



Behold the Lamb

Publications

Simply Christ

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

Volume 17

*Twelve Gospel Messages from our
Weekly SIMPLY CHRIST Newsletter!*

Simply Christ

The Apostle Paul spoke of a time when Christian people would *“heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* II Timothy 4:3-4. A fable is something which is “made up.” Fables find a home in the church because they tell people what they already want to hear. Sadly, we live in an hour where the hearts of many would rather believe a fable than the record of God’s word.

You can prove almost anything by using only the scriptures which support your belief. If you really want to know if your belief is the truth, go to God’s word to see if it can be disproved

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Matthew 15:9

by the scripture. The truth is not afraid of the truth!

The purpose of Simply Christ and other Behold the Lamb Publications is to share the gospel of Christ according to what the scriptures actually say. We are not defenders of denomination, dogma, religious tradition, or the newest religious fad. We have set our heart to simply say what the word of God actually says.



Leroy Surface

As a young man I was told by an elder minister that I should just accept what the leaders of “our movement” told us was true rather than believe



Keith Surface

what I saw the scriptures to be saying. I chose to believe that the word of God is true. Anyone that will do the same will find the gospel of Christ to be a simple message with the power to make everyone who believes it ...free indeed!

Simply Christ

Gospel Insight

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

Volume 17

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THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT

As Jesus was being interrogated and railed upon by the chief priests, elders, and high council of the Jews, Peter was denying that he even knew him. On the first occasion Peter simply denied that he knew Jesus. On the second occasion Peter swore an oath that he did not know Jesus. Finally, on the third occasion, Peter began “...*to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.*” Matthew 26:74. It seems that Peter not only took an oath that he did not know Jesus, but pronounced a curse on either those who accused him of knowing Jesus, or, more likely, upon Jesus Christ himself.

Only hours before, Jesus had told Peter that he would deny him three times. Luke 22:34. Peter could not believe that he would do such a thing, but Jesus said, “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*” Luke 22:31-32. With these words, Jesus was looking past Peter’s denial to the hour of Peter’s conversion. **For over three years Peter had been a disciple, but it was only after Jesus’ resurrection that Peter became a born-again child of God.**

All my life I have heard ministers use Peter’s denial, David’s adultery, or Abraham’s deception of Pharaoh as proof of the sinfulness every child of God still possesses. It is though they are completely ignorant of the great change and redemption that was brought in at Calvary. While it is true there is much we can learn from those who walked with God before Christ appeared, they (including Peter before he was converted) are not examples of what it is to be the redeemed of the Lord.

While the book of Hebrews reminds us of the exploits the great men and women of old did through believing God, it says, “***These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them...***”

Hebrews 11:13. As great as these men and women of faith were, they spent their lives persuaded of and looking for the promise of redemption which they could never receive in their lifetime.

As the writer of Hebrews concludes his record of the great men and women of faith, he says, “*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, **received not the promise:** God having provided some better thing for us, **that they without us should not be made perfect.***” Hebrews 11:39-40. Each of these obtained a witness of righteousness by faith, but they could not receive in their lifetime the completion of salvation that we receive through Jesus Christ.

The words “*made perfect*” as used in Hebrews means “*to complete.*” This “*completion*” is described as having our inner man purged from sin by the blood of Christ. The Bible says, “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience from dead works** to serve the living God?*” Hebrews 8:14. The “*conscience*” is speaking of your “*innermost thoughts and feelings.*” The sacrifices and ritual of the Law could sanctify the outside of a person but could never wash sin from the heart. The Bible says, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*” Hebrews 10:4. The sacrificial system of the Law left the person very “*incomplete*” before God because sin still remained in their heart and nature.

Jesus Christ came to “*take away the sin*” John 1:29 that dwells in the human heart. This is what it means to be made complete. Yet, no one could receive this “*completion*” until Christ died and rose again from the dead.

Those believers who lived before Christ came, died in faith without receiving the promises, but they were not lost. The Bible verifies this in the following chapter of Hebrews, telling us that when we come to Jesus we are also coming “*to God the Judge of all, and to **the spirits of just men made perfect.***” Hebrews 12:22-23. They were not made complete before they died, but they received that completion when Christ rose from the dead. They were righteous men while they lived, but now they are “*the spirits of just men made perfect.*”

For those who are alive today, it is a dangerous fallacy to believe that they also will receive the promised cleansing from sin after death. This was true for Abraham, David, and others because they believed God even though Christ had not yet come. Today, Christ has come! Jesus was very clear. It is only those who do not believe

him who die in their sins. He said, “...*for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*” John 8:24. Your deliverance from sin and Satan is not after you die. Today is the day of salvation! After you die, it will be too late!

SPEAKING IN TONGUES – Part 1

There is nothing more scriptural than for those who believe upon Jesus Christ to speak in other “tongues.” Shortly before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples, “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; **they shall speak with new tongues;** ...*” Mark 16:17. You may know those who speak in tongues that are nothing but flesh, hype, pretense, or even demonic, but their error does not disannul the words of Jesus, the Apostles, and the record of the scripture. To deny that speaking in tongues is ordained of God is to deny a very substantial amount of scripture. If a person is comfortable with such denial of God’s word, I doubt there is much I can say which would make any difference to them.

It is clear in the scripture that speaking in “other tongues” (as the Spirit of God gives the utterance) is the witness God gives that a person has received His Spirit. The Bible gives record of four occasions where people received the Holy Ghost Baptism. Let’s look at each of these with an open heart, accepting the word of God for what it says.

1. The Day of Pentecost.

Most remember this amazing account of the day the Spirit of God was first poured out upon on one hundred and twenty believers. The Bible says, “***They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.***” Acts 2:4. The tongues they spoke in that day were other languages recognized by people from many different nations. Yet, this is the only occasion recorded where the tongues spoken were reported to be in other known languages.

Some argue that speaking in tongues must be in a known language for the tongue to be of God. But if that is true, why do the Apostles speak of speaking “*with **the tongues of men and of angels?***” Or

why does Paul say, “*For he that speaketh in an **unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries**”?* 1 Corinthians 14:2.

2. Believers at Ephesus.

When the Apostle Paul met some believers at Ephesus, he asked them, “*Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed.*” Acts 19:2. He was not questioning their faith or salvation, but simply wanted to know if they had they received the promised baptism of God’s Spirit since they believed upon Jesus Christ. Like many Christians today, they told him they had never hear of such a thing. The Bible records, “*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and **they spake with tongues, and prophesied.***” Acts 19:6.

3. The House of Cornelius.

Peter, being instructed by the Lord, went into the house of Cornelius who was a gentile, and shared the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Peter was speaking, “*the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. **For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.***” Acts 10:44-46. The Bible is clear that Peter and the Jews with him knew these gentiles received the Holy Ghost that day “*...for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*” Again, speaking in tongues was the witness God gave that He had given these new believers His Spirit. Years later, Peter reminds the church leaders in Jerusalem of this, saying, “*And God, which knoweth the hearts, **bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;***” Acts 15:8. God giving them the Holy Ghost was God’s witness that their hearts had been purified by faith in Christ, but speaking in tongues was God’s witness that He had given them the Holy Ghost.

4. The believers in Samaria.

When Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, great revival broke out with many miracles, wonders and conversions to Jesus Christ. The Bible says, “*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*” Acts 8:12. Many people were

saved, but as of yet, none had received the Holy Ghost. We know this because the Bible says, “*Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”).” Acts 8:14-16. The Apostles knew that a person did not receive the Holy Ghost simply because they believed on Jesus Christ for salvation.

By any scriptural measurement, these new believers in Samaria were “saved people.” They believed the gospel Philip preached unto them. They were baptized. They were followers of Christ, but when the Apostles heard the report, they knew even before they came that not a single person among them had received the Holy Ghost. The Bible says, “***For as yet he was fallen upon none of them.***” There was an evidence the Apostles looked for that happened every time the Holy Ghost fell on a person. This had not happened to a single believer in Samaria.

After the Apostles arrived in Samaria, they “*laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*” Acts 8:17. Now the Bible does not tell us exactly what happened, but it was so amazing that “*when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*” Acts 8:18-24. The Apostles strongly rebuked Simon, but the evident point is that everyone could tell when these believers received the Holy Ghost. God again had given His witness! I say, that just as on every other occasion, they were speaking in tongues and glorifying God.

It is evident from the record of the scripture that speaking in tongues is the witness God gives that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit. This is true evidence because it always happened “*as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” Acts 2:4. This means the Holy Ghost was actually forming the words that came out of their mouth. These people were not coached, primed, or taught. When the Spirit of God came into them, He gave His own witness in other tongues for all to hear.

This great witness of the Holy Ghost baptism brings to light the great error of much of the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. In many circles it is taught that speaking in tongues, as well as prophecy and the other gifts of the Spirit, are all teachable things. If they are, then they give no evidence at all that God's Spirit has come to that person! It is no longer the witness of God but the witness of religious flesh. Many people have a "tongue" they can turn on at their will regardless of whether the Spirit of God is moving upon them. They believe it is their gift so they can use it at their will. I do not know what they have, but it is not the witness of God's Spirit.

Even those ministers who tell people to speak words they hear in their head are leading the people into a fallacy. When the Holy Ghost fell on the first believers, God did not put words in their mind. He formed words in their mouth! Your mind may hear the tongues you heard the preacher utter, your grandma utter, or some other conception of your mind. That is not the way the Spirit of God works! This fallacy is not proof of the Holy Spirit baptism, but, if anything, it is proof of the lack of it. I close Part 1 of this article with Paul's question to the believers. *"Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?"*

SPEAKING IN TONGUES – Part 2

When we talk about the Baptism with the Holy Ghost and the initial evidence God gives of speaking in others tongues as recorded in the Bible, many people are preprogramed to reject that this is of God. They cannot deny it based on the scripture, so they point to some teacher who claims it all ceased with the death of the Apostles. **While it is true that many things ceased with the death of the early Apostles including preaching the truth, that does not mean God desired it to be that way. The loss of such reality is how the church fell into the dark ages!** We cannot disannul God's word based on religious teachers who decided they can tell us things ended when the scripture does not say that. We must be a people who believe God's word!

I want to address some common questions about the Holy Spirit Baptism and speaking in tongues. As always, I trust to give answers based on the word of God.

1. Do we automatically receive the Holy Spirit when we receive Christ? No! There is a clear difference between receiving the Spirit of Christ and receiving the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul said, "*God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts...*" Galatians 4:6. He also said "*...if any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of his.*" Romans 8:9. We are saved when the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of God's Son, comes into us. Many people were saved in Samaria when Philip preached there, but none received the Holy Ghost until the Apostles came down and laid hands on them to receive. Acts 8:4-25. Paul asked those believers he encountered at Ephesus, "*Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?*" Acts 19:2. He later reminded the Ephesians of this truth, saying, "*...after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...*" Ephesians 1:13.

In Romans, Paul speaks of two different conditions for the child of God. The first condition is "*...if **Christ be in you**, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*" Romans 8:10. When we receive Christ, we receive the life of God within and are transformed completely, but our natural body still needs to be "*quickened*" by the power of God's Spirit.

Paul then speaks of a second condition for a child of God, saying, "*But if the **Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" Romans 8:11. If Christ is in you, you are saved and have eternal life, but if the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead (the Holy Spirit) dwell in you, he makes your mortal body alive for the supernatural service of God. I know most teachers deny what I have told you, but it is God's word.

2. Do you receive the Holy Spirit by faith? Yes and No! You do not receive the Holy Ghost by faith if you think that means to simply ask God to send Him then just accept by faith that you have received the baptism of God's Spirit. However, we must "*ask in faith*" believing God will send the Spirit to us. Jesus Christ is the

baptizer. Only when he baptizes us with the Spirit do we receive the Spirit. When that Baptism comes, you will begin to speak in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives you utterance. This is God's witness that He has given you His Spirit. Act 10:46.

3. Is speaking in tongues our prayer language? No! Our prayer language is a language we understand. Tongues is the Spirit's language. You need to pour out your heart to God in your native language but allow the Spirit free reign to move on your spirit and pray though you if he chooses. Paul told us *"the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* Romans 8:26. The language of God's Spirit is not something you can utter. That is why it is always *"as the Spirit gave them utterance."* Acts 2:3. Those I know who I confidently believe have God's Spirit working in them and speak in tongues are never able to do so unless the Spirit of God is moving on them. They are not *"sensual."* Jude 19. When Paul said, *"...my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful"* I Corinthians 14:14, he is describing how the Holy Spirit moves upon the believer's spirit and in unison utterance reaches upwards towards God.

4. Is speaking in tongues an important part of our walk? Yes! First, it is the first evidence God gives that His Spirit has come into you. Second, as God's Spirit begins to move on someone He has filled and they begin to speak, pray, or worship in tongues, God in that time is building them up in His Spirit. Paul told us, *"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..."* I Corinthians 14:4. We need that edification for ourselves so we will have something from God to edify others. This is why Paul says, *"but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."*

5. Is it wrong for a person to speak with tongues in the church house? No! A person who has received God's Spirit should never be ashamed to allow God's Spirit to speak through them as they pray or worship, even in the church house. **It doesn't matter that you or I do not understand them. They are not praying to or worshipping us!** Paul said, *"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."* I Corinthians 14:2. When the Spirit of God begins to move upon a few

worshippers and they yield to Him, God has a fresh avenue to fill the entire place with His presence.

Paul's words of restraint upon those who spoke with tongues in the church was concerning those who were speaking to the congregation. When you speak to someone, what you say is useless if they do not understand you. Two of the gifts of the Spirit are "*divers kinds of tongues*" and "*interpretation of tongues.*" ¹ Corinthians 12:10. God places these two gifts together in a church body. One may deliver a message from God to the people in tongues then another gives the interpretation of the message by the Spirit of God. It is much like a missionary preaching through an interpreter. If there is no interpreter, the missionary's words mean nothing to the people. Even so, speaking in tongues to the congregation profits nothing if God does not give the interpretation. I Corinthians 14:27-28.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES – Part 3

Years ago, while in Israel along with a group from a large church in the Houston area, my dad was asked to speak at the Mount of Olives. As he spoke, the presence of God settled upon him and those who were gathered there. There was silence for a long while after he finished, then finally the Armenian tour guide, who was a professor at the Hebrew University, stood with tears in his eyes and said, "This man has prepared the way for me to give you the tour I have always wanted to give instead of what I am instructed to tell you.

Two days later at the Sea of Galilee, an elder from the large church approached my dad and asked if he would go for a walk with him. He said, "I love my church. The worship is wonderful, and we have all the gifts of the Spirit in operation in every service. We used to believe we had to wait on the Spirit of God to speak in tongues, but now we understand these things are our gifts and we can use them at any time. But when you spoke yesterday evening, I felt the presence of God for the first time in many years. Will you pray with me? I want to feel the presence of God again.

The contradiction in this man's words was astounding. He was convinced that his church was experiencing the great gifts and manifestation of God's Spirit, while at the same time it was also void

of the presence of God. Such is never the case. Yet tens of thousands if not millions think they have the same great spiritual manifestations without God's presence upon them. Something is very wrong when that is the case.

Above fifty years ago, a "new revelation" began to take hold in Spirit-filled churches. Until that time, it was known by those who received the Holy Ghost Baptism that the operation of the spiritual gifts came and operated at the express will and visitation of God. The Bible says, "*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit...*" I Corinthians 12:11. The "new revelation" said that speaking in tongues and the gifts of the Spirit were our gifts and we could use them at our will. People began to be taught how to speak in tongues. Others were given "primer" words to repeat. While still others were told to simply speak what they heard in their mind.

Even many of those who had received the Spirit by visitation from Heaven were seduced by this "new revelation." I remember how strange it was the first time I heard a minister instruct everyone to speak in tongues. This was a startling thing! We knew tongues came by the moving of God's Spirit and not by the urging of man. It soon began to be taught that tongues is our prayer language and we could and should pray in tongues at our will. It sounded spiritual to some, but it was not. It became mechanical. Entire congregations of people would supposedly pray "in the Spirit," and the Spirit of God was not even in the building. You could go to an altar and there was no need to really talk to God. You could just speak in tongues. You could do it in church, while watching television, or after committing fornication. It was your gift. But was it from God?

I do not write these things because I do not believe in the Baptism with God's Spirit and spiritual gifts, but because I do! The speaking in tongues that is God's witness to you and everyone else that His Spirit has come still works exactly the same way as on the Day of Pentecost. They spoke in tongues "*as (and only as) the Spirit gave them utterance.*" Acts 2:4. What a mistake it is to lose that sovereign visitation in order to join the voices of tens of thousands who speak in tongues or prophecy at their will, that is, if you are one who would rather have the presence of God.

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH – Part 1

For centuries, justification and sanctification have been viewed as sort of a step 1 and step 2 of the Christian experience. In general, justification has been presented as affecting our standing with God, whereas sanctification is taught to be about our cleanliness before God, whether positionally or in real-life experience. Almost all gospel teaching tries to fit within this framework in one way or another. For many years I have questioned the explanations given of both of these works, but today I see clearly that the basic framework itself is fatally flawed. An honest reading of the scripture shows clearly that justification and sanctification are not two different works, but rather two different ways of explaining this wonderful gospel of Christ to two very different audiences. Justification explained the gospel in terms the Greco-Roman world could relate to, while presenting the gospel as *"the righteousness,"* or justice, of God. Romans 1:16-17. On the other hand, sanctification explained the same gospel in terms the Hebrews understood based upon the purification requirements of the Law of Moses.

The Apostle Paul is the only New Testament writer who presented the gospel in terms of "justification," which he did in Acts, Romans, Galatians, and Titus. He was an apostle to the Gentiles, and it seems the gospel he received by revelation was tailored to speak to the Gentiles and not easily understood by the early Jewish believers. Peter spoke of Paul's epistles, saying, *"...in which are some things hard to be understood..."* II Peter 3:15-16. Paul seems to acknowledge his different way of presenting the gospel when he tells of the trip he and Barnabas took to Jerusalem to see the other Apostles. He said, *"I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles..."* He also says, *"...when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter."* Galatians 2:7. It was not a different gospel, but it was a distinctly different way of presently it.

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul famously wrote, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness (or justice) of God*

revealed...” Romans 1:16-17. In the first three chapters, Paul is like a prosecutor who strips away every defense until we see the entire world guilty of sin and deserving damnation. Romans 3:19. It is at this point that Paul begins to show what steps God’s justice mandated for the salvation of humanity. He says, *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...”* Romans 3:21. We then discover that the first part of justification is forgiveness, or *“remission of sins that are past.”* Romans 3:25. In the 4th chapter we find that justification comes only through faith, but in the 5th chapter we begin to see the transformation justification brings to the believer. God’s righteous judgment determined that if one man, Adam, made us to be sinners, then another man, Jesus Christ, would make us righteous. Paul clearly makes this known, saying, *“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”* Romans 5:19.

The 6th chapter of Romans explains to us how God’s work of justification transforms a sinner into a righteous creation. Paul said, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* Romans 6:6. Our death in union with Christ is how God chose to deliver us from the power and presence of sin. Some claim this passage is explaining sanctification, but it is not. The next verse says, *“For he that is dead is freed from sin.”* Romans 6:7. What is important to see is that the word translated “freed” in this verse is the Greek word *“dikaioō”* which is the word Paul used for *“justified.”* Our deliverance from sin is the ultimate result of Christ’s work of *“justification.”* Paul then tells us that holiness is the fruit, or result, of being made free from sin by the justifying power of the cross of Christ. Romans 6:22. Instead of saying we are made holy by the work of sanctification, in Romans Paul presents that we are made holy by the power of justification.

In the 8th chapter of Romans, Paul gives an overview of all he has written so far. He says, *“... and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”* Romans 8:30. Any modern theologian would have said, “whom he called, he also justified, and whom he justified, he also sanctified,” but Paul says nothing here about being sanctified. Why is this? It is because Paul is not explaining the gospel based upon the purification

requirements of the Law, but by presenting God's justice to save sinners through the power of justification.

In Sanctified by Faith - Part 2 we will show how this same gospel message was presented to the Hebrews based upon the purification requirements of the Law.

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH – Part 2

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul uses the message of Justification to present the gospel to the Greco-Roman world. His multi-faceted presentation of God's justice began with forgiveness of past sins and culminates with the believer being delivered from the presence of sin in their nature through the power of Jesus' crucifixion. Romans 6:6-7. The book of Hebrews, however, reveals the same gospel in terms the Jews, who had trusted in the purification rituals and ordinances of the Law, could relate to. This manner of preaching the gospel presented redemption as a work called Sanctification.

To be sanctified by faith in Christ is neither a second work of grace, nor a progressive work. It is the work Christ accomplished upon the cross for us all and is very essence of salvation itself. When Jesus saved Paul on the road to Damascus and called him into the ministry, he said, *"...I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among **them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**"* Acts 26:17-18. The phrase *"sanctified by faith"* is synonymous with being *"saved by faith"* in Christ.

The opening words of several epistles confirm this equating of sanctification to be salvation. Paul opens his first epistle to Corinth, writing, *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to **them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus...**"* I Corinthians 1:2. The Apostle Peter writes his first epistle to the *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, **through sanctification of the Spirit,** unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ..."* I Peter 1:2. Jude also writes *"...to **them that are sanctified** by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."* Jude 1:1. Each of these

epistles were addressed to an entire body of saints, and not only to certain ones who had reached a special spiritual plateau. Paul confirms that sanctification is the work of salvation when he says, *“God hath from the beginning chosen you to **salvation through sanctification of the Spirit** and belief of the truth.”* ¹¹

Thessalonians 2:13.

Many people believe you are first born again or “*regenerated*,” then sanctified at a later time. Paul’s words refuted this when he wrote, *“...according to his mercy he saved us, by **the washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”* Titus 3:5-6. There is no “*regeneration*” without “*the washing of regeneration*.” We are washed from our sin when we are born again of God’s Spirit!

Perhaps the clearest scriptural example of “*sanctified by faith*” is relayed to us by Peter when he spoke of the salvation of Cornelius and those with him. Peter said that God “*...put no difference between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith***.” Acts 15: 9. To have your heart purified by faith in Jesus Christ is what it means to be sanctified by faith. This is the work of salvation.

The book of Hebrews gives us the most detailed explanation of what it means to be sanctified. It begins by telling us Jesus Christ is the Son and express image of God who, “*when he had by himself **purged our sins**, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*.” Hebrews 1:3. The power of this statement is revealed chapters later when we are told that “*...the worshippers **once purged should have had no more conscience of sins***.” Hebrews 10:2. Your “*conscience*” speaks of your innermost thoughts and feelings. When a person is sanctified by faith in Christ, sin is washed from their heart, i.e. conscience. This is what Jesus spoke of as cleansing the inside of the cup. Matthew 23:26. When Jesus purges your sin, it no longer dwells in your heart, and so you no longer have “*a conscience of sins*.”

The book of Hebrews presents sanctification as a complete work Christ accomplishes in the believer. Multiple times it uses the word “*perfect*,” which means complete, to describe this work of Christ. It exposes the Law of Moses’s inability to make anything complete because it could only affect the “*outer man*,” or “*the*

flesh.” The scripture says, *”For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:* (Can you see that the result of something being sanctified is that it is purified?) *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* Hebrews 9:13-14. Anything that leaves a person with an unclean heart is more like the Law of Moses than it is the gospel of Christ. The sanctifying power of the blood of Christ cleanses a person from sin both inwardly and outwardly.

Our sanctification is the central purpose for which Christ suffered and died on the cross. The Bible says, *”Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”* Hebrews 13:12. This cleansing power of the blood of Christ will avail for anyone who will simply believe the gospel and trust in Christ. We believe God, and he sanctifies us. This is what it means to be *”sanctified by faith.”*

In Sanctified by Faith – Part 3, I will seek to answer why some who do know the Lord still struggle with sin in their heart.

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH – Part 3

Early last Sunday morning, I was still in bed when I realized God was speaking to my heart. My thoughts centered around a vehicle being driven down the highway when it ran out of gas and the engine died. The vehicle coasted for several hundred yards before it came to a complete stop. This has happened to me a few times, and I remember letting the vehicle coast as long as possible hoping to get closer to a gas station. If a hill or overpass was ahead, the vehicle would not be able to climb it because the engine was dead and could not propel the vehicle.

My thoughts then turned to an old man of God I knew who came to Christ in the 1940s. At that time, he still ploughed with a team of mules, but instead of the traditional gee and haw commands, his mules had learned to respond to his words of profanity. The day after receiving salvation, he was working his mules who refused to respond to his gee and haw commands. Frustrated, he began to holler

at them using profanity as he had done in times past. When he realized what he was doing he was horrified and sought out his new pastor. The pastor told him it was because he was saved, but not sanctified yet. He and his pastor began to pray until the Spirit of God came upon them and the man never had a problem with profanity again. This man lived the entirety of his life free from sin, believing God had sanctified him that second day after his salvation the day before.

It is amazing how when the Lord shows you things like this, he also gives understanding of what you are seeing. I had been at a loss on how to explain how the work of sanctification comes to a believer. I understood in my spirit what I wanted to say, but did not have the words to express it. For years I have seen the fallacy of teaching sanctification as a progressive work. Just as the Apostle Paul spoke of those who are *“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* II Timothy 3:7, those who believe they are in the process of sanctification never arrive at being sanctified. More than this, however, the word of God is clear that our sanctification is the initial work of salvation, and not something to follow after. On the other hand, I felt checked describing sanctification as an instantaneous work received at the moment of salvation. While I know this is true, I also know that it gets people expecting it to come like some sort of spiritual lightning bolt. I have seen many whom I had no doubt truly received Christ and were completely transformed, but still seemed to be troubled by certain things of the old life for a short period of time.

Our sanctification is described multiple ways in the word of God. The book of Hebrews describes it as *“...having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience...”* Hebrews 10:22. John the Baptist described our sanctification when he said, *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29. Neither of these statements are describing the deeds of sin but rather are speaking of the source of sin in the human heart. Jesus told us that people commit the deeds of sin because they are enslaved to a master called Sin which dwells within them. John 8:34. The Apostle Paul also mentions this source of sin as he tells of his struggles under the Law before coming to Christ, saying, *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* Romans 7:20. Some

people refer to this source of sin as the “sin nature.” Whatever you call it, it is the sin that entered into the world through Adam’s transgression Romans 5:12, and its entrance made us all to be sinners Romans 5:19, even before we ever committed the first sin.

This sin master is like a generator in the human heart that generates sinful thoughts, desires, and actions. Great effort and energy are often spent seeking to rid oneself of the things it generates. A person may feel successful at times, but then the generator kicks in and fills the heart again with the things Jesus said defiles a person. Mark 7:21-23. You could call it a “Sin Engine” which we received from Adam, and it constantly pollutes the human heart.

As the Lord dealt with my heart Sunday morning, I realized more than ever before that this “Sin Engine” is what Jesus Christ came to take away. Paul spoke of this saying, “...*our old man is crucified with him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” Romans 6:6. In redemption, the “Sin Engine” does not just run out of fuel, but it is destroyed by the work of Christ. When it is destroyed, or “*taken away*,” by the power of the blood of Christ, it can no longer generate sin in your heart.

The vehicle in this illustration I received from the Lord, is the old life of a person who comes to Christ. The things the Bible says will “*shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*” I Corinthians 6:9-10 are the hills and overpasses. Once the engine dies, the vehicle can no longer climb such things. If you can commit adultery or fornication, lie and deceive, manipulate, steal, and rage against others, your “Sin Engine” is alive and well. On the other hand, when the “Sin Engine” is destroyed by the blood of Christ, there still may be learned behaviors of the old life which will cease over the days or weeks to come as your vehicle coasts to a complete stop. The Sin Engine can no longer generate sin in your heart, so as your vehicle comes to its place of rest in Christ, habits and learned behavior of your old life simply come to an end.

Last week I stated I would seek to answer why some who do know the Lord still struggle with sin in their heart. I apologize that I was not able to cover that in this article. Perhaps next week we will.

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH – Part 4

The Bible is clear that the washing of sin from our heart through Christ's work of sanctification is the essence of our salvation. While it is evident that a great portion of those who fill churches have never been born of God's Spirit, there are also those who truly found Christ, but now find themselves struggling with sin in their heart? The question is: "Why are they not free?"

While I was in prayer a couple of days ago, I asked God to give me words to answer this question for his people. Immediately, the Spirit of God spoke the words the Apostle John recorded in the Revelation, saying, *"...and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."* Revelation 12:4. In that moment I understood what I needed to address in this article.

The children of God are born (born again) free! Free from sin. Free from Satan. Free from Darkness. This is what salvation is. This is what salvation does. It is not a process. It is what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross and what he freely gives to us in redemption. Yet, for some who truly received this great salvation, the glory of it is stolen before they even begin to understand its greatness. As the "dragon," who is Satan, goes about seeking occasion to devour the newborn child of God, in many cases he finds that occasion in the church house. There, in a what is supposed to be a place of nurture and edification for God's children, Satan finds countless tools whose sole purpose is to strip and destroy the people of God.

The truth of Christ "shall make you free" but a religious lie will rob you of that freedom while making you think it is the plan of God. The Apostle Paul told us to *"reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ"* Romans 8:11, but most Christians are instructed to do exactly the opposite. The first thing a new convert is taught today is to accept that they are still a sinner and will always be so. The mindset is that only a self-righteous hypocrite would believe that they are in fact dead unto sin as Paul told us we were. Instead of being grounded in the truth, the new convert is taught to be on guard against it. The truth cannot make them free because they are taught to reject it and cling to a lie.

In the natural, if you take a beautiful intelligent child, and continually tell them they are ugly, worthless, and dumb, your words will produce a person who is ugly, worthless, and dumb. This is not because your words are true, but because you stripped them of every assurance they might have of their natural beauty, worth, and intelligence. When you tell a child of God they are and will always be a sinner, and that Christ does not wash it out of our heart, you are stripping away their confidence in the work and power of the blood of Christ. When faith in what Christ accomplished is destroyed, the work of Christ ceases to have any effect in the believer. Galatians 5:4, I Corinthians 1:17. They then become the sinful person you assured them they were even though it was not the truth of what Christ had done for them.

The Apostle Paul warned of this, saying, “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*” Colossians 2:8. The Greek word translated “*spoil*” means “*to lead away as booty.*” This speaks of a person who has become Satan’s spoil of war. They were born again free, but through religious “*philosophy and vain deceit*” they became slaves once again. Just as he attempted to kill Jesus as soon as he was born of Mary, Satan succeeds in bringing spiritual death to many newborn children of God using the tools handed to him in the church house. There is no person Satan cannot destroy if he can bring them to deny the truth and embrace a lie.

Most churches have become little more than houses of religious philosophy. The “truths” they proclaim are theological conclusions based upon human deduction and not scriptural proclamations. Their doctrines are just human wisdom. This is why Paul called it philosophy. New Christians are taught from “birth” to ignore the direct statements in the Bible and embrace the church’s philosophical positions about the word of God. Jesus said, “*the truth shall make you free*” John 8:32, but religious philosophy says no can be free from sin. The Bible says, “*The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*” I Corinthians 6:9, but religious philosophy says this does not apply to Christian sinners. Paul told us that if you do not continue in God’s goodness “*you also shall be cut of,*” Romans 11:22,

but religious philosophy says you can never be cut off once you believe. These are just a few of many examples where the church accepts its philosophical arguments to be more true than the word of God.

Anytime we choose our wisdom over God's word we are providing Satan with the tools he needs to devour the children of God. Through these kinds of teachings, Satan convinces the children of God the freedom Christ provided for them is just a myth. They stand in denial of the truth which Jesus said makes them free, and rush to defend wise sounding doctrines which are never spoken in God's word. So then, a life of victory becomes a life-time struggle with sin which then proves to them that their theology is correct. While all this goes on the dragon sits back and laughs.

IN THE HANDS OF GOD

In 1979, a large chunk of molten iron fell into my dad's boot and cooked the flesh. After the boot was cut off, it was discovered that it had burnt all the way to the bone. The doctor told dad they would put him to sleep and scrape his foot to the bone. The ligaments would be gone, and he would lose the use of several toes. He replied that he was a minister of the gospel and preached that God was a miracle worker. He then asked them to bandage his foot so he could go home, saying, ***"My God will give me a better deal than you can."*** Initially his foot was a burnt black color, but over the next several weeks, the dead flesh turned white. After about six weeks the dead flesh began to crumble out leaving a quarter of an inch-deep hole in his foot that was about three-inches long and over one-inch wide. Then skin began to grow over it and over the next couple months it filled with new flesh from underneath. His foot did the impossible and completely healed with no scar tissue and no signs there was ever an injury.

Around 1986, a rock from a commercial mower ricocheted off a tire and hit dad in the eye. The outer skin was ruptured, and the eye immediately turned purple. As I drove him towards home, the pain became unbearable, and his vision began to fade. I stopped driving, and laying my hands on him called on God for a miracle. As we drove on, the pain lifted, and the sight returned. We stopped by a

pharmacy to buy an eye patch. When the pharmacist saw his eye, he exclaimed, *“My God man, get to the emergency room. The vessels in your eye are all burst, and when the pressure builds up you will lose your sight. Get to the emergency room as fast as you can.”* Dad never went to a doctor but preached that night wearing the eye patch. As he began, he removed the patch and showed his eye to the congregation, saying, *“I want you to see what God is going to do for me.”* His eye healed perfectly, with no loss of vision. He is now 85 and reads without glasses.

In 2002, in a time of prayer, God spoke to dad, saying, *“You trusted me with your foot, and you trusted me with your eye; will you trust me with your life?”* Dad replied to God, *“With all my heart I want to be one who will trust you with my life.”* He told me about the question God asked him, but neither of us knew what was about to happen. Several days later, dad was helping dig a foundation for our publishing building. He was laying on the ground attempting to cut an old sewer pipe with a grinder when the sewer began to fly into his face filling his mouth and nostrils. Over the weeks that followed his body began to turn “septic.” His breath literally began to smell like a septic tank. As time went on his heart began to be erratic, then working one day he was struck to the ground with a severe pain in his chest. His liver became hard and swollen with constant pain front and back on his right side. He began to cough up green discharge and began to have pain in his kidneys and bladder. He told me I should prepare for his “departure,” but I reminded him of what God had asked, and said, *“I believe you are going to be here for a long time.”* Strangely enough, he began to fast for another person’s healing. On the twenty-eight day of the fast, he awoke with stomach pains and felt he needed a bowel movement. A large discharge of green knotty slime poured from his bowels. When it was over, all the symptoms left his body, and his health became better than it had been in many years. He had trusted God with his life, and God renewed his health.

About six weeks ago, at age 85, dad had a massive heart attack. After being stabilized and examined in the Emergency Room and Hospital, the cardiologist told him most of this heart was destroyed and without intervention he had only a couple weeks to live. He advised him to check out of that hospital and go to in the Methodist

Hospital in Houston, Texas. There, after multiple tests, they decided it was too risky to do open heart surgery but would attempt to open the main artery to his heart with a stint, knowing it might not work. Shortly before they took him in, I texted the following to our family. *“Everyone knows this is “iffy” because of the condition of dad's heart. He has never been in man's hand. Not when the molten metal burnt a hole in his foot. Not when a rock burst his eye. Not when an angry man put a knife to his belly. Not when he swallowed sewer and his body turned septic. And not now! He has always been in the hands of God. Whatever happens today cannot change that. Dad knows more than anyone that he is in the hands of God!”*

When the doctor spoke with us after the surgery, he said he was not able to do anything at all. *“But,”* he said, *“His heart seems to be doing better than we all thought. It has created his own bypasses, and a good amount of blood is flowing into the upper chamber which is nowhere near as damaged as we thought.”* *“What will he be able to do?”* I asked. *“Anything he feels like doing!”* the doctor said. When I finally saw dad after he awoke from recovery, he asked, *“Did you hear that their efforts were a complete failure?”* I then told him all the doctor had told us, and said, ***“It sounds to me like we just got a reminder that you are not in the hands of men, but in the hands of God!”***

For almost a month, dad has been back teaching every morning on Facebook and working four to five hours in the Behold the Lamb office each day. He is back to ministering two services each week at the church and is starting to write his next Behold the Lamb book. For years I have told people that dad will preach until God is done with him, then he will die. Dad has always said he would have it no other way. He is still in the hands of God!

FLESH AND SPIRIT – Part 1

When the Apostle Paul writes of being *“in the Spirit,”* he is speaking of a person who has been born of the Spirit of God. On the other hand, the phrase *“in the flesh”* almost always refers to those who have never been born again. Jesus told us *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* John

3:6. Every person born into this world is “*in the flesh*” until they are born of God’s Spirit. When that new birth takes place, they become a spiritual creation, and their life exists in a spiritual realm we know as being “*in Christ*.”

Those who are “*in the flesh*” are natural creations, but those who are born of God are “*spiritual*” creations just as Christ was a “*spiritual man*.” The Bible tells us, “*The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (Jesus Christ) was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*” 1 Corinthians 15:45-46. The words, “*last Adam*” are speaking of Jesus Christ. The next verse confirms this, saying, “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*” 1 Corinthians 15:47. We are all like one of these very different men. The Apostle Paul continues, saying, “*As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*” 1 Corinthians 15:45. According to this passage, every person is a “*natural*” creation, or, “*a living soul*,” until they are born of God. Their only dwelling place is “*in the flesh*.” In the new birth, however, we become “*spiritual*” beings, and we live “*in the Spirit*.”

The “*natural*” person may be very religious, but they are still “*in the flesh*” and cannot know or receive the things of the Spirit of God. The Bible says, “*...the natural 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. But he that is spiritual judgeth (discerns) all things...*” 1 Corinthians 2:14-15. The spiritual person, one who is born of God, has “*the mind of Christ*” 1 Corinthians 2:16, and can “*...know the things that are freely given to us of God.*” 1 Corinthians 2:12.

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a person is born of the Spirit, they can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. John 3:3, 5. Paul adds to this, saying, “*Because the carnal (flesh) mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*” Romans 8:7-8. Until a person is born of God’s Spirit, their mind is at war with God and can never be subject to the law of God. Because of this condition, it is impossible for the person who is still “*in the flesh*” to ever please

God. No amount of religious teaching or effort can change this. They must be born again! John 3:7.

In Galatians, Paul describes the vast difference between “*the flesh*” and “*the Spirit*.” He says, “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*” Galatians 5:17. Some mistakenly teach this as internal struggle in a child of God. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In this passage, Paul is explaining how different these two conditions are. The one who is “*in the Spirit*” longs for completely different things than the person who is “*in the flesh*.” For this reason, a person who walks in the Spirit cannot do the things a person who is in the flesh can do.

In his letter to the believers at Rome, Paul reminds the Jews among them Romans 7:1 of what it was like under the Law as they attempted to serve God before they came to Christ. He says, “***For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.***” Romans 7:5. The “*motions of sins*” he speaks of is the turmoil a person finds themselves in as they attempt to carnally serve God. They try to do good, but they discover evil is still present in their heart. Romans 7:21. It seems the harder they try the worse this problem gets. They do not understand that the carnal mind can never please God. Yet, until they are born of God’s Spirit, the carnal mind is all they have to offer. The entire 7th chapter of Romans is describing the futility of trying to serve God with the carnal mind. Paul’s concluding statement in Romans 7 tells us that as long as a person attempts to serve the law of God through the carnal mind, they will always end up serving sin with their flesh. Romans 7:25.

Vast multitudes of people have been led to believe that a confession, baptism, or a discipleship program has made them to be a child of God. None of these things have the power to save anyone. Only a visitation of the Spirit of God can bring a true “*born again*” experience. It is no wonder so many people find themselves in a fleshly struggle with sin in their heart as they try to serve God. As Paul reminds us, “***...they that are in the flesh cannot please God.***” Romans 8:7-8.

FLESH AND SPIRIT – Part 2

A child of God is a spiritual creation whereas a natural man is a soulish creation. The Apostle Paul confirms this, saying, *“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (Jesus Christ) was made a quickening spirit. ...As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.”* I Corinthians 15:45-48. The soulish creation lives in the fleshly realm, or *“in Adam.”* The spiritual creation lives in the spiritual realm, or *“in Christ.”* Paul spoke of these two different realms when he wrote, *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* I Corinthians 15:22.

The term *“in the flesh”* refers to the fleshly realm of *“Adam.”* On the other hand, the term *“in the Spirit”* refers to the spiritual realm of *“Christ.”* Those who are born of God live *“in the Spirit.”* Those who are not born of God live *“in the flesh.”* No one lives in both realms. Paul tells the redeemed *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”* Romans 8:9.

Only those who are *“in the Spirit”* can *“walk in the Spirit.”* Galatians 5:16. In fact, it is impossible for those who are still *“in the flesh”* to *“walk in the Spirit.”* They may be sincere and do many religious works, but they cannot *“walk in the Spirit”* if they are not born of the Spirit of God. This why Paul says, *“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”* Romans 8:8.

As the life of a fish is found in the ocean, so a child of God thrives as they walk in Christ. They are heavenly creations, and in that heavenly realm they find everything they need for a joyous and victorious walk. As they walk in Christ, they have no struggle with sin because *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death.”* Romans 8:2. There is, however, one thing that can bring them crashing down into the struggles of religious darkness. Paul warned of this when he said, *“If you live after the flesh you shall die.”* Romans 8:13.

To *“live after the flesh”* is to walk as those who live in the fleshly realm walk. Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for this, saying, *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”* I Corinthians 3:3. Carnal men cannot walk with God, but it is

possible for a child of God to walk like carnal men walk. Such a walk always leads to destruction. A walk “*after the flesh*” can be worldly, but it also can be religious.

Paul repeatedly warned the church about becoming subject to the rudiments, or elements, of the world. This speaks of the way things are done in the realm of flesh. Paul described these elements of the world as being “*weak and beggarly.*” Galatians 4:9. He was referring to religious observances, rituals, commandments, and traditions which can never cleanse your heart from sin or give you the life of Christ. This is why such things are called “*weak and beggarly.*”

Paul identifies some of these “*weak and beggarly elements*” as the religious observance of “*days, and months, and times, and years.*” Galatians 4:10. It is astounding how many Christians are trusting in the keeping of a feast day or “*...holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days*” Colossians 2:16, thinking it adds spiritual value to their walk with God. There is nothing wrong with observing a feast day or sabbath, neither is it wrong not to observe it. Trusting in such things, however, is what carnal men do.

The Apostle Paul also identifies religious ordinances as being a rudiment of this world. He asked the Colossians, “*Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*” Colossians 2:20-22. If you are born of God’s Spirit, why do you come under the dominion of religious ordinances, rituals, and commandments? All these things are flesh, and as Jesus told us, “*the flesh profits nothing.*” John 6:63. None of these things can add to the work Christ has already done in you.

In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul identifies the religious “*flesh*” he once trusted in under Moses’ Law. His religious induction ceremony was *flesh*. His natural lineage was “*flesh.*” His religious affiliation was *flesh*. His religious zeal was “*flesh.*” And his commandment keeping was “*flesh.*” Philippians 3:4-6. When he realized how impotent these things really are, he gave it all up to “*win Christ, and be found in him!*” Philippians 3:8-9. He reminds us that the true people of God are those “*...which worship God in the*

spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3.

BORN INTO THE SPIRIT

When a person is born again of the Spirit of God, they become a spiritual creation and they began to live in a realm referred to as being *“in the Spirit.”* This realm of the *“Spirit”* is also referred to as *“the Kingdom of God’s Son”* Colossians 1:13 and as being *“in Christ.”* I Corinthians 5:17. They may know nothing about this new kingdom they now live in just as an infant knows nothing about the world it is born into. This newborn child of God no longer lives in the realm of flesh. This is why the Apostle Paul speaks about, *“For when we were in the flesh...”* Romans 7:5. He also told us that God *“...hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”* Colossians 1:13.

On the other hand, a natural man still lives in the realm of flesh, and cannot even see the realm of the Spirit which the child of God now lives in. As Jesus said, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* John 3:3.

The “laws” that govern these two realms are completely different. In the realm of “the flesh,” the “law of sin and death” reigns absolute. Romans 5:12, 7:23. This “law” tells us that sin and death (condemnation) are as sure to humanity as the pull of gravity is upon objects on planet earth. The realm of “the Spirit” has no such law. In fact, the Apostle Paul told us, *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* Romans 8:2. Those who live in Christ Jesus are not bound by “the law of sin and death,” hence, they are not sinners, and they are not damned.

Those who continually tell you that the redeemed are still sinners, know very little, if anything, about *“life in Christ Jesus.”* All their experiences and beliefs have been shaped by the realm of “flesh,” and they cannot even begin to consider what God’s word says about life in Christ. They struggle with sin, so they conclude that everyone must be a sinner. They have forbidden lust, so they teach that an unclean heart is acceptable for God’s children. Today, over 50% of pastors admit to using pornography at times. To them this proves that such bondage is normal for all. Their doctrines are formed, not

by God's word, but by their understanding of what life is like living in the realm of "*flesh*."

When I was born the second time (born again), I did not have a pastor like many have, who constantly assured me that I was still a sinner and would continue to sin as long as I lived in this body. I did not hear that I had to struggle each day with the "*old man*" or "sinful nature" as I walked with God. Instead, I heard of the victory given to those who are in Christ Jesus and how Jesus destroyed Satan and Sin upon the cross. I never heard that it was hard to serve God, but was taught that the Christian Walk is a walk in "...righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" Romans 14:17, even in times of great trials and tribulation. I believed what I heard and found it to be very true.

Unfortunately, many converts to Christ have pastors who are well versed in how to live in the kingdom of "*the flesh*." They assure you that you will struggle, grow weak, and succumb to sinful desires. They tell you it is hard to walk with God, hard to forgive others, and hard love your enemy. You are informed that sin is not only around every corner but also embedded in your very heart and nature. They present these fallacies as truth, then give you fleshly answers to deal with such things.

Listening to such teachers, multitudes of people who have had a true "born of God" experience become like fish who are being instructed to live on dry land. The fish may be taught to lay in the shade so the sun does not parch them too quickly, or practice breathing in hopes of getting a little oxygen into their system. Maybe it even learns to exercise its flopping skills so it can move around in the sand. The problem is a fish cannot survive on dry land. It was made to live in the sea. There it will find everything it needs. Even so, a child of God will not survive if they try walk like those who are "in the flesh." This is why the Apostle Paul said, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:25.

It may sound strange, but Paul rebuked the Colossians for walking as though they were still "living in the world." He said, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances...?" Colossians 2:20. Instead of walking in the glory of Christ, they were embracing

carnal commandments, ordinances, rituals, and things called “voluntary humility,” and “will worship.” Colossians 2:16-23. A child of God does not serve God by such things. Those things are how those who are still “in the flesh” attempt to serve God.

God has a kingdom prepared for his children to walk in. It is a place of liberty, righteousness, peace, and joy. Neither Satan nor sin exists in God’s kingdom. None can access this kingdom through religious works. You must, however, believe the gospel and trust in Jesus Christ to do what his word declares.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD’S SON

When the Apostle Paul said that God “...*hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*” Colossians 1:13, he was speaking of a heavenly realm God’s people abide in which Paul often referred to as being “*in the Spirit*.” Two people can be working on the same job, worshiping on the same pew, or living in the same home, but if only one is born of God, then one lives “*in the Spirit*” while the other lives in a realm known as “*in the flesh*.” Romans 8:9. Both of these people walk through this present world, but they live in two very different kingdoms. Those who live “*in the Spirit*” are often referred to as being “*in Christ*.”

Jesus introduced this heavenly kingdom early in his ministry, saying, “*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.” Matthew 4:17. The coming of this heavenly realm was long ago foretold by the Biblical prophets, and most clearly by the prophet Isaiah. Let us consider one of the great prophecies of this realm of “*the Spirit*” as recorded in the 35th chapter of Isaiah.

Verse 4 - “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.” Isaiah 35:4. This prophecy begins with the promise that God would come and save us. This was a clear and straightforward promise of the salvation which would come unto us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Various men arose claiming to be the Savior and Messiah of Israel, but they were pretenders and imposters. Yet, in the very next verse of this prophecy, Isaiah records how everyone could know without a doubt when this Savior truly came.

Verse 5 - “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...” Isaiah 35:5-6. The great and undeniable miracles Jesus did were biblical proof that he was in fact the Christ and that the Kingdom of God had come unto man. When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus, asking, “*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*”, Jesus’ answer turned John’s attention back to this prophecy. He said, “*Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*” Matthew 11:3-5. By this, John would certainly know that Jesus was indeed the Christ which God had promised.

The remainder of this great prophecy reveals the nature of the kingdom which Christ prepared for his people to dwell in.

Verse 6-7 - “...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.” Isaiah 35:6-7. This is a promise to those whose lives were once like desert places where nothing would grow, and no water could be found. In this Kingdom of Christ, they would find a land where living water flowed. No longer would they be parched and desolate. As Jesus said, “*But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*” John 4:14.

Verse 8 - “And an highway shall be there, and a way...” Isaiah 35:8. Isaiah spoke much of this highway prepared for the Lord and his people. Isaiah 11:6, 40:3, 62:10. The stumbling stones and obstacles would be gathered out of their path. This would make it an easy path for the people to walk. As Jesus said, “*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” Matthew 11:30. You may face hardships in life, but it is not hard to serve God when you live in Christ.

Verse 8 - “...and it shall be called The way of holiness;” Isaiah 35:8. Holiness is not the way to God. If it were, the Pharisees would not have needed salvation. Jesus, however, is the way, and the only way,

of holiness. He suffered and died to “*sanctify the people with his own blood.*” Hebrews 13:12. His people are a holy people because sin has been washed from their heart and nature by the blood of Christ.

Verse 8 - “...the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: ...” Isaiah 35:8. Only those who have been washed from their sin through faith in Jesus Christ can inhabit this land. There may be sinful and unclean people in the church house or even the pulpit, but there is not even one of such in the Kingdom of God’s Son. “*...the unclean shall not pass over it.*” The Apostle Paul reaffirms this, saying, “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?*” I Corinthians 6:9.

Verse 8 - “...the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Isaiah 35:8. There is only one entrance into this realm of the Spirit. Jesus said, “*You must be born again.*” John 3:7. No one stumbles into this kingdom. No one accidentally finds it. You can crisscross the land and try every religion known to man, but you will never enter this kingdom until you with faith in Jesus Christ, “*repent and believe the gospel.*” Jesus clearly told us, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” John 14:6.

Verse 9 - “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:” Isaiah 35:9. Neither sin nor Satan have any existence in this kingdom. In the realm of flesh, Satan, “*as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” I Peter 5:8, but in the realm of Christ, Satan and his work have no place at all. You will never find the roaring lion (Satan) or the ravenous beast (Sin) in the kingdom of Christ. The Apostle John told us, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...*” I John 3:5.

Verse 10 - “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” The Apostle Paul reminds us of this glorious truth, saying, “*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*” Romans 14:17. What a joy it is to live in the Kingdom of God’s dear Son!

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