed by Christians and the inheritance “reserved in heaven” for Christians have their respective counterparts within teachings drawn from the five major warnings in Hebrews, so does the salvation “to be revealed in the last time.” Heb. 1:14 speaks of a future salvation which is so intimately associated with the inheritance of the saints that “salvation” itself is here said to be inherited; and Heb. 2:3 calls this future salvation, “so great salvation.” It is the greatest thing God could ever design for man, for it consists of the recipients exercising power and authority from the heavens over the earth with God’s Son within the coming world order. Through reception of this future salvation, Christians will realize the very purpose of their present salvation, the goal of their calling, the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

However, the first warning in Hebrews, as the other warnings in this book, gives two sides to the overall picture; and the lessons at the very beginning, as in subsequent warnings, are drawn from Old Testament history. The object lesson beginning these warnings surrounds the experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness: “For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...” (Heb. 2:2, 3a)?

The “just recompense of reward” is receiving exactly what an individual deserves. All of the Israelites who left Egypt under Moses were saved. They all had availed themselves of the substitutionary atonement in Egypt through the death of the paschal lambs. The death of the firstborn was past and could never be their lot, for the paschal lambs had already died in their stead. The danger which the Israelites faced was not that of being returned to Egypt and removed from the safety of the blood. Such an act was an utter impossibility. The danger which the Israelites faced lay in the fact that they could be overthrown in the wilderness and not realize the purpose of their deliverance. Through obedience they would realize this purpose, but through disobedience they would fail to realize this purpose. In either instance they would receive a “just recompense of reward.”

The same is true for Christians today. All Christians have availed themselves of the substitutionary death of the Passover Lamb. The death of the firstborn is past and can never be their lot, for the Passover Lamb has already died in their stead. The danger which Christians face is not that of being removed from the safety of the blood. Such an act is an utter impossibility. The danger which Christians face is the same as that which the Israelites under Moses faced: Christians can be overthrown in their present position and fail to realize the purpose of their salvation. Through obedience, which involves a “living” faith emanating from works which the Lord has outlined for one’s life, an individual will realize this purpose; but through disobedience, which involves a “dead” faith emanating from not doing the works which the Lord has outlined for one’s life, an individual will not realize this purpose. In either instance, Christians will receive a “just recompense of reward.”

The “so great salvation” in Heb. 2:3, synonymous with the salvation to be inherited in 1:14, is, within the context, associated with the inhabited earth to come: “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world [‘inhabited earth’] to come, whereof we speak [lit. ‘concerning which we are speaking’]” (2:5). Angels occupy positions of power over the nations during the present age. But during the coming age angels will not occupy these positions. Satan and his angels will be cast out at the end of the present age, and Christ with His “companions” (cf. Heb. 1:9; 3:14) will exercise power over the nations during the coming age. The writer of Hebrews states that this coming inhabited earth under the rule of man is what the preceding verses concern. The inherited salvation, the so great salvation, has to do with the coming age when a new order of rulers will be crowned.

The Books of Hebrews, James, and I, II Peter all deal with the salvation to be revealed, the salvation of the soul; and these books must be interpreted within this framework. The warnings in Hebrews and works in James have to do with the same thing as our text in I Peter 1:3-5 — a “just recompense of reward” to be realized in the coming age.

## **7: Approval, Goal of Your Faith**

That the trial [‘approval’] of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire [‘but being approved through fire’], might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end [‘goal’] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (I Peter 1:7-9).

In the Greek text of verse seven the word translated “trial” is dokimion, and the word translated “tried” is dokimazo. These are, respectively, noun and verb forms of the same word. In either form this word means to be “tried with a view to approval, if found worthy”; or, if the text so indicates, the word can refer to “approval” itself at the termination of testing. James 1:3, where dokimion is used, provides a good example of present testings with a view to future approval. But I Peter 1:7; contextually, moves beyond the point of present testings. Approval at a future date is in view, and the translation of both dokimion and dokimazo should reflect this fact. This verse should correctly be translated, “That the ‘approval’ of your faith ... but being ‘approved’ through fire...”

Verse nine, continuing this same thought, refers to obtaining something because of the outcome of one’s faith — “Receiving the end of your faith...” The word translated “end” is telos in the Greek text, which literally means “goal,” “consummation,” “full development” of that which is in view. “Faith,” the subject matter at hand in verses seven through nine, is in view. In verse seven, “faith” must be approved in order to realize “praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”; and in verse nine, “faith” must be brought to full development, reach its goal, in order to realize the “salvation of your souls.”

### **At the Judgment Seat**

The approval and goal of one’s “faith” await the coming issues of the judgment seat of Christ. The evaluations and determinations of this judgment will be based on “works” which emanate from faithfulness to one’s calling. The Book of James teaches that faithfulness to one’s calling will result in works of a particular nature, and these works alone (works which God has outlined for each individual Christian to accomplish) will bring faith into a position where it can be approved, realizing its proper goal (ref. Chapter V).

The trial of “every man’s work” in fire at the judgment seat of Christ will be with a “view to approval, if found worthy.” The Greek word translated “try” in I Cor. 3:13 is dokimazo, the same word used in I Peter 1:7. “Works” are approved through fire in I Cor. 3:13, and “faith” is approved through fire in I Peter 1:7. Both Scriptures refer to that future time when the approval of works at the judgment seat will result in the approval of faith. During the present time faith is being brought to its goal (into the position where it can be approved) through works, and at the judgment seat the approval of faith will be based upon the approval of works. The former cannot be realized apart from the latter, and the relationship between faith and works after this fashion is such that Scripture reveals both being approved “through fire.”

However, there is another side to the judgment seat of Christ, for Scripture reveals that a Christian’s works may be found unworthy of approval. The trial will be with a “view to approval,” but such will not be the case if the fire reveals works which are not worthy of approval. Disapproved “works” will result in a disapproved “faith.” A faith of this nature will not have been brought to its proper goal, and individuals possessing works unworthy of approval will “suffer loss.” Using the inverse of what is taught in I Peter 1:7-9 about approved faith brought to its goal (through approved works), an individual possessing a disapproved faith (resulting from disapproved works) will not only be denied praise, honour, and glory at Christ’s coming (v. 7) but he will also suffer the loss of his soul (v. 9).

James 1:12 refers to Christians being “approved” prior to receiving a crown: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [‘approved’], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

The word translated “tried” is dokimos in the Greek text. This word is from the same root form as dokimios in I Peter 1:7 and refers specifically to being “approved at the end of testing.” In I Cor. 3:13 it is the approval of an individual’s “works”; in I Peter 1:7 it is the approval of an individual’s “faith”; but in James 1:12 it is the approval of an “individual” himself. The approval of works, as we have seen, will result in the approval of faith. This will, in turn, result in the approval of the individual, for it is a physical flesh and bone entity who will realize the goal of his “faith,” the salvation of his soul.

In I Cor. 9:24-27 Paul states that the Christian is in a race with a crown in view which will be acquired only after the runner has been approved at the conclusion of the race:

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain [the prize].

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible [crown].

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [lit. ‘be disapproved’].”

The word translated “castaway” (v. 27) is *adokimos* in the Greek text. This is the same word translated “tried [lit. ‘approved’]” in James 1:12, but with the prefix “a,” which negates the word. *Adokimos*, thus, means “disapproved.”

Studying I Cor. 9:24-27; James 1:12; I Peter 1:7-9 in the light of one another will produce one clear, uniform teaching: Christians are enrolled in a race, with crowns to be won or lost at the termination of this race. How well we run the race depends upon our “faithfulness.” Faithfulness to one’s calling is the key, for only through faithfulness can works ensue; and works are necessary to produce a “living” faith, resulting in fruit-bearing, which can, in the coming day (at the judgment seat), be approved (cf. James 2:14-26). Only in this manner will individuals be approved for crowns, allowing the recipients the privilege of occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in His coming kingdom.

The Primary, Fundamental Type

A Christian’s disapproval for the crown in I Cor. 9:24-27 has its contextual parallel in the verses immediately following (I Cor. 10:1-11) which record Israel’s disapproval for entrance into the land of Canaan. These eleven verses reiterate certain experiences of the Israelites under Moses following the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt. Israel’s experiences (within the scope of the type) begin in Egypt, move through the Red Sea passage, and terminate in the wilderness wanderings. The verses outlining these experiences are divided into two sections (vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-11).

The first section outlines in general terms the experiences of the Israelites under Moses, and this section is concluded in verse six with the statement: “Now these things were our examples [lit. ‘these things happened as types for us’], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

The second section outlines in more specific terms four sins of the people which characterized the wilderness journey, and this section is concluded in verse eleven with the statement: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [lit. ‘for types’]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [‘ages’] are come.”

Thus, there is a type-antitype treatment of Israelites under the leadership of Moses with Christians under the leadership of Christ. This same type-antitype treatment of Israelites with Christians also forms the basis for the first, second, and third warnings in the Book of Hebrews (1:14-2:5; 3:1-4:16; 6:1-12), apart from which these warnings cannot be properly understood.

Just as a proper understanding of the first three warnings in Hebrews is built around a type-antitype treatment of Israelites under Moses with Christians under Christ, a proper understanding of I Cor. 9:24-27 is built around this same type-antitype treatment. These verses logically lead into the tenth chapter, and this chapter forms the basis for explaining what is meant by being approved or disapproved at the conclusion of the race. Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture, and the approval or disapproval of an individual at the judgment seat of Christ must be understood in the light of Old Testament typology — namely the experiences of the Israelites under the leadership of Moses following the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt. This is the primary, fundamental type which God uses in His Word to teach Christians great spiritual truths concerning dangers strewn along their present pilgrim pathway as they, under the leadership of Christ, traverse the only route which will culminate in the realization of the salvation to be revealed — the salvation of their souls.

Type — Israel in the Wilderness

On the night of the Passover in the land of Egypt God established a distinction “between the Egyptians and Israel.” This distinction was established on the basis of shed blood — the blood of the paschal lambs — and involved the birth and adoption of a nation (Ex. 4:22; 6:6, 7; 11:4-7; 12:1-13; Hosea 2:15). Israel’s birth and adoption were for definite, distinct purposes — namely the establishment of God’s firstborn son at the head of the nations within a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Not only was the “Feast of the Passover” instituted at this time but the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” was also instituted at the very beginning of Israel’s national existence. Immediately following the Passover, Israel — the newly established nation, God’s firstborn son — was to eat “unleavened bread” for a period of seven days. All leaven was to be put out of the house (house of Israel) during this period. “Leaven,” in Scripture, always, without exception, portrays that which is evil, corrupt. “Seven” is the number of perfection, indicating the completeness of that which is in view; and whether in Egypt before the Red Sea passage, in the wilderness after the Red Sea passage, or in the land of Canaan realizing the purpose of the nation’s calling, evil typified by leaven was to be put out of the house of Israel. The penalty for not so doing was spelled out in no uncertain terms: “...for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel” (Ex. 12:15).

Thus, God’s dual truth concerning “blood” and “leaven” was established at the very beginning of Israel’s existence as a nation. The appropriation of the “blood” placed those who came out of Egypt, forming the nation of Israel, in a peculiar relationship to God from which they could never be removed. This, however, was only the beginning. The entire purpose for Israel’s existence lay ahead; and after the appropriation of the blood, everything associated with leaven was then to be put out of the house for the period specified. Only in this manner could the nation realize the purpose for her peculiar relationship to God, the purpose of her removal from Egypt, the very purpose of her calling.

Now, what did Israel do relative to the Feast of Unleavened Bread following the appropriation of the blood of the paschal lambs? Israel kept the feast in the sense of the seven literal days required by Ex. 12:15 (cf. Ex. 12:34, 39; 13:1-10); but did Israel keep the feast in the sense of what it portrays must be done in the camp beyond that time? Did Israel put sin out of the house during her pilgrim journey in the wilderness? The answer of course, according to the Record, is “No.” Israel committed trespass after trespass against the Lord, climaxing the leavening process at Kadesh-Barnea.

Had Israel put leaven out of the house and followed the leadership of the Lord, the nation would have realized the purpose of her calling. Israel would have entered into the land at Kadesh-Barnea, overthrown the inhabitants, and ruled over all nations as God's firstborn son within a theocracy. However, instead of this happening, the entire accountable generation (save Caleb and Joshua, who possessed a different spirit) was overthrown in the wilderness. Of the 600,000 fighting men who came out of Egypt, all but two were overthrown in the wilderness. They were cut off from the house of Israel. They were overthrown on the right side of the blood — cut off from Israel, not from God — and they fell short of the goal of their calling.

According to the account of the wilderness journey of the Israelites in Hebrews, chapter three, the nation failed to enter into the land at Kadesh-Barnea because of "unbelief ['unfaithfulness']" (v. 19). The Israelites under Moses rejected what God had to say concerning entrance into the land set before them. They believed the false report brought back by the ten spies rather than the true report carried by Caleb and Joshua. At this point they fell away; and, as set forth in the antitype in Heb. 6:4-6, it was then impossible "to renew them again unto repentance."

Why did they "fall away"? What brought about such unbelief, unfaithfulness on their part? The answer can be found by comparing their attitude toward both the "food" (the manna) which God had provided and the "land" (the land of Canaan) which lay before them with their attitude toward both the "food" (fish, etc.) which they had previously enjoyed in Egypt and the "land" (the land of Egypt) which they had left.

According to Numbers, chapter eleven, they rejected the "manna" and longingly looked back to the food which they remembered in Egypt; and, almost immediately following, in Numbers, chapters thirteen and fourteen, they rejected the "land of Canaan" and longingly looked back to the land of Egypt. In each instance their look was back to the things of the world, the flesh, and the Devil (cf. Luke 9:62) — the things associated with the leavening process which had been working for almost eighteen months in the camp ("Egypt" in Scripture is always a type of the world with its fleshly allures, and "Satan" is the god of this present world system). Israel's attitude concerning the manna preceded the nation's attitude concerning the land. Their refusal to go in and take the land could have been anticipated by their previous rejection of the manna. That is, because they previously had preferred the food in Egypt to the manna which God had provided, at Kadesh-Barnea they could only be expected to prefer the land of Egypt to the land of Canaan. This fact will be clearly seen in the antitype.

#### Antitype — Christians in the Wilderness

As a distinction was established "between the Egyptians and Israel" in the land of Egypt the night of the Passover, a distinction has been established "between the world and Christians" during our day. As the distinction during Moses' day was established on the basis of shed blood, so has the distinction in our day been established on the basis of shed blood. Thirty-five hundred years ago in Egypt the distinguishing factor was the blood of the paschal lambs, and today the distinguishing factor is the blood of the Passover Lamb.

As Israel was called into existence for definite and distinct purposes, so has the Church been called into existence for definite and distinct purposes. Israel was called into existence to rule as God's firstborn son within a theocracy, and the Church has also been called into existence to rule as God's firstborn son within a theocracy. Israel was called into existence to rule on the earth at the head of the nations with God dwelling in their midst, and the Church has been called into existence to rule from the heavens over the nations with God's Son.

As Israel was commanded to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days immediately following the Passover, so have Christians been commanded to keep this feast for the same length of time immediately following the Passover (salvation, the birth from above): "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:6b-8).

The feast is to be kept for a period of "seven days," indicating the completeness of what is in view. The entire Christian life from the point of salvation forward is in view. During the present age Christians reside in bodies of death, possessing the old sin nature; but during the coming age Christians will reside in sinless, deathless bodies like unto the body of Christ (cf. Rom. 7:24; I John 1:8; 3:2). During the coming age the removal of leaven from the house will no longer be an issue, for it will have been put out once and for all. Thus, the issue of Christians keeping the feast (in accordance with I Cor. 5:6ff) and the dangers inherent in not keeping the feast are for the present age alone. Israelites who failed to keep the feast were cut off from the house of Moses; and Christians who fail to keep the feast will fare no better, for they will be cut off from the house of Christ (Heb. 3:1ff).

Thus, God's dual truth concerning "blood" and "leaven," established at the very beginning of Israel's existence as a nation, is the same dual truth present in Christendom today. Through the appropriation of the blood of the Passover Lamb, Christians form "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Peter 2:9). Christians occupy a positional standing "in Christ," from which they can never be removed. This, however, as in Israel's case, is only the beginning. The entire purpose for the Christian's very existence lies ahead. After the appropriation of the blood, everything associated with leaven is then to be put out of one's life for the period specified. Only in this manner will Christians realize the purpose for their present positional standing "in Christ," the very purpose of their calling.

Keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread outlined for Christians in I Corinthians, chapter five is not synonymous with Christians living sinless lives, living above sin. This is by no means what is being taught in this passage, for it is impossible for Christians to live apart from sin in such a manner as long as we reside in this present body of death with its old sin nature. This is the reason for the high priestly ministry of Christ in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle.

He is ministering today, on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, on behalf of Christians who sin. The sins committed by Christians are forgiven through confession of these sins on the basis of the shed blood of Christ which "cleanseth ['keeps on cleansing'] us from all sin." Christians keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread today in a twofold manner; abstention from every appearance of evil on the one hand, and confession of sins when overtaken by evil on the other hand (I Thess. 5:22; I John 1:7-10). All leaven is kept out of one's life in this twofold manner, and we, thus, correspondingly keep the feast.

However, as Israel failed to keep the feast in the type, so are Christians failing to keep the feast in the antitype. The Israelites committed trespass after trespass against the Lord, climaxing their sins by rejecting the manna and rejecting the land of Canaan. They looked back to the things of Egypt in both instances, and Christians are doing exactly the same thing. The Church has become so enmeshed in the things of the world that it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell where the Church ends and the world begins. The sins of Christians, as the sins of Israel, have led them down a path where they are rejecting the things typified by both the manna and the land of Canaan.

The manna was that bread from heaven which God had provided to sustain the Israelites while on their pilgrim journey. This bread contained everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the physical body throughout the wilderness journey. The counterpart for Christians today is the Bread which we have from heaven — The “Word of God” — which contains everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the spiritual man throughout the pilgrim journey (cf. John 6:30-58; Luke 4:4).

The Israelites, remembering the food which they had while in Egypt, tried to change the manna. They “ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it.” Through this process they ruined the manna, for the taste was like “fresh oil [a bland taste, made with olive oil]” (Num. 11:4-8).

Christians today have done the same thing with the Word of God; and, according to the type, it is because of their carnal desires for the food served in Egypt, i.e., the carnal nourishment which the world provides. Christians have tried to change the Word of God to conform to the things of the world, making this Word palatable to both the world and themselves. Thus, we have such things as the paraphrased versions of the Bible which are supposed to help us better understand the Scriptures, and the shortened, compressed versions which are for individuals who don’t have time to read the Word as given through Moses and the prophets. Changing the manna during Moses’ day ruined that which God had provided for the people, and changing the Manna today serves only to accomplish this same destructive end.

The importance of recognizing this whole thing for what it really is — a Satanic attack upon the Word of God — becomes evident when one understands the proper place which the Word occupies in the life of a Christian. God has breathed life (the Neshamah [initial work of the Spirit]) into man, effecting the birth from above (cf. Gen. 1:1-3; 2:7; John 3:3). He then continues this life through the indwelling presence of His Breath (the Neshamah [indwelling of the Spirit; I Cor. 6:19]), and nourishes and sustains this life through a continued breathing in (the Neshamah/Theopneustos [the God-Breathed, Living Word; II Tim. 3:16; James 1:21]). The indwelling Holy Spirit (the Neshamah) takes the Word of God (the Neshamah) received into man’s saved human spirit and effects spiritual growth unto maturity (ref. Chapters III, IV).

That which God delivered to man through Moses and the prophets constitutes the Neshamah — the God-Breathed Oracles — not that which carnal man has changed by seeking to make it palatable to himself and the world. The Holy Spirit (the Neshamah) uses the God-Breathed Oracles (the Neshamah) alone to effect a Christian’s spiritual growth unto maturity. That which is not the Word of God (not the Neshamah) substituted for the Word of God (the Neshamah) can only produce spiritually anemic, sick Christians, for the Holy Spirit does not use what is not the Breath of God — He does not use that which is lifeless — to effect spiritual growth.

That which man has changed approximates the Living Word of God to the same degree that the manna which the Israelites changed approximated the manna which God delivered to them from heaven. The Israelites, through changes, ruined the manna; and Christians (those of the world also in certain instances, for monetary gain), through changes, have ruined the Word of God.

Thus, it is easy to understand why the Israelites under Moses preferred the things of Egypt to the things of the land set before them (their earthly inheritance; cf. Num. 14:12; Heb. 11:8), and why innumerable Christians today prefer the things of the world to the things of the land set before them (their heavenly inheritance; cf. Heb. 1:14; 3:1; I Peter 1:4). The Israelites desired to feast on the things of Egypt rather than the manna which God had provided, and Christians today are doing the same thing.

The spirituality of the Israelites, brought about through their association with Egypt, was at such a low ebb that they didn’t believe it was possible to go in and conquer the inhabitants of the land. Thus, they sought to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4) — completely overcome by the enemy before ever engaging the enemy in combat.

The spirituality of many Christians today, brought about through their association with the world, is at such a low ebb that they, in like manner, refuse to believe it is possible to go in and conquer the inhabitants of the land (cf. Eph. 6:10-17). Thus, they, as Israel, seek their place in the world, under the sun — completely overcome by the enemy before ever engaging the enemy in combat.

Concluding Thoughts:

The importance of feasting on the Manna from heaven cannot be overemphasized. A Christian must receive “the implanted word [the ‘Neshamah’]” or he cannot realize the salvation of his soul. The reason is very simple: Apart from the reception of this Word there can be no spiritual growth unto maturity. Without spiritual growth, wrought through a continued inbreathing of “life” into man, there can be no movement of the spiritual man, producing “works” resulting in a “living” faith. Consequently, faith cannot be brought to the position where it can be approved at the judgment seat.

The race will have been run in no certain manner, with no fixed goal, as one beating the air. And, as revealed in I Cor. 9:24-10:11, a race run in this manner will result in the individual being disapproved, for he will have been overthrown in the wilderness. Accordingly, such an individual at the judgment seat of Christ will have his works tried, with a view to approval; but these works will be shown to be “dead [barren]” works, emanating from unfaithfulness, producing nothing but “wood, hay, stubble.” These will all be burned in the fire, leaving the individual in the position, “saved [salvation of his spirit]; yet so as by [‘through’] fire” (I Cor. 3:12-15). His works will be disapproved; and works of this nature will have failed to bring faith to maturity, its proper goal. Consequently, the individual’s faith will also be disapproved, and he will “suffer loss” — the loss of his soul.

## **8: The Ministry of Elders**

The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed [‘Shepherd’] the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but

willingly: Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples ['types'] to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Peter 5:1-4).

"Sufferings" and "glory" go hand in hand throughout Scripture. The latter always follows the former — never the inverse — and the latter cannot be realized apart from the former. Scripture records the sufferings of Christ on behalf of Christians (I Peter 2:21), and Scripture also records the sufferings of Christians on behalf of Christ (I Peter 1:11). Glory must then follow, for Scripture inseparably links sufferings and glory.

On the Emmaus road following His resurrection, Christ rebuked two disciples whose eyes were still closed to the truth concerning Christ's sufferings and glory: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26). The sufferings of Christ refer to the events surrounding "Calvary," and the glory of Christ will be revealed in the coming "Kingdom." The Son's ministry in the interim, as our great High Priest, is based on the former, with a view to the latter.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John "saw his glory" (Luke 9:32). This event, following the mention of both the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings on behalf of Christ (Matt. 16:21-27), pertains specifically to "the Son of man coming in his kingdom" at the end of "six days [6,000 years]" (Matt. 16:28-17:5; II Peter 1:16-18; 3:8). For the "joy [the day when He shall rule and reign] that was set before him," Christ "endured the cross, despising the shame [not that the 'shame' was a small thing, but the 'joy' was so much greater that He refused to consider the 'shame'], and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

The sufferings of Christians on behalf of Christ and the glory that is to follow appear in this same framework in Rom. 8:17-23. A condition is set forth in verse seventeen: "...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The thought is then continued in verse eighteen with the statement: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The time of this glory is then specifically revealed in verses nineteen through twenty-three to be following the adoption when the sons of God are manifested.

God is about to bring in a new order of "sons" (Christians) to replace the present order of "sons" (angels). This new order is referred to in Heb. 2:10 as "many sons" who will be brought unto glory; and these individuals — presently "children" awaiting the adoption (Rom. 8:18, 23) — are to look upon the present sufferings in the same framework that Christ looked upon His sufferings. We are to enter into the "fellowship [to be like-minded] of his sufferings" if we are to have a part in the "resurrection ['out-resurrection'] of the dead" and receive the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:10, 11, 14). Christ "suffered for us ['on our behalf'], leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps [Christians should 'suffer on His behalf']" (I Peter 2:21).

I Peter 1:11, pertaining to Christians rather than Christ, should literally read: "...when He testified beforehand the sufferings on behalf of Christ, and the glory that should follow." The "glory that should follow" pertains to the "salvation of your souls" (vv. 9, 10) following the "trial ['approval'] of your faith" (v. 7) at the judgment seat of Christ. When being tested and tried during the present time, Christians are told to "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12, 13; cf. James 1:2-12).

#### Elders in the Church

"Sufferings on behalf of Christ," "according to the will of God" — in view of the "approval" of our faith at the judgment seat, resulting in the "salvation" of our souls — constitute the main theme of the subject matter throughout the first four chapters of I Peter. ("...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" [II Tim. 3:12].) Beginning in chapter five we are introduced to elders in the assembly who are instructed to "Shepherd the flock." This "flock" is a heritage (a present inheritance from the Lord, placed under the care of the elders).

In verses two and three, elders, as shepherds, are instructed to lead the flock in a completely unselfish, willing, eager manner. They are never to participate in any type shameful or base gain; nor are they to place themselves in the position of masters, rulers over the flock. They are never to occupy a position of power over their heritage. (Note that this is their "heritage," even though it belongs to God. The word "God's" [v. 3, KJV] is in italics, indicating that it is not in the Greek text but has been supplied by the translators.) Elders are instructed to be "ensamples to the flock" (v. 3). The Greek word translated "ensamples" is tupos, from which we derive our English word "type." A "type" is a pattern of how something either will be or should be. In this case elders are to govern their lives in such a manner that they become patterns of how those in the flock should also govern their lives (cf. I Thess. 1:6, 7).

An interesting and significant feature of this section in I Peter is the fact that these instructions concerning elders are recorded in concluding verses of a book dealing specifically with the "salvation of the soul." And within these concluding verses surrounding instructions given to elders, the coming glory of Christ occupies the center of attention (vv. 1, 4, 6, 10, 11). Elders have been entrusted with a heritage in view of the coming salvation of the soul, and they are to lead this heritage into the things pertaining to this future salvation.

Elders who are faithful to their calling will receive an unfading crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd appears. Faithfulness of this nature will result in "works" producing a "living" faith which will be approved at the judgment seat. Faithful elders will then realize the "end ['goal']" of their faith, the salvation of their souls. And as a recompense for faithfulness in their calling, they will receive an unfading "crown of glory" and occupy positions of power and authority in the coming kingdom of Christ (James 2:14-26; I Peter 1:7-9; 5:4).

Unfaithfulness on the part of elders, however, will produce results of an opposite nature. Elders unfaithful to their calling will not possess "works" capable of producing a "living" faith. A "dead [barren]" faith will ensue, which will be disapproved at the judgment seat. Unfaithful elders will then realize the loss of their souls, for faith will not have been brought to its proper "goal." Consequently, they will be denied the unfading "crown of glory," and they will occupy no positions of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom.

#### The Ministry of Elders

"Depend upon and be submissive to the ones leading you; for they watch on behalf of your souls, as ones having to give an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

The preceding is a literal translation from the Greek text, and some variances will be noted between this and other translations. Elders are to conduct their ministries in a specific manner, and individuals placed under their care are to depend upon and be submissive to their leadership. The reason for this relationship between elders and their heritage is twofold: a) that the elders might be able to properly carry out their God-ordained responsibility of caring for the flock, and b) that the sheep might receive the proper care as they “grow thereby unto salvation [‘with respect to salvation’ (the salvation of their souls)]” (I Peter 2:2b, ASV).

1. “Depend upon and be submissive to the ones leading you”

Elders possess a tremendous responsibility. They are the God-ordained shepherds of the flock. They have received a heritage from the Lord, and, as shepherds placed over the sheep, they are directly responsible for the spiritual well-being of the sheep. A high calling of this nature — the highest calling any man can possess during the present day and time — demands certain qualifications; and these qualifications are not to be taken lightly, for the manner in which elders function will directly affect the spiritual well-being of the flock.

Paul in I Tim. 3:2-7 sets forth the qualifications which an elder (here called a “bishop”) must meet to be properly qualified to shepherd the flock:

a) He must be “blameless” (v. 2): The Greek word translated “blameless” is *anepileptos*. This is a compound word prefixed with the letter “a.” The verb form without the prefix is *epilambano*. *Epi* means “upon,” and *lambano* means “to take.” Thus, the two words used in a compound form mean “to take hold upon.” Prefixing the letter “a” to the compound form makes the word mean exactly the opposite — “unable to take hold upon.” This is the thought behind the meaning of “blameless.” An elder must be an individual that no one can take hold of (lay his hands upon, point a finger at) in the sense of bringing a charge of wrongdoing against him. He must be “above reproach.”

b) He must be “the husband of one wife” (v. 2): The construction of these words in the Greek text, standing alone, refers to “a one-woman type man [whether married or unmarried].” However, the context associates this “one-woman type man” with the marriage relationship existing between husband and wife (vv. 4, 5); and when used in this manner, the construction refers, as in the Authorized Version, to “the husband of one wife” (note I Tim. 5:9 where the same construction is used).

c) He must be “vigilant” (v. 2): The word in the Greek text means “dispassionate,” or “circumspect.” His ability to function must not be affected by personal or emotional involvement. He is to look carefully at all related circumstances before acting.

d) He must be “sober” (v. 2): The word in the Greek text means “serious-minded,” sensible,” “one who shows good judgment.”

e) He must be “of good behaviour” (v. 2): The word appearing in the Greek text is *kosmios*. This is closely related to the word *kosmos*, referring to an “orderly arrangement,” as opposed to chaos. The thought behind *kosmios* is “order.” An elder must be an “orderly type person.”

f) He must be “given to hospitality” (v. 2): The compound word *philoxenos* appears in the Greek text. *Philos* means “fond of” or “loving,” and *xenos* means “stranger” or “foreigner.” Thus, *philoxenos* refers to one who “loves strangers.” The early Church met in homes, and “strangers” (new converts) were continually being brought into these meeting places. These new converts were to be joyfully received and nurtured along with the others.

The same attitude is to prevail concerning “strangers” today. Christians move into a new area, or new converts are brought into the assembly. Both are to be received in a hospitable manner by elders in view of occupying their proper place in the assembly.

g) He must be “apt to teach” (v. 2): The Greek word refers to one who is “able and skilled in teaching.”

h) He must not be “given to wine” (v. 3): Wine in countries where early New Testament Churches were established, as in certain countries in the same area today, was a common beverage. The word in the Greek text refers to one who becomes addicted to wine.

i) He must not be a “striker” (v. 3): The Greek word refers to a “belligerent” or “hostile” type person.

j) He must not be “greedy of filthy lucre” (v. 3): The best Greek manuscripts omit these words. Consequently, this portion is not included in many recent translations. However, the expression is found in I Tim. 3:8 (referring to deacons) and in Titus 1:7 (referring to bishops [elders]). The expression in the Greek text refers to “dishonest” or “disgraceful base gain.”

k) He must be “patient” (v. 3): The Greek word refers to one who is “gentle,” “mild,” “reasonable.”

l) He must not be a “brawler” (v. 3): The word in the Greek text is *amachos*. This is the word *mache* (“to fight”) with the prefix “a,” which negates the word. Thus, *amachos* refers to “one who does not engage in fights,” “one who is not quarrelsome.”

m) He must not be “covetous” (v. 3): The word in the Greek text is *aphilarguros*. This is a compound word (*philos* and *arguros*) with the prefix “a.” *Philos*, as we have previously seen, means “fond of” or “loving”; and *arguros* means “silver,” referring to “money.” *Philarguros* means “a lover of money”; but the word used in the text is *aphilarguros*, which means exactly the opposite — “one who does not love money.”

n) He must be an individual who “ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (v. 4): The word “ruleth” is a translation of the compound Greek word *proistemi* (comprised of *pro* and *histemi*). *Pro* means “before,” and *histemi* means “to stand.” Thus, *proistemi* means “to stand before,” “to take the lead.” The word translated “gravity” is from a Greek word (*semnotes*) which refers to “dignified behaviour.” An elder is to take the lead role — stand before all others — in “supervising” or “managing” his house, and he is to accomplish this with “dignified behaviour.” An elder must manage his own house in this manner: “For if a man know not how to rule [‘manage’] his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” (v. 5).

o) He must not be a “novice” (v. 6): The word in the Greek text is *neophutos*, from which we derive our English word “neophyte.” *Neophutos* is a compound word comprised of *neos* (“new”) and *phutos* ([from *phuo*] “to spring up”). The word refers to a “new convert.”

The given reason why a “new convert” is not to hold the position of elder is because he may be “lifted up with pride” and “fall into the condemnation of the devil.” Satan, in the pre-Adamic world, became dissatisfied with his position as ruler over this earth and sought to exalt his throne above his God-appointed position (Isa. 14:12ff; Ezek. 28:12ff). As a result, the *kosmos* became a chaos (Gen. 1:1, 2a), necessitating restoration through Divine intervention (Gen. 1:2b-2:1).

An immature Christian is not to hold the position of elder, lest he, through pride, as Satan, might seek to exalt his office above his God-appointed position (rule over the flock, etc.). Such a move would, after some fashion, have the same results as Satan's move. In Satan's case it was kosmos to chaos relative to the earth; and in the elder's case it would be kosmos to chaos relative to the Church.

p) He must "have a good report of them which are without" (v. 7): In addition to everything else which has been named, an elder must possess a good testimony in the eyes of those outside the Church (those in the world). As stated at the very beginning of the list of qualifications for elders, he must be "above reproach." An elder must be an individual whom no one can bring a charge of wrongdoing against.

Elders obtain a testimony of this nature through one means only — a walk "by faith." The Greek word translated "report" in the text is *marturia*. This same word appears in its verb form in Heb. 11:2, 4, 5, 39, referring to individuals obtaining a "good report [good testimony]" through faith. Apart from a walk by faith, a good testimony cannot ensue. Through a walk by faith, a good testimony cannot help but ensue.

The thought is not as is so often heard today, "Watch your testimony!" The thought is, "Walk by faith, and you will not have to watch your testimony!" Those in the world do not understand a walk of this nature, for they have no capacity for spiritual perception; but they do understand, through their soulical nature, that someone walking "by faith" is not walking in their realm, and they can bring no possible charge against such an individual.

2. "...for they watch on behalf of your souls"

According to Heb. 13:17 the basic thought underlying the entire ministry of elders is that they are to "watch" on behalf of the souls of those placed under their care. The word translated "watch" carries the thought in the Greek text of never ceasing. The elders, at all times, in every facet of their ministry, are to be watching "on behalf of your souls."

A similar expression is used in the Old Testament concerning shepherds in the house of Israel. These shepherds were called "watchmen" (Isa. 52:7, 8; 56:10, 11; Jer. 6:16, 17), and they were to watch over the house of Israel in an unceasing manner. This ministry was also on behalf of the "souls" of the ones to whom they ministered, as well as their own "souls" (Ezek. 3:17-21; 33:2-20).

Paul, describing his own ministry, on a number of occasions in his writings set forth the unceasing manner which is to surround the ministry of elders: "...that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers"; "I thank my God always on your behalf..."; "Always in every prayer of mine for you all..."; "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you"; "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing ... For this cause also thank we God without ceasing..."; "We are bound to thank God always for you ... Wherefore also we pray always for you ... But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you..."; "...without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day"; "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers..." (Rom. 1:9; I Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:3; I Thess. 1:2, 3; 2:13; II Thess. 1:3, 11; 2:13; II Tim. 1:3; Philem. 4).

It should be noted that most of the preceding references concern themselves with Paul ministering "incessantly" on behalf of other Christians in view of their calling, their spiritual maturity, and the coming kingdom of Christ. Paul conducted his ministry after this fashion, and elders today are to conduct their ministries after the same fashion.

According to Scripture the elder's incessant ministry is to be conducted in a twofold manner, and both the incessant fashion and twofold manner were set forth in a statement by the apostles to the Church in Jerusalem at the time deacons were first appointed: "But we will give ourselves continually to [a)] prayer, and to the [b)] ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Deacons were appointed to take care of certain matters in the Church which, if left for the elders, would detract from the ministry into which they had been called. The result of such detractions would be that both the elders and those to whom they ministered would suffer spiritual loss; and detractions wherein spiritual loss was presently experienced could, in the final analysis, possibly lead to suffering loss — the loss of their souls — before the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul's entire ministry revolved around prayer and the ministry of the Word, with the uppermost thought in his mind always being the coming "salvation of the souls" of those to whom he ministered. Paul's letter to the Church in Colosse gives a classic example of how he conducted his ministry as a "watchman" on behalf of the souls of Christians.

Because of the "hope" laid up for Christians in heaven, Paul did not cease to pray for those in Colosse. His unceasing desire in his prayers was that each individual "might be filled with the knowledge [mature knowledge] (epignosis) of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," resulting in these individuals walking "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge [mature knowledge] (epignosis) of God..." (Col. 1:3-5, 9, 10).

Paul was made a minister of what is known in Scripture as, "the mystery," which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27). "The mystery" revealed to Paul through the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (personal appearance of Christ to Paul following his conversion [Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3]) pertained to the Jews and Gentiles being "fellowheirs, and of the same body [the 'one new man' in Christ]" (Eph. 2:13-15; 3:6). This is the same "inheritance" referred to in Col. 1:12. Those in Colosse had been rendered fit (through being placed "in Christ") to be "partakers" of the inheritance of the saints in light." These individuals had been rendered fit positionally, and from this position "in Christ" they could never be removed.

An individual must occupy this positional standing in order to possess "the hope of glory"; but this positional standing itself does not guarantee that the one "in Christ" will realize the hope of his calling, entering into the inheritance of the saints. That's not at all what is taught in Col. 1:12. And because it is possible for individuals "in Christ" not to realize the hope of their calling, Paul made known details surrounding "the mystery" to those in Colosse, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom" in order that he might "present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:25-28).

The Greek word translated "perfect" in Col. 1:28 is *teleios*, the noun form of the same word also translated "perfect" in James 2:22 and from the same root form as the word translated "end" in I Peter 1:9. James refers to faith "made mature," "brought to full development," "reaching its goal" through works; and Peter refers to faith being "approved," following the approval of works, subsequently reaching its

proper “goal.” These verses pertain to future issues surrounding the judgment seat of Christ, and the thought of presenting “every man mature” in Col. 1:29 pertains to the same issues.

3. “...as ones having to give an account”

Elders, entrusted with a heritage, will one day be called upon to render an account concerning their faithfulness in continually engaging in prayer and the ministry of the Word as “watchmen” on behalf of the souls of those in the heritage.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord [at the judgment seat], we persuade men [to prepare themselves]” (II Cor. 5:10, 11a).

The word translated “terror” is from the Greek word for “fear” (phobos). Its usage here is very similar to its usage in Heb. 10:31 — a verse referring specifically to the people of God (cf. vv. 26-30): “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Faithful Christians will have nothing to fear when they appear before the judgment seat of Christ; but for unfaithful Christians, this will be “a fearful [terrible] thing...” Too long have Christians been misled into believing that everyone will stand as victors before the judgment seat, to be praised and receive a reward. That is not at all the picture. This is a judgment seat! And the issues of this judgment will determine every Christian’s position in the coming kingdom of Christ.

The “watchmen” of Israel were to be called to render an account, and they would appear at this accounting in one of two fashions: a) as ones who sounded the warning from God, delivering their own souls and the souls of those who heeded the message (Ezek. 3:17, 19, 21; 33:5, 7, 9); or b) as ones who failed to sound the warning from God, failing to deliver their own souls and the souls of those who were to hear the message (Ezek. 3:17, 18, 20; 33:5, 7, 8). For the latter, the “blood [the ‘soul’ is in the blood (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 53:12)]” of those who had not been warned would be required at the responsible “watchman’s hand.”

Many Christian ministers and teachers are quick to apply these verses in Ezekiel, chapters three and thirty-three to the unsaved. But these verses have nothing to do with unsaved individuals. These verses concern Israel, watchmen placed over the house of Israel, and the saving or losing of one’s soul. The only counterpart in the New Testament concerns the Church, watchmen placed over the flock, and the saving or losing of one’s soul.

4. “...that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable for you”

The sheep are to “depend upon and be submissive” to the shepherd’s leadership as he “watches” on behalf of their souls. Otherwise, the shepherd’s task will not be one of joy, and the sheep will not profit through his ministry on their behalf. The joy of the shepherd and the profit of the sheep have to do with both present and future values. If the shepherd and sheep possess a proper relationship today, the sheep will be properly cared for, realizing a “profit”; and this will be a “joy” to the shepherd. Then, before the judgment seat of Christ when this proper treatment is reflected through the realization of the flock’s (and the shepherd’s) calling, as they are shown to be “profitable servants,” there will again be “joy” for the shepherd.

However, if the shepherd and sheep possess an improper relationship today, the sheep will be improperly cared for, realizing no “profit”; and this will be to the shepherd’s “dismay.” Then, before the judgment seat of Christ when this improper treatment is reflected through the flock (and possibly the shepherd also) failing to realize their calling, as they are shown to be “unprofitable servants,” there will again be “dismay” for the shepherd.

The “Salvation” or “Loss” of the Soul is the present great issue in Scripture confronting every Christian. Elders! Christians placed under the ministry of elders! Give heed to the Word of God!