

# A CONSIDERATION OF THE ARGUMENTATION FOR AND AGAINST THE LORDSHIP AND NON-LORDSHIP VIEWS OF SALVATION

(Your comments and questions are welcome)

(**Bold type** and underlining of scripture text have been added for emphasis)

## General Outline Of The Contents Of This Study Paper.

- A. The argumentation by formidable advocates of, both, the “Lordship” and the “Non- Lordship” views of salvation. (Page one through the middle of page 17 of this paper)
- B. Comments of a twentieth century evangelist who rejects the “once saved-always saved” or “unconditional security” position held by both the “Lordship” and the “Non-Lordship” advocates. (Bottom of page 17 through the middle of page 23 of this paper)
- C. My comments on the omission by all four commentators of a passage of scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 26 through 31, which is relevant to their debate on eternal security. (Bottom of page 23 through top of page 25 of this paper)
- D. A summary of the preceding consideration. (Top of page 25 through the middle of page 31 of this paper)
- E. A concluding consideration of the underlying cause for the different interpretations of the Holy Scriptures by persons who hold these Scriptures to be the “inspired” and “inerrant” Word of God. (Bottom of page 31 through page 57 of this paper)

**The proponents of the “Lordship” and the “Non-Lordship” views of salvation** have not been engaged in a discussion about salvation to, by consensus, arrive at an accurate view of the subject, but rather, theirs is a debate in which each holds to a very firm, but differing position on what constitutes the gospel, faith, repentance, salvation, carnality, and security. This is illustrated by the following comments.

**MacArthur comments:** “Those who want to eliminate the lordship of Jesus from the gospel message insinuate that it is heresy equal to Galatian legalism to demand that sinners forsake their sins, commit themselves to Christ, obey His commands, and surrender to Him.” In support of this allegation against “Lordship” salvation he cites: “Cf. Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), p. 170, where Ryrie writes, ‘The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment of life cannot both be the gospel; therefore, one of them is a false gospel and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).’ ”

**An additional comment by MacArthur:** “I have not sought to label anyone or attack any individual in a personal way. A great many of the men with whom I disagree here are my friends. I have quoted a good deal from Zane Hodges’ works. That is because he is the most vocal of the recent authors who have attacked the traditional view of salvation, and his writings appear to have considerable influence among students, pastors, and teachers. I meet hundreds of church leaders each year at pastors’ conferences, and the questions they ask most frequently are related to confusion generated by Hodges’ writings. It is essential to understand what he has written and respond biblically to it.” John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. xv, 221).

**Hodges comments:** “MacArthur’s theological posture is Puritan and Reformed--a very narrow strand of the overall evangelical tradition. The doctrine that divine regeneration is logically prior to saving faith is a view that in no sense deserves to be identified as traditional orthodoxy. It is certainly not biblical.” Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci’ on Viva, 1989, p. 220).

**While they disagree** on these and other “biblical truths”, *they are in agreement that a person who has been “born again” by “...the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”-(Titus 3:5) is unconditionally and eternally secure from any punishment for sin at the moment of such inception of life.*

As we proceed, we will inquire into the various views of what constitutes some of the above-mentioned “biblical truths”.

## **GOSPEL**

**Beginning with explanations of the gospel**, one “Non-Lordship” proponent gives the following definition: “Paul gives us the precise definition of the Gospel we preach today in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. The Gospel is the good news about the death and resurrection of Christ. He died and He lives—this is the content of the Gospel.” This writer continues, “This same twofold content of the good news appears again in Romans 4:25: He “was delivered up...and was raised.” Everyone who believes in that good news is saved, for that truth, and that alone, is the Gospel of the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:2).” He further states, “Today we hear about the “whole Gospel,” which includes the redemption of society along with the redemption of individuals. But Paul wrote clearly that the Gospel that saves is believing that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. This is the *complete* Gospel, and if so, then it is also the true full Gospel and the true whole Gospel. Nothing else is needed for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.” Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, pp. 39, 40).

**A proponent of the “Lordship Salvation” view says**, “The gospel Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship, a call to follow Him in submissive obedience, not just a plea to make a decision or pray a prayer. Jesus’ message liberated people from the bondage of their sin while it confronted and condemned hypocrisy. It was an offer of eternal life and forgiveness for repentant sinners, but at the same time it was a rebuke to outwardly religious people whose lives were devoid of true righteousness. It

put sinners on notice that they must turn from sin and embrace God's righteousness. It was in every sense good news, yet it was anything but easy-believism." John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, p. 21).

The above quoted statement by Ryrie emphasizes *the content of the gospel* to be that *Jesus died and rose again*, for that truth, and that alone, *is the Gospel message*. MacArthur, as well as most who hold to the inspiration and the inerrancy of the Christian scriptures, surely would consider the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus essential to the gospel message. It is significant to notice that MacArthur includes within the gospel message the call to *discipleship* and *submissive obedience*. MacArthur's broader view of the gospel includes *turning from sin* and *embracing God's righteousness*.

Zane C. Hodges, an advocate of "Non-Lordship Salvation", considers *the gospel* in terms of *specific facts* that one must believe concerning Christ. He writes, "At a tragic moment in the life of Martha of Bethany, who had lost her brother Lazarus in death, the Lord Jesus Christ confronts her with a majestic claim. He says to her:

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (Jn 11:25-26).

He then adds a decisive question: "Do you believe this?" (11:26)."

In additional comment he writes:

*"Faith and Facts"*

"It is one of the tragic aspects of evangelical thought today that we have lost much of our appreciation for the majesty of simple faith in Christ. Although we live in an increasingly pagan world, where even belief in the existence of God is in decline, our esteem for the wonder of childlike trust in God is steadily eroding.

"The New Testament does not share our modern point of view. The writers of Scripture knew perfectly well how hostile their environment was to the acceptance of Christian truth. They were in no way inclined to depreciate the worth of "believing the facts" about the Son of God. They recognized clearly how difficult that was for both Jew and Gentile alike.

"It goes without saying, then, that the reply of Martha to our Lord deserves the very highest praise. For in response to the Savior's question, "Do you believe this?" she gives this answer: "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world" (11:27).

"We need not ask why the apostle John has included this reply in his book. The reason is obvious! Martha is stating her belief in the very facts which John wishes all his readers to believe as well. For in the announcement of his purpose for writing, John clearly states:

'And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, and that believing you may have life in His name' (Jn 20:30-31; italics added).

“Let there be no mistaking that indeed we are talking about “believing facts.” Jesus said, “Do you believe *this*?” and Martha replies, “I believe *that You are ....*” And John wants his readers to “believe *that Jesus is ....*” The content of the faith under discussion is unmistakably factual.

“But there is more to the exchange between Jesus and Martha than this. The facts presented to her by the Lord are more than great facts. They are *saving* facts. That is, they are *divinely revealed facts which are to be believed for salvation*. Thus, Jesus’ words to Martha are John’s way of telling us what it means to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

“Naturally, there are many people in the modern world who would claim to believe that Jesus is God’s Son. For such people it goes almost without saying that He is also ‘the Christ.’ ‘After all,’ they might say, ‘isn’t that His name?’

“But if they were asked whether Jesus guarantees resurrection and eternal life to people on the simple basis of faith, their reply might very well be negative. ‘Of course not,’ they might say, ‘you also have to live right to get eternal life!’ And in so saying, they would plainly disclose that they *did not believe* what the Savior asked Martha to believe.

“Not all facts about God are saving facts. To believe in the unity of God (that God is One) saves no one. Every orthodox Jew in the Roman world believes *that*. So in fact, claims an opponent of James, do the demons (Jas 2:19). To be sure, the unity of God is glorious Christian truth. But it does not contain within itself the truth of the gospel.

“But to believe that Jesus is the Christ—in *John’s sense of that term*—is to believe saving truth. It is, in fact, to believe the very truth that Martha of Bethany believed. To put it as simply as possible, Jesus was asking Martha whether she *believed* that He fully guaranteed the eternal destiny of every *believer*. That was the same as asking if this great truth applied to *her* as well! And Martha affirmed that it did by affirming her conviction about who He was.

“Thus, by believing the amazing facts about the person of Christ, Martha was *trusting* Him. She was placing her eternal destiny in His hands. If she was wrong about who He was, then her faith was sadly misplaced. But if she was right about this---and she was---then resurrection and eternal life were a certainty for her. She had Jesus’ own word for it.” Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci’ on Viva, 1989, pp. 37,38,39).

Above, Hodges says that “not all facts about God are saving facts”. He explains *the gospel* as consisting of *specific facts about Jesus*. These scriptural facts are that *Jesus is the Son of God*, and that *He is the Christ*. Hodges explains these facts to include the guarantee of resurrection and eternal life, or, the full guarantee of one’s eternal destiny on the basis of faith. Hodges’ concept of the gospel is quite similar to that of **Ryrie** who says that the content of the gospel is that *Jesus died* and *rose again*. However, while Hodges says that the facts of the gospel are that *Jesus is the Christ* and *the Son of God*, he indicates that the facts of *Jesus death* and *resurrection*, and the believer’s inclusion therein, are implied.

## FAITH

Another major divide between these two theological positions is found in the *concept that each holds of faith*, and as the proponents often say, “saving faith”. Hodges, who advocates the “Non-Lordship” view, defines faith as follows: “What faith really is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That---and that alone---is saving faith.” And he adds, “Faith, then, is taking God at His Word. Saving faith is taking God at His Word in the gospel. It is nothing less than this. But it is also nothing more.” Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci'on Viva, 1989, pp. 31,32.)

Ryrie, as above mentioned is also an advocate of the “Non-Lordship” view, provides this explanation of “saving” faith: “What is faith? Does it involve any kind of commitment, particularly the commitment of the years of one’s life on earth? What does it mean when the Bible says that the demons believe and shudder? (James 2:19) How can some people apparently believe and not be saved while others believe and are saved?

“*Faith* means ‘confidence, trust, holding something as true.’ Certainly, faith must have some content. There must be confidence *about* something or *in* someone. To believe in Christ for salvation means to have confidence that He can remove the guilt of sin and give eternal life. It means to believe that He can solve the problem of sin, which is what keeps a person out of heaven.

“You can also believe Christ about a multitude of other things, but these are not involved in salvation. You can believe that what He taught while on earth was good, noble, and true, and it was. You can believe He will return to earth, and He will. You can believe He is the Judge of all, and He is. You can believe He is a Prophet, and He is. You can believe He is a Priest. You can even believe that His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, and it is. You can believe He is able to run your life, and He surely is able to do that, and He wants to. But these are not the issues of salvation. That issue is whether or not you believe that His death paid for all your sin and that by believing in Him you can have forgiveness and eternal life.

“Faith has an intellectual facet to it. The essential facts are that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 4:25). In addition, faith involves assent or agreement with the truth of those facts. One can know the facts of the Gospel and either agree or disagree with them. But faith also involves an act of the will, for we can decide either to obey or to reject God’s command to believe (Acts 16:31). And making whichever choice we do involves our will.”

After making the above comments, and then quoting other theologians (not referenced here) whose comments tended toward substantiating his above explanation, Ryrie continues: “From these suggested descriptions of faith, it is obvious that faith involves more than the knowledge of facts. The facts must be there or faith is empty. But giving assent to the truth of those facts is also a part of faith. But even assent, however genuine, must be accompanied by an act of the will to trust in the truth which one has come to know and assented to.

“Hodge’s [Charles Hodge, not Zane C. Hodges] use of the word *trust* may be particularly appropriate today, for the words *believe* and *faith* sometimes seem to be

watered down so that they convey little more than knowing facts. Trust, however, implies reliance, commitment, and confidence in the object or truths that one is trusting. An element of commitment must be present in trusting Christ for salvation, but it is commitment to Him, His promise, and His ability to give eternal life to those who believe.

The object of faith or trust is the Lord Jesus Christ, however little or much one may know about Him. The issue about which we trust Him is His ability to forgive our sins and take us to heaven. And because He is the Lord God, there is an element in bowing before Him and acknowledging Him as a most superior Person when one trusts Him for salvation.”

“What makes the difference between those who believe and are not saved and those who believe and are saved? Apparently those who believe and are not saved know the facts of the Gospel and may even give assent to its truthfulness, but they are unwilling to trust the Savior for their personal salvation. Knowledge and assent without being willing to trust cannot in themselves save.” Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, pp. 118, 119, 121, 122).

The above quotations from Ryrie are somewhat extensive to establish the context of his statements regarding “faith” and “believe”. Now we will restate the following paragraph because it seems to express a concise explanation of his concept of faith: “From these suggested descriptions of faith, it is obvious that faith involves more than the knowledge of facts. The facts must be there or faith is empty. But giving assent to the truth of those facts is also a part of faith. But even assent, however genuine, must be accompanied by an act of the will to trust in the truth which one has come to know and has assented to.”

Here we are told that faith consists of three elements: 1) Knowledge of facts; 2) Assent to the truth of those facts; 3) Trust in the truth of such knowledge. Thus, Ryrie’s third element indicates that his concept of faith extends beyond Hodges’ view that faith is receiving the testimony of God or the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true. Nothing more and nothing less! This is equivalent to Ryrie’s 2<sup>nd</sup> element, “assent” to the truth.

While it is not the intent or purpose of this consideration to enter into the “Lordship” versus “Non-Lordship” debate, in the paragraphs referenced immediately above, Ryrie’s suggestion that there are persons who believe the gospel and are not saved is incongruent with the scriptural meaning of “believe” or “faith”. Also, this suggestion conflicts with his explanation that faith consists of: 1) Knowledge of certain facts; 2) Assent to the truth of those facts; and 3) Trust in, both, the truth of those facts and Christ as the object of those facts. According to his explanation, with the absence of the element of “trust”, “faith” or “belief” does not exist. Thus, it is a contradiction to say that one can believe and not be saved.

MacArthur, after referencing the two parables (Matt. 13:44-46) in which one man found a treasure in a field, and another finding a pearl of great price, each

sold all that they had and purchased, the first, the field containing the treasure, and the second, the pearl, writes the following concerning “saving” faith: **“Must we literally sell everything and take an oath of poverty before we can be saved? No. Nor do these parables teach that sinners must rid themselves of their sins before coming to Christ. What they *do* mean is that saving faith retains no privileges. It clings to no cherished sins, no treasured possessions, no secret self-indulgences. It is an unconditional surrender, a willingness to do anything the Lord demands.”**

**“Obviously, a new believer does not fully understand all the ramifications of the lordship of Jesus at the moment of conversion. But a true believer has a desire to surrender. This is what distinguishes true faith from a bogus profession. True faith is humble, submissive obedience. As spiritual understanding unfolds, that obedience grows deeper, and the genuine believer displays an eagerness to please Christ by abandoning everything to His lordship. This willingness to surrender to divine authority is a driving force in the heart of every true child of the kingdom. It is the inevitable expression of the new nature.”** John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. 139, 140).

**MacArthur’s explanation** of “saving” faith may be summarized by his statements: **“What they *do* mean is that saving faith retains no privileges.” “It is an unconditional surrender, a willingness to do any thing the Lord demands.” “True faith is humble, submissive obedience.”**

**It is quite apparent that MacArthur’s concept of faith** extends beyond that of **Ryries *third element*** of faith to trust in the truth. **MacArthur’s** explanation of faith is most emphatic that faith is an unwavering abandonment of one’s person to God and His will. This involves more than **Ryrie’s expression of “*trust*”** in Christ as a **“commitment to Him, His promise, and His ability to give eternal life to those who believe.”**

Also, **MacArthur’s** concept of faith involves much more than **Hodges’** declaration that faith **“is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true.”** (For the writer’s discussion on “faith”, read the study paper entitled, “What Is Faith”).

## **REPENTANCE**

**Repentance** is another topic frequently mentioned in scripture. A brief part of **MacArthur’s commentary** on “repentance” is as follows: **“Repentance is a critical element of saving faith, but one must never dismiss it as simply another word for believing. The Greek word for ‘repentance’ is *metanoia*, from *meta*, ‘after’ and *noeo* ‘to understand.’ Literally it means ‘afterthought’ or ‘change of mind,’ but biblically its meaning does not stop there. As *metanoia* is used in the New Testament, it *always* speaks of a change of purpose, and specifically a turning from sin. In the sense Jesus used it, repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation.”**

**“Such a change of purpose is what Paul had in mind when he described the repentance of the Thessalonians. ‘You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God’ (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Note the three elements of repentance: a turning to God; a**

turning from evil; and the intent to serve God. No change of mind can be called true repentance without including all three elements. The simple but all too often overlooked fact is that a true change of mind will necessarily result in a change of behavior.” John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp.162, 163).

**Ryrie**, a “Non-Lordship” advocate, after discussing Peter’s proclamation on the Day of Pentacost in chapter two of Acts, comments as follows:

**“Upon hearing and realizing this, conviction overwhelmed the people. They asked what they should do, and Peter replied, “Repent.” Repent about what? Change your minds about Jesus of Nazareth. Whatever you thought about Him before or whoever you thought He was, change your minds and now believe that He is God and your Messiah who died and who rose from the dead. *That* repentance saves.”**

**“Indeed, before any of us came to Christ we had some conception of Him. Perhaps it was fuzzy, perhaps it was reasonably clear, perhaps it was wrong. But we turned from whatever conception we had and turned to Him as our Savior from sin. And that repentance brought eternal salvation.”**

**“The lordship/discipleship/mastery teaching apparently makes repentance and faith two distinct and necessary requirements for salvation.”** (Ryrie then quotes the statement of a “Lordship” advocate that supports this statement). **He then proceeds to support his view** that repentance and faith or believing *are synonymous* by the following comment:

**“However, Luke’s rendering of the Great Commission uses repentance in the same sense as believing in Christ. ‘And He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem’ (Luke 24:46-47). Clearly, repentance for the forgiveness of sins is connected to the death and resurrection of Christ. Other passages where repentance stands for faith and refers to the conversion experience are Acts 5:31, 11:18; Hebrews 6:6; and 2 Peter 3:9.”**

**“Paul said that God calls on all people everywhere to repent because judgment is coming and the Person God raised from the dead will be the judge (Acts 17:30-31). Peter said the same thing. God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Does this mean just to be sorry for sin? Does this mean that repentance is a precondition to faith? No to both questions. If repentance is not a synonym for faith in these verses, then these verses do not state the Gospel. If repentance is only part of conversion (faith being the other part), then these verses state only a half Gospel.”** Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, pp.96, 97).

**Zane C. Hodges**, a “Non-Lordship” advocate, commenting on repentance writes the following:

**“No other position is biblical or truly evangelical. Faith alone (not repentance and faith) is the sole condition for justification and eternal life.”**

**Of all the New Testament writers, Luke speaks the most frequently about repentance. Yet, in one of Luke’s most famous stories, a badly shaken Philippian jailer inquires of Paul and Silas, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ The answer they give to him is the only answer the Bible knows to such a question: ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus**

Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household' (Ac 16:31). **There is not a word here---not a syllable!---about repentance. Paul and Silas did *not* say, 'Repent and believe,' but simply, 'believe.'**

**"Lordship salvation teachers are in dire straits with a text like this. They are reduced to trying to extract their doctrine from this passage by way of implication. But it is not there, and no amount of theological casuistry can put it there."**

**"As we have already seen, the effort to find the concept of repentance and surrender in the word 'believe' is totally without linguistic foundation. The word 'believe' means 'believe'---both in English and in Greek."**

**"It is an extremely serious matter when the biblical distinction between faith and repentance is collapsed and when repentance is thus made a condition for eternal life. For under this perception of things the New Testament doctrine of faith is radically rewritten and held hostage to the demand for repentance. ..."**

**Hodges concludes his comments by a concise statement of his view of the meaning of repentance:**

**"From what we have seen in this chapter, we must conclude that the call to repentance is *broader than* the call to eternal salvation. It is rather a call to *harmony* between the creature and his Creator, a call to *fellowship* between sinful men and women and a forgiving God."**

**"If we keep this fact firmly in mind, we will never make the mistake of thinking that repentance is a condition for eternal salvation"** Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci'on Viva, 1989, pp. 144, 145, 160).

**The scriptural meaning of "repentance"** is not only disputed between the "Lordship" and "Non-Lordship" advocates, it is a point of disagreement between "Non-Lordship" advocates.

- **MacArthur**, an advocate of "Lordship" salvation writes, as quoted above that, "**repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation**". (Underlining mine)
- **Hodges**, a "Non-Lordship" advocate writes, as quoted above that, "**the call to repentance is *broader than* the call to eternal salvation. It is rather a call to *harmony* between the creature and His Creator, a call to *fellowship* between sinful men and women and a forgiving God.**"  
**"If we keep this fact firmly in mind we will never make the mistake of thinking that repentance is a condition for eternal salvation."**(Underlining is mine)
- **Ryrie**, also a "Non-Lordship" advocate, views repentance as a change of mind about Jesus. As quoted above, he comments, "**But we turned from whatever conception we had and turned to Him as our Savior from sin. And that repentance brought eternal salvation**". (Underlining is mine)

**These three commentators** also express differing interpretations of the relationship, if any, between repentance and faith or believing.

- **MacArthur's interpretation**, as evidenced in the above quote, is that repentance is a "critical element of saving faith", ***but it is not*** "another word for believing".

- **Ryrie comments**, as evidenced in the above quote, that “Lordship” teaching distinguishes between repentance and faith, but both being essential for salvation. (He then quotes a “Lordship” advocate to support his statement). He continues by attempting to support his view that repentance *is synonymous* with faith, or that *repentance stands for faith*.
- **Hodges**, as evidenced in the above quote, is most emphatic that “faith alone”, *apart from repentance*, is the only condition for eternal salvation. Thus, **Hodges** disputes **Ryrie’s** interpretation that *repentance is synonymous with faith*. **Hodges** and **MacArthur** seem to be in agreement that repentance and faith are *distinct concepts*, however, **Hodges’** interpretation that repentance is a call to sinners for fellowship with God, conflicts with **Ryrie’s** and **MacArthur’s** interpretations that repentance is *a condition for salvation*.

(For further consideration of “repentance” read pp. 12-17 of the study paper entitled “Foreknowledge”)

## SALVATION

While both the “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” advocates continually use the words salvation, saved, and saving, etc., *they have widely divergent interpretations of what these words mean*.

**Hodges** provides this explanation:

“The biblical picture of the saving experience is masterful in its clarity and simplicity. A single, one-time appropriation of God’s gift results in a miraculous inward transformation that can never be reversed.”

“Since this is true, we miss the point to insist that true saving faith must necessarily continue. Of course, our faith in Christ *should* continue. But the claim that it absolutely must, or necessarily does, has no support at all in the Bible. We will say more about this in subsequent chapters.”

“For now, however, it is sufficient to observe that the Bible predicates salvation on an *act* of faith, not on the *continuity* of faith. Just as surely as regeneration occurs at a point in time for each individual, so surely does saving faith.”

“Through justification we acquire the very *righteousness* of God, which is credited to us on the basis of faith alone (Ro 3:21, 22). Through regeneration we acquire the very *life* of God, which is imparted to us likewise on the basis of faith alone. Therefore, in a moment of time we obtain both perfect acceptance before the bar of God’s justice as well as full membership in His family.”

“And all of this is absolutely free and permanent. ‘For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Ro 11:29).’ ” Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci’on Viva, 1989, pp. 63, 64).

**MacArthur** explains salvation in this manner:

“Real salvation is not only justification. It cannot be isolated from regeneration, sanctification, and ultimately glorification. Salvation is an ongoing process as much as it is a past event. It is the work of God through which we are ‘conformed to the image of

His Son' (Romans 8:29, cf. Romans 13:11). Genuine assurance comes from seeing the Holy Spirit's transforming work in one's life, not from clinging to the memory of some experience."

"Salvation is solely by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). That truth is the watershed for all we teach. But it means nothing if we begin with a misunderstanding of grace or a faulty definition of faith." John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. 23, 31).

The disagreement is not that there is a point in time when faith, justification, and regeneration occur, and **MacArthur** might add sanctification to the list. Nor, would there be disagreement that one's faith is credited or counted for righteousness, or that divine life is imparted to one at the moment of regeneration. However, **Hodges'** interpretation that the benefits of God's grace that he has listed are eternally sealed by "**an act of faith**", and that the individual need not, nor will not necessarily or inevitably *continue in faith* is the point of disagreement.

## CARNALITY

Whether or not a person who has partaken of "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" **can engage in sustained carnal living** is *another point of their disagreement* concerning the testimony of scripture.

Ryrie provides the following comment on this issue:

"CAN A BORN-AGAIN Christian be carnal? Or is carnality something that describes an unsaved person? Or are both possible?"

"What is carnality? According to the Greek dictionary, it means to have the nature and characteristics of the flesh (or more simply, it means "fleshly"). What, then, is the flesh? Sometimes it refers to the whole material part of man (1 Corinthians 15:39; Hebrews 5:7), and based on this meaning, carnal sometimes relates to material things like money (Romans 15:27) or to the opposite of our weapons of spiritual warfare (2 Corinthians 10:4). But the word *flesh* also has a metaphorical sense when it refers to our disposition to sin and to oppose or omit God in our lives. The flesh is characterized by works that include lusts and passions (Galatians 5:19-24; 1 John 2:16); it can enslave (Romans 7:25); and in it is nothing good (Romans 7:18). Based on this meaning of the word *flesh*, to be carnal means to be characterized by things that belong to the unsaved life (Ephesians 2:3)."

"Do we have at least a tentative answer to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter? If carnality refers to that disposition or life principle of the unregenerate life, then obviously an unsaved person may be said to be carnal or carnally minded. But cannot believers also exhibit those same traits? If so, then a believer can, under some circumstances, be labeled carnal. If we can first understand what carnality is, then we are in a better position to answer the question, "To whom can the term be applied?"

"Do the Scriptures indicate that both unbelievers and believers can be called carnal? I think so."

"But 'carnal' can also describe some believers. How so? Simply because such believers live and act like unsaved people (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). How do we know the

people Paul describes in this passage are believers? He addresses them as ‘brethren’; and ‘babes in Christ’ in the first verse.”

“How do we know they were carnal? He says so three times (verses 1 and 3). ... Notice that Paul does not merely say that Christians ‘can and do behave in carnal ways’, he plainly states, ‘You are carnal.’ How then can one charge that ‘contemporary theologians have fabricated an entire category for this type of person---the ‘carnal Christian’? Obviously, such a designation for some Christians is not a fabrication; it is a scriptural teaching.”

“What were the evidences of the Corinthians carnality? In general terms Paul characterizes them as walking or living like men (1 Corinthians 3:3-4). Certainly other Christian men are not meant, but unsaved people or the world. Paul can only mean that these carnal Corinthians lived like unsaved men. That clarifies why the word *carnal* can label both unbelievers and believers, simply because the lifestyles of both are the same. ...”

“Specifically how does the Apostle Paul describe carnality among Christians?

- (1) He likens it to being a babe in Christ. Notice that such people are ‘in Christ,’ a designation that makes it clear again that Paul is describing believers and not unsaved people. In other words, carnality can indicate the state of the new believer who is still a weak, immature baby.
- (2) Paul also describes carnality among Christians as continued immaturity beyond what normally might be expected---‘You are *still fleshly*’ (1 Corinthians 3:3). The word is slightly different than the one used earlier and contains the thought of willfulness. At Corinth this willful carnality was characterized by jealousy and strife, including the divisions Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 1:12. What a contrast such immature behavior is to the spirituality and maturity that come from steady, healthy growth.”

“How long should it take before a believer might be considered spiritual? When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the believers were about five years old in the faith, and he expected to be able to address them as spiritual (3:1). But even so, there is further growth to be achieved, more battles to be fought, more knowledge to be acquired, more intimacy to be enjoyed.” Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, pp. 59, 60, 61, 62, 63).

**MacArthur comments** as follows on the carnality issue:

“Opponents to lordship salvation admit that one of the reasons they exclude obedience from their concept of saving faith is to make room in the kingdom for professing believers whose lives are filled with sin. ‘If only committed people are saved people, then where is there room for carnal Christians?’ one leading advocate of the anti-lordship view pleads.” MacArthur footnotes this quotation as Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), p. 170.

**MacArthur then comments** on several passages in 1 Corinthians:

“Paul’s words to the Corinthians, ‘Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?’ (1 Corinthians 3:3, KJV ), were not meant to establish a special class of Christianity. These were not people living in static disobedience; Paul does not suggest that carnality and rebellion were the rule in their lives. In fact, he said of these same people, ‘You are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1:7-8). Nevertheless, by having taken their eyes off Christ and created

religious celebrities (3:4-5), they were behaving in a carnal way. Contrast Paul's words about the incestuous man in chapter 5. Paul calls him a 'so-called brother' (v. 11). He doesn't say the man is not a Christian, but because of the pattern of gross sin, could not affirm him as a brother."

"A real disciple, on the other hand, may fail Christ but will never turn against Him. A true Christian might temporarily fear to stand up for the Lord but would never willingly sell Him out. Inevitably, true disciples will falter, but when they fall into sin, they will seek cleansing and not wallow in the mire (cf. 2 Peter 2:22). Their faith is neither fragile nor temporary; it is a dynamic and ever-growing commitment to the Savior." John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. 97, 105).

**The point of disagreement** between **Ryrie** and **MacArthur** is not whether or not Paul is addressing "born again" people at Corinth, but whether or not "walking after the flesh" can be and was a sustained manner in which such people live their lives. **Ryrie interprets** the passage in 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 as scriptural support that "saved" individuals can and do **practice** carnal living. **MacArthur interprets** Paul's words, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" as not meaning that these people were "living in static disobedience". **MacArthur** then cites two other passages in 1 Corinthians to support his view that while a "true" Christian may fall into sin such person will **never** willingly **continue** in sin, but will "seek cleansing".

## **ETERNAL SECURITY**

**It was noted at the beginning of this consideration** that the advocates of both the "Lordship" and the "Non-Lordship" views ***agree that one who has been "born again" is eternally secure from the moment of the inception of new life in Christ.*** However, they do have ***opposing views of the nature and the role of faith*** as it relates to the matter of one's ***future security.*** **The following are excerpts from their respective arguments.**

**MacArthur comments:** "I am committed to the biblical truth that salvation is forever. Contemporary Christians have come to refer to this as the doctrine of eternal security. Perhaps the Puritan's terminology is more appropriate; they spoke of the perseverance of the saints. The point is not that God guarantees security to everyone who will *say* he accepts Christ, but rather that those whose faith is genuine will prove their salvation is secure by persevering to the end in the way of righteousness."

"True believers *will* persevere. If a person turns against Christ, it is proof that person was never saved."

"But it is not a biblical view of faith to say one may have it at the moment of salvation and never need to have it again. The continuing nature of saving faith is underscored by the use of the present tense of the Greek verb *pisteuo* ('believe') throughout the gospel of John (cf. 3:15-18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 7:38; 11:25-26; 12:44, 46; 20:31; also Acts 10:43; 13:39; Romans 1:16; 3:22; 4:5; 9:33; 10:4, 10-11).

**If believing were a one-time act, the Greek tense in those verses would be aorist.”**  
John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. 98, 172).

**Ryrie comments:** “Some years ago a book by Robert Shank, entitled *Life in the Son*, [Robert Shank, *Life in the Son*. Springfield, Mo: Westcott, 1960] argued against eternal security on the basis that believing in the New Testament was always in the present tense. Therefore, if a believer did not continue to believe he could and would lose his salvation. Today proponents of lordship/discipleship/mastery salvation use the same argument to conclude that if someone does not continue to believe, then he or she was never a believer in the first place. However, notice that when Abraham’s faith is described in the New Testament, an aorist, not a present, tense is used consistently (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Many Samaritans believed (aorist) the harlot’s testimony and were saved (John 4:39, 41). Others believed (aorist) (John 10:42; 11:45; Acts 14:1; 1 Corinthians 15:11). And in response to the Philippian jailer’s question, Paul said, ‘Believe’ (aorist, Acts 16:31).”

**It is noteworthy that MacArthur and Ryrie each cite scriptures for “believe” that use the “tense” that best supports their interpretation.** Both the “present” tense and the “aorist” tense are used in scriptures referring to “believe”, with the “tense” *depending on the context of their use.*

**Ryrie also comments:** “What does eternal security mean? Let me propose a concise definition. Eternal security is that work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost. Since security rests on God’s guarantee, its truthfulness, then, does not rest on my feelings or experiences. Sometimes the teaching of eternal security is called the doctrine of preservation, which means that God preserves the believer in his salvation”

“Some use the word *perseverance* or final perseverance to describe the concept of security or preservation. Perseverance emphasizes that the believer cannot finally or totally fall away from grace but will persevere to the end and be eternally saved.”

“But back to security. On what is this teaching based. Its basis is the grace of God who gives us the gift of eternal life, and that grace is eternal. Receiving that gift brings us into a relationship with all the Persons of the Godhead, which guarantees and assures us that our salvation is eternally secure.” Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP publications, Inc., 1989, pp. 137, 138, 141, 142).

**(Question: Is Ryrie saying that one’s “salvation is eternally secure”: 1) Because grace is eternal, and/or 2) Because the gift of eternal life brings us into “a relationship with all the persons of the Godhead”?)**

**Hodges comments:** “In his encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus made a spectacular promise. He said to her:

Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn 4:13-14).

“Whatever else she understood from this, the woman of Sychar understood one thing. She understood that Jesus was offering her a drink which would permanently satisfy her thirst. Her response shows this clearly: ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw’ (4:15).

“But at least she had got one thing straight. Whatever this water was, she needed to drink it only once. ...

“And on that point she was exactly right. True, the water Jesus offered her was spiritual and supernatural in character, but the point remained the same. After drinking what He gave, she would never need to come and ask Him for this water again.”

Hodges continues: “It is surprising, however, that this simple reality is often lost from sight in the Christian church. Of course, there are many who directly deny its truth. Instead, they insist, the water of life can be lost through serious disobedience or through departure from the faith. A person who has once possessed it, may need to obtain it again. But, in so saying they flatly contradict the Lord himself.

“But others do not quite say this. What they do say, in effect, is that the drinking itself must go on and on. And they add that if the drinking ever stops it never really began! But the confusion here is enormous. The simplicity of the Savior’s offer is lost sight of completely.

“The concept just mentioned is found quite commonly in lordship salvation. According to some of its proponents, if someone ‘really believes,’ they will keep on believing to the end of life. And if this supposed faith fails, it was not true faith to begin with.

“This view of things is utterly unknown to the bible. Nevertheless, there are many who have been confused by this kind of teaching. ...” Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci’on Viva, 1989, pp. 55, 56).

The above commentary does not question the fact that there is security, both present and future, for those who are God’s children by means of grace through faith. *Most, if not all, systems of “Christian” theological thought provide the adherents a way to expect a secure future relationship with God.* However, the above comments evidence the, not at all mild, disagreement between what may be the two more compatible divisions within the Christian evangelical belief systems.

The basic argument between “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” advocates is whether or not one’s security rests on an initial act of faith (non-lordship) or a continuity of faith (lordship). Both, Ryrie and Hodges emphasize their common view of the one act of faith concept. MacArthur supports the “Lordship” interpretation of continuing in faith by noting “the use of the present tense of the Greek verb *pisteuo* (‘believe’) throughout the gospel of John”, and also in Acts and Romans (verses referenced). And Ryrie supports the “Non-Lordship” interpretation of one act of faith, noting that, “when Abraham’s faith is described in the New Testament, an aorist, not a

present, tense is used consistently”. He then references several verses of scripture. **Hodges argues** that the “Lordship” view, that one who believes *will necessarily continue in faith*, and that if one’s professed faith fails *that is proof that they never had true faith*, is “utterly unknown to the Bible”. **Hodges declares** that, “there are many who have been confused by this kind of teaching”.

**Both**, the “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” systems of thought have common roots in *the Calvinist security concept* that has been referred to as the *“once saved, always saved” doctrine*. The Calvinist concepts of “Total Inability or Depravity”, “Unconditional Election”, “Limited Atonement”, “Irresistible Grace”, and “Perseverance” have a greater acceptance by the advocates of “Lordship” salvation. We observe these concepts *underlying the interpretations of scripture* by “Lordship” advocates, while the concept that sustained *sinful behavior does not affect security underlies the interpretation of scriptures* by proponents of “Non-Lordship” salvation.

**The different interpretations** that each has of the passage of scripture in 2 Timothy 2:11-13 illustrate *these conceptual influences* on interpretation of scripture. The passage reads: v11 *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: v12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will also deny us: v13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

**MacArthur comments:** “Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 2:12 speak powerfully to this issue: ‘If we endure, we shall also reign with Him, if we deny Him, He also will deny us.’ Endurance is the mark of those who will reign with Christ in His kingdom. Clearly the thought is that enduring is a characteristic of true believers, while disloyalty and defection reveal a heart of unbelief. Those who deny Christ, He will deny.

“Paul goes on to say, ‘If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself’ (v. 13). **Thus God’s faithfulness is a blessed comfort to loyal, abiding believers, but a frightening warning to false professors. Because He is faithful to himself, He will condemn them (cf. John 3:17-18).**” John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, p. 172).

**There are theologians**, other than “Non-Lordship advocates, who interpret verse 13, on the basis that Paul identifies the persons being addressed in this passage as “we”, thus, “we” *being of the same category as Paul, and therefore, are God’s children*. However, to maintain his security view and his “irresistible grace” concept, **MacArthur** necessarily must interpret “we” in verse 13, and the “we” and the “us” that deny Him in verse 12 to refer to “false professors”.

**Ryrie comments:** “(9) What was apparently part of an early Christian hymn in New Testament times gives strong assurance of the believer’s security (2 Timothy

2:11-13). Paul says that ‘it is a trustworthy statement.’ Four couplets are recorded, two positive and two negative.

“The first is, ‘If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him’ ---likely a reference to our co-crucifixion with Christ (as explained in Romans 6:1-10).

“The second is, ‘If we endure we shall also reign with Him.’ Here the contrast is between the endurance necessary in this life and the ultimate glorification which all believers will enjoy (Romans 8:17).

“The third couplet, ‘If we deny Him, he also will deny us’, reiterates the Lord’s word in Matthew 10:33. Judas did this.

“The last couplet, however, assures us that ‘if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.’ This is no warning of certain condemnation to false professors; rather ‘Christ’s constancy to His own promises provides the believer with his greatest security. It is unthinkable that any contingency could affect the faithfulness of God, for he cannot deny himself.’” (Here Ryrie quotes: ‘Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, p.146’).

“ ‘He will not deny even unprofitable members of His own body. True children of God cannot become something other than children, even when disobedient and weak. Christ’s faithfulness to Christians is not contingent on their faithfulness to Him.’ ” (Ryrie quotes from: ‘A. Duane Litfin, ‘2 Timothy,’ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, 1983, 1:748.’) Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, pp.140, 141).

**Ryrie’s interpretation** of this passage in 2 Timothy *has both similarities and differences* with **MacArthur’s interpretation**. Both men interpret “we”, as “we” relates to *suffering and reigning* with Christ in verse 12 to refer to “true” believers. Also, the “we” and the “us” related to, *if we deny Him He will deny us* in verse 12 is interpreted by both men to refer to “false professors”. While **Ryrie** does not directly call them “*false professors*”, he clearly implies it by his reference to Judas. (Most commentators who embrace Calvinist security, view Judas as “unsaved”). However, **MacArthur interprets** “we” in verse thirteen to refer to “*false professors*”, while **Ryrie interprets** “we” in verse thirteen as referring to “*True children of God*”.

**While the preceding debate** is between “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” salvation advocates, who do agree on the point that a person who is “born again” is from the moment of “new birth” eternally secure from any judgment or punishment for their sin, **the following commentary** is by a twentieth century evangelist who embraced the concept that a person born into the family of God *can “fall away” and be “lost”*.

“Many years ago I became convinced that those who taught unconditional security, or ‘once in grace, always in grace,’ were unsound in their position. My years of study have but confirmed me in the belief that their position is not only unscriptural but a very dangerous teaching. I have had ample opportunity to see the blighting effect of this teaching on many of those who accept it and apply it to their lives.”

“Now I am aware of the fact that there is a great group of people abroad in the land, who are preaching a shallow, cheap, and unscriptural security; a security that is not only unscriptural but it is one of the most dangerous doctrines that could possibly be preached by anyone.

“The people to whom I refer are those who preach and teach that, if a person is once really born of the Spirit of God and becomes a child of God, it is impossible for him ever to fall from grace and be lost. They teach that after a person has once been born again, no matter what sins that person may commit he cannot possibly be lost, for he is God’s child and he can never become anything else. Some of them even go so far as to teach that a person may be guilty of murder or any other sin and still he is saved if he has once been a child of God. I have heard them contend that a person might die in the grossest sort of sin, and yet be saved just because he at some time or other in his past life believed on Christ and accepted Him as his Lord.”

“...In fact, in every place where it speaks of people who have eternal life, we are told that it is on the condition of constantly believing on Christ, for that is what the word *‘believeth’* means. It is in the present tense. That means that it is not a thing that is done once and for all and is never to be repeated, but rather it is a continuous act that must be *constantly going on*. When we cease to believe we cease to have eternal life abiding in us. In fact, there can be no eternal life separate and apart from Christ. *He is the life*. When we break our contract with Him by sin, we are as devoid of eternal life as a house is devoid of light when it is cut loose from the power line. Eternal life is not something that can be possessed separate and apart from Christ. We have it only as we live in constant touch with Christ, who is the source of life. To be dead spiritually is to be cut off from Christ, and sin will surely break the contact with life. It will do it today just as surely as it did with Eve, and to teach otherwise is but to revive the doctrine that Satan put forth in the Garden when he said, ‘Ye shall not surely die.’

“Not only does our Lord Jesus Christ deny and refute this dangerous doctrine of unconditional security, but Paul, Peter, James, and John also deny it time after time. All through the New Testament we find warning and exhortations urging us to beware lest we fall away.

“Our good friends who teach unconditional security like to quote the words of the great Apostle Paul in Romans 8:1. He speaks of there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and they try to make it appear that once a person is in Jesus Christ he can never come into condemnation again. However, they fail to quote that part of the verse which says, *‘Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’* They leave that out, for it does not fit in with their doctrine. It clearly implies that the condition of remaining in a state of not being condemned is to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This same thing is reaffirmed in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse. They also fail to note that he says in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> verses of this same chapter, *‘Therefore, brethren, (that means Christians) we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye (brethren or Christians) live after the flesh, ye shall die.’* (Paul refuses to go along with those who would say, ‘Ye shall not surely die.’) These same people make a great deal of the last part of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, where Paul speaks in such glowing terms about no creature (or created thing) being able to separate us from the love of Christ. I praise God that this is true. However, I would remind you

that Paul does not one time say that we cannot separate *ourselves from Christ*. Neither does he say that *sin* cannot separate us from Christ. If Paul had said any such thing as that, he would have contradicted himself and would be an unreliable teacher; for in this same letter to the Romans he clearly says that *it is possible* for us to separate ourselves from Christ and be lost or cut off. In Romans 11:20-23, we find these plain words, ‘Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou *standeth by faith*. Be NOT HIGH-MINDED, (or overconfident) *but fear*: (How different this language is from that of our good friends who teach unconditional security!) for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*’ To me, it is a strange thing that our good friends, who make so much of taking all the Bible as the inspired Word of God and are ready to label all as Modernists who teach otherwise, should fail to take such statements as these at their face value. If they mean anything then they mean what they say; and if they mean what they say, then they mean that it is possible for a person to be cut off from Christ and be lost.”

“This is the plain teaching of the Great Apostle Paul, but how different it is from much of the teaching that we hear today on every hand! I wonder why our good friends, who contend so earnestly for unconditional security, and who make so much of the Bible being the inspired Word of God, do not preach on this text and many others of a similar nature and tone. Is this not a part of the Word? Does God intend that this should be explained away? Are we, who sound out to people the word of warning along this line, not preaching the Word also? Is it not far better to give this note of warning and admonition than to lull people to sleep in a false security? Is it not better to follow the example of Christ and Paul than some of our leaders today?

“Since these people, who teach unconditional security, or in other words teach that it is impossible for a person who has once been born again ever to fall away and be lost, are so dogmatic in their contentions and are so ready to cry down anyone who may be inclined to point out the other side of the question, I feel that it will be worth while to go into this subject a little more thoroughly and present some more evidence to prove that their position is *unscriptural* and *dangerous...*”

Some of the scriptures presented by this writer in support of his comments are:

“Luke 9:62. ‘And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, *is fit for the kingdom.*’

Acts 14:22. ‘Confirming the souls of the disciples, and *exhorting them to continue in the faith*, and that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*’

Acts 13:43. ‘Who, speaking to them, persuaded them to *continue* in the grace of God.’

I Cor. 9:27. ‘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.*’ (Paul believed his own doctrine and practiced it. He is not speaking of his words here, but says, *I, myself.*)

I Cor. 10:12. ‘Wherefore let him that *thinketh he standeth* take heed *lest he fall.*’

II Cor. 11:3. 'But I fear, lest by any means, *as the serpent beguiled Eve* through his subtilty, (he told her that she would not surely die, just as some are saying today) so your mind would be corrupted *from* the simplicity that is in Christ.' (Paul would certainly get into hot water if he were here today and should preach like this in some sections.)

Gal. 5:4. 'Christ is *become* of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace.*'

Gal. 6:7, 8. '*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* For he that soweth to his flesh shall *of the flesh reap corruption.*' (This warning was to Christian people.)

Col. 1:21-23. "And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: *if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.*'

I Tim. 4:1. 'Now the *Spirit speaketh expressly* that in the latter times *some shall depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.'

I Tim. 5:12-15. '*Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith...For some are already turned aside after Satan.*' "

"In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the little word 'if' used twenty-four times, and each time it appears in this epistle it implies the possibility of falling away from the faith and being lost. In fact, this great epistle was written for the very purpose of trying to help the Hebrews, who had been converted to Christianity, and keep them from falling from grace and going back to Judaism. This letter is filled with words of encouragement and words of warning to help people at this very point. It might be of interest for you to run through this epistle and pick out the passages where the word 'if' occurs and study them. I will give a few of the outstanding ones."

"Heb. 2:1-3. 'Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, *lest at any time we should let them slip.* (The marginal reading is, *let them leak out.*) For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; *how shall we (Christians) escape*, if we neglect so great salvation?'

Heb. 3:12-14. 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be *in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest *any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*'

Heb. 5:9. 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey him.*'

Heb. 6:4-6. 'For it is impossible for *those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift*, (Jesus tells us what this heavenly gift is in John 5:50, 51. 'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. *I am* the living bread which came down from heaven,') and were made *partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of world to come*, (Now if this is not the description of a real child of God, then I would not know how to find the language to describe such a one), *if they shall fall away*, to

renew them again unto repentance; seeing they *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*'

Heb. 10:35. '*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.*'

Heb. 10:38. '*Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*'

Heb. 12:14, 15. '*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.*'

James 5:19, 20. '*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death.*' (In this passage James clearly teaches that it is possible for one of the brethren to err from the truth and need be converted again. He also plainly teaches that unless he is brought back *he will die in his sins*).

II Peter 2:15. '*Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness*'

II Peter 2:18. '*They allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.*'

II Peter 2:20-22. '*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them,*' etc.

II Peter 3:17. '*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*' (Undoubtedly Peter believed that it was possible for people to be led away and fall).

I John 2:24. '*Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*'

Rev. 2:4, 5. '*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*'

Rev. 3:5. '*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*' (It is possible to have your name blotted out of the book of life).

Rev. 22:19. '*And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*' (This is almost the last word in the New Testament, and yet it is a clear warning that we can have our names taken from the book of life and lose our inheritance with God)."

"Now, I am frank to confess that I don't see how any person who claims to accept the Bible as the Word of God can, in the face of these plain statements *from His Word*, and many others that might be given, teach unconditional security, and claim that it is impossible for a person to fall from grace and be lost."

“...We have the privilege of coming into the family of God, and we have the power to take ourselves out again.”

“In the first place, they overlook the fact that the Bible teaches that man is a free moral agent and has the power of choice. Not only has he the power to choose to be saved, but he also has the power to choose to continue in salvation. His power of choice is never taken from him, and there never comes a time when he cannot take himself out of the hands of Christ. Certainly nothing else can take us out of the hands of Christ. All this we believe and teach, and rejoice in the comfort of it. However, the time will never come when we will not have the power to choose, and if we make the choice of sin we take ourselves out of the hands of Christ and may be lost. ‘In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,’ is still the Word of God and will always be.

“In the second place, they overlook the great truth that, so long as this life shall last, we are on probation. Our probation does not end with the work of regeneration, it ends with death. The promise is, ‘He that shall endure unto the *end*, the same shall be saved.’ The promise is to the overcomer. It is not to the one who just begins well, but to him who remains faithful. ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’ Those who are faithful unto death are the only ones who are promised the crown.

“In the third place, they overlook the teaching of the Bible on the conditions of being saved and *keeping* saved. The promise of salvation is to the one that *believeth*. That is a continuous thing that must go on all the time. We are not only saved by faith, but we also *live* by faith. We are ‘*kept* by the power of God *through faith*.’ ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith*.’ There can be no life *apart from Christ*, and we can abide in Christ only by faith. I am aware of the fact that the Bible teaches that we cannot be saved by good works, but we are saved by faith. Neither do we keep saved by good works, but we live moment by moment through faith in Christ. We are not supposed to keep ourselves any more than we are to save ourselves. However, we do need to see that constant faith in Christ is just as essential to our being kept as it is to our being saved in the first place.”

“A failure through weakness or lack of knowledge does not make us children of the devil; but a *deliberate* turning away from God into sin and *walking after the flesh* does make us once more the children of the devil.”

“While I cannot accept the kind of security that some people teach, I do want to say I believe with all my heart that the Bible does teach that there is security for the child of God *in Christ*. There can be no security elsewhere, but if we are in Him, we are secure. I also want to say that it is not enough for us to just show the error of those who preach a false security. We need not only to point out the error of this teaching, but to go on and find out just what the Word of God does teach about security... I trust that I may be used of the Spirit to lead them to see that they can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth them, and lead them to that rest of faith that comes to the child of God who rests in Christ by faith.

#### ‘HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD’---THE POWER OF SIN AND SATAN

‘Greater is he that is in you, than *he that is in the world.*’

In this beautiful text, John gives to us the assurance that there is adequate power for a life of constant victory, and that we may live the life of an overcomer by the power of Christ in us. These are the words of a man who not only spoke by divine inspiration, but also spoke out of his own glorious experience. When John wrote this glowing testimony, he was an old man and had tried and proven it to be a fact. He had met the enemy on many a battlefield and had come out more than conqueror by the power of the indwelling Christ. He assures us that this same power is at our disposal. Surely this ought to encourage our hearts and give us faith to endure unto the end.” (John R. Church, *Security In Christ* or “KEPT BY THE INDWELLING CHRIST”, (Published by: INDIAN SPRINGS HOLINESS CAMP GROUND, INC., FLOVILLA, GEORGIA, pp. 5, 8, 11, 13-15, 18-25, 30, 35-37).

**Church**, as the above quotations clearly show, references numerous scripture passages to support his view of security. *His interpretation of scripture differs* from the interpretations of **MacArthur, Hodges, and Ryrie** in that **Church** holds that by *not continuing in faith, which is as much an individual choice as beginning in faith, a person can and will lose their salvation*. And, by such turning from God in unbelief one turns to “walking after the flesh”, *which is equivalent to living in sin* rather than “walking after the Spirit”, and *thereby ceases to be “kept by the indwelling Christ”*. He does point out that such loss of salvation does not result from “failure through weakness or lack of knowledge, but rather, by a “deliberate turning away from God into sin””.

**MacArthur** also interprets scripture *to require a continuing in faith* to be secure, however, **MacArthur** maintains that continuing in faith *is inevitable* because faith is a “sovereignly granted gift of God”, and does not depend on a person’s *willingness* to so continue. But, **Ryrie and Hodges** view the *inevitability* of the “continuing in faith” *concept* to be eternally secure, *as unbiblical*. However, they would agree with the concept held by **Church** that a child of God can be unfaithful, but they disagree with Church that continued unfaithfulness *removes* such a person from their secure position in Christ.

**One noteworthy point** that is common to all four of the above commentators relates to a passage of scripture in chapter 10, verses 26 through 31 of the Epistle To The Hebrews, referenced as follows:

**<sup>26</sup>For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup>Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God**

underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

<sup>30</sup>For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"<sup>[e]</sup> says the Lord.<sup>[f]</sup> And again, "The LORD will judge His people."<sup>[g]</sup> <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**The above passage is addressed to:** 1) The Lord's people-verse 30; 2) Those who **have been sanctified** by the blood of the covenant-verse 29.

**If such people engage in "willful" sin**, they are trampling under foot the Son of God; they are treating *the blood of the Lord Jesus* by which *they were sanctified* as common or of little value; and they are bringing insult to the Holy Spirit who dwells within. This scripture warns that *vengeance is the Lords* and that *He will repay "His people"* for such *willful* sin by punishing them in the *fearful and fiery judgment* by which He will devour His adversaries.

**Ryrie references** verses 24, 25, and 34, and **Hodges references** verses 19 through 25, and verses 32 and 34, however, both ignore verses 26 through 31 that are *a direct contradiction to their argument* that the *unfaithfulness* of God's children *does not affect their security*. Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, (Wheaton, Illinois, a div. of SP Publications, Inc., 1989, p. 162); Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, (Dallas: Redenci'on Viva, 1989, p. 237).

**Church**, as evidenced on pages 20 and 21 of this paper, cites numerous passages in the Hebrews epistle, including chapter 10, to support his refutation of the "unconditional security" concept that is firmly held by **Ryrie, Hodges, and MacArthur**. However, he also ignores verses 26 through 31 in chapter 10, that are *a direct contradiction to his argument* that God's children, by a "deliberate" turning away from God into sin "lose their salvation" which is his way of saying that *they cease to be God's children* ("The Lord will judge His people." v-30) *by taking themselves out of the family of God*. (See top of page 22 of this paper)

**MacArthur cites** numerous passages in the Hebrews' epistle, including verse 38 in chapter 10, however, he ignores verses 26 through 31 and dismisses any application to God's children of what he calls the "warning passages in Hebrews" in the following manner:

**"I have examined elsewhere the warning passages in Hebrews that were addressed to people who identified with and intellectually accepted Christ but had not laid hold of Him by faith. No matter how one interprets the warning passages of the book, there is no escaping the clear and obvious implications of Hebrews 12:10-14: 'He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.... [Therefore**

follow] the sanctification [holiness] without which no one will see the Lord.” John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, p. 220).

**The above referenced passage in chapter 10 of Hebrews** is also a direct contradiction to his claim that such a warning passage does not address “His people” (v-30) who were “sanctified” by the “blood of the covenant” (v-29). And, only the blood of the Lord Jesus sanctifies [makes holy]. MacArthur, by his own declaration (immediately above), when he accurately equates “sanctification” with “holiness” “without which no one will see the Lord” assists the passage at Hebrews 10:26-31 *in refuting his argument* that the “warning passages” do not apply to the Lord’s people.

## SUMMARY OF THE PRECEDING TEXT

**We will continue by briefly summarizing the preceding debate, and by condensing it to include only the essential points in contention between the above quoted commentators.**

## GOSPEL

**Ryrie** emphasizes the *content of the gospel* to be that *Jesus died and rose again*, for that truth, and that alone, *is the Gospel message*.

**MacArthur** includes within the *gospel message* the call to *discipleship* and *submissive obedience*. **MacArthur’s** broader view of the gospel message includes *turning from sin* and *embracing God’s righteousness*.

**Hodges** explains *the gospel* as consisting of *specific facts about Jesus*. The scriptural facts are that *Jesus is the Son of God*, and *He is the Christ*. **Hodges** explains these facts to *include* the *guarantee* of resurrection and eternal life, or the *full guarantee* of one’s eternal destiny on the basis of *faith*. (One act of faith)

## FAITH

**Hodges** defines faith as follows: “What faith really is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That ---and that alone---is saving faith.”

**Ryrie** says, “... it is obvious that faith involves more than the knowledge of facts. The facts must be there or faith is empty. But giving assent to the truth of those facts is also a part of faith. But even assent, however genuine, must be accompanied by an act of the will to trust in the truth which one has come to know and has assented to.” **And further**, that “An element of commitment must be present in trusting Christ for salvation, but it is commitment to Him, His promise, and His ability to give eternal life to those who believe.”

MacArthur's explanation of "Saving" faith may be summarized by his statements: "What they *do* mean is that saving faith retains no privileges." "It is an unconditional surrender, a willingness to do any thing the Lord demands." "True faith is humble, submissive obedience."

It is apparent that MacArthur's concept of faith is an unwavering abandonment of one's person to God and His will, and involves more than Ryrie's expression of "trust" in Christ as a "commitment to Him, His promise, and His ability to give eternal life to those who believe." Also, Ryrie's *third element* of faith, to "trust in the truth which one has come to know and has assented to" involves more than Hodges' declaration that faith "is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true." Hodges definition of faith is equivalent to Ryrie's *second element* of faith, which is *assent to the truth* of the facts of the Gospel.

## REPENTANCE

MacArthur, in brief, says "Repentance is a critical element of saving faith, but one must never dismiss it as simply another word for believing." Also, MacArthur says that, "repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation."

Ryrie views repentance as a change of mind about Jesus. In this regard he says, "But we turned from whatever conception we had and turned to Him as our Savior from sin. And that repentance brought eternal salvation." Ryrie also views repentance and faith *as synonymous*. He makes the following statements: 1) "The lordship/discipleship/mastery teaching apparently makes repentance and faith two distinct and necessary requirements for salvation." 2) "However, Luke's rendering of the Great Commission uses repentance in the same sense as believing in Christ." 3) Clearly, repentance for the forgiveness of sins is connected to the death and resurrection of Christ. Other passages where repentance stands for faith and refers to the conversion experience are Acts 5:31; 11:18; Hebrews 6:6; and 2 Peter 3:9."

Hodges explains repentance as follows: "the call to repentance is *broader than* the call to eternal salvation. It is rather a call to *harmony* between the creature and His Creator, a call to *fellowship* between sinful men and women and a forgiving God."

"If we keep this fact firmly in mind we will never make the mistake of thinking that repentance is a condition for eternal salvation."

MacArthur and Ryrie both say that repentance is *a condition* for salvation, while Hodges declares that repentance is a call *to fellowship* with God, and *not a condition* for eternal salvation. However, Ryrie views faith and repentance as synonymous, while MacArthur says that repentance is a "critical element of saving faith", *it is not* "another word for believing".

## SALVATION

While both the “Lordship” and the “Non-Lordship” advocates continually use the words salvation, saved, and saving, etc., *they have widely divergent interpretations of what these words mean.*

Hodges provides this explanation: “The biblical picture of the saving experience is masterful in its clarity and simplicity. A single, one-time appropriation of God’s gift results in a miraculous inward transformation that can never be reversed.”

“Since this is true, we miss the point to insist that true saving faith must necessarily continue. Of course, our faith in Christ *should* continue. But the claim that it absolutely must, or necessarily does, has no support at all in the Bible.”

MacArthur explains salvation in this manner:

“Real salvation is not only justification. It cannot be isolated from regeneration, sanctification, and ultimately glorification. Salvation is an ongoing process as much as it is a past event. It is the work of God through which we are ‘conformed to the image of His Son’ (Romans 8:29, cf. Romans 13:11).”

The primary points of contention are:

Hodges’ claim that *salvation is a “single, one-time appropriation* of God’s gift” that “can never be reversed” is the direct opposite of MacArthur’s interpretation that the initial appropriation of God’s gift is *but the beginning* of the *salvation process* whereby we are “conformed to the image of God’s Son”.

As Hodges suggests, the “Lordship” view that one’s faith *must* and *necessarily will* continue is also the direct opposite of the “Non-Lordship” concept that *one act of faith* secures eternal salvation.

## CARNALITY

Whether or not a person who has partaken of “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” **can engage in sustained carnal living** is *another point of disagreement* concerning the testimony of scripture.

Ryrie comments on carnality:

“Do the Scriptures indicate that both unbelievers and believers can be called carnal? I think so.”

“But ‘carnal’ can also describe some believers. How so? Simply because such believers live and act like unsaved people (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). How do we know the people described in this passage are believers? He addresses them as ‘brethren’; and ‘babes in Christ’ in the first verse.”

“How do we know they were carnal? He says so three times (verses 1 and 3)... Notice that Paul does not merely say that Christians ‘can and do behave in carnal ways’, he plainly states, ‘You are carnal.’ How then can one charge that ‘contemporary theologians have fabricated an entire category for this type of person---the ‘carnal Christian’?’ (Underlining mine)

### **MacArthur comments on carnality:**

“Paul’s words to the Corinthians, ‘Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?’ (1 Corinthians 3:3, KJV), were not meant to establish a special class of Christianity. These were not people living in static disobedience; Paul does not suggest that carnality and rebellion were the rule in their lives. In fact, he said of these same people, ‘You are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1:7-8). Nevertheless, by having taken their eyes off Christ and created religious celebrities (3:4-5), they were behaving in a carnal way.” (underlining mine)

Ryrie interprets the passage in 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 as scriptural support that “saved” individuals *can* and *do* practice carnal living. MacArthur interprets Paul’s words, “Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” as *not* meaning that these people were “living in static disobedience”, that is to say, they were *not engaged* in the practice of carnal living. MacArthur then cites two other passages in 1 Corinthians to support his view that while a “true” Christian may fall into sin such person will *never* willingly *continue in sin*, but will “seek cleansing”.

## **ETERNAL SECURITY**

### **MacArthur comments:**

“I am committed to the biblical truth that salvation is forever. Contemporary Christians have come to refer to this as the doctrine of eternal security. Perhaps the Puritans’ terminology is more appropriate; they spoke of the perseverance of the saints. The point is not that God guarantees security to everyone who will *say* he accepts Christ, but rather that those whose faith is genuine will prove their salvation is secure by persevering to the end in the way of righteousness.”

“True believers *will* persevere. If a person turns against Christ, it is proof that person was never saved.”

### **Ryrie comments:**

“What does eternal security mean? Let me propose a concise definition. Eternal security is that work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost.”

The basic argument between “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” advocates is whether or not one’s security rests on an **initial act of faith** (non-lordship) or a continuity of faith (lordship). Both, Ryrie and Hodges emphasize their common view of the one act of faith concept. MacArthur supports the “Lordship” interpretation of continuing in faith by noting “the use of the *present* tense of the Greek verb *pisteuo* (‘believe’) throughout the gospel of John”, and also in Acts and Romans (verses referenced). And, Ryrie supports the “Non-Lordship” interpretation of one act of faith, noting that, “when Abraham’s faith is described in the New Testament, *an aorist*, not a *present*, tense is used consistently”. He then references several verses of scripture.

It is noteworthy that MacArthur and Ryrie, each cite scriptures for “believe” that use the “tense” *that best supports their interpretation*. Both the “present” tense and the “aorist” tense are used in scriptures referring to “believe”, *depending on the context of their use*.

Hodges argues that the “Lordship” view, that one who believes **will necessarily continue in faith**, and that if one’s professed faith fails *that is proof that they never had true faith*, is “utterly unknown to the Bible”. Hodges declares that, “there are many who have been confused by this kind of teaching”.

Both, the “Lordship” and the “Non-Lordship” systems of thought have common roots in *the Calvinist security concept* that has been referred to as the “*once saved, always saved*” doctrine. The Calvinist concepts of “Total Inability or Depravity”, “Unconditional Election”, “Limited Atonement”, “Irresistible Grace”, and “Perseverance” have greater acceptance by the advocates of “Lordship” salvation. We observe these concepts *underlying the interpretation* of scriptures by “Lordship” advocates, while the concept that *unfaithfulness* and the attending sinful behavior *does not affect security*, *underlies the interpretation* of scriptures by proponents of “Non-Lordship” salvation.

The different interpretations that each has of the passage of scripture in **2 Timothy 2:11-13** illustrate *these conceptual influences* on their interpretation of scripture. (See their comments on pages 16 and 17 of this paper)

We will conclude the summary with comments by John R. Church who does not embrace the concept of “*once saved, always saved*”, or as he refers to this teaching, “*once in grace, always in grace*”. But rather, he interprets scripture to support the view that *unfaithfulness* and the attending sin that is willful in nature *removes* a “born again” child of God out of the His family.

#### **Church comments:**

“Now I am aware of the fact that there is a great group of people abroad in the land, who are preaching a shallow, cheap, and unscriptural security; a security that is not only unscriptural but it is one of the most dangerous doctrines that could possibly be preached by anyone.

“The people to whom I refer are those who preach and teach that, if a person is once really born of the Spirit of God and becomes a child of God, it is impossible for him ever to fall from grace and be lost. They teach that after a person has once been born again, no matter what sins that person may commit he cannot possibly be lost, for he is God’s child and can never become anything else.”

“..In fact, in every place where it speaks of people who have eternal life, we are told that it is on the condition of constantly believing on Christ, for that is what the word ‘*believeth*’ means. It is in the present tense. That means that it is not a thing that is done once and for all and is never to be repeated, but rather it is a continuous

act that must be *constantly going on*. When we cease to believe we cease to have eternal life abiding in us. In fact, there can be no eternal life separate and apart from Christ. *He is the life*. When we break our contract with Him by sin, we are as devoid of eternal life as a house is devoid of light when it is cut loose from the power line. To be dead spiritually is to be cut off from Christ, and sin will surely break the contact with life. It will do it today just as surely as it did with Eve, and to teach otherwise is but to revive the doctrine that Satan put forth in the Garden when he said, ‘Ye shall not surely die’.

“Not only does our Lord Jesus Christ deny and refute this dangerous doctrine of unconditional security, but Paul, Peter, James, and John also deny it time after time. All through the New Testament we find warning and exhortations urging us to beware lest we fall away.

“Our good friends who teach unconditional security like to quote the words of the great Apostle Paul in Romans 8:1. He speaks of there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and they try to make it appear that once a person is in Jesus Christ he can never come into condemnation again. However, they fail to quote that part of the verse which says, ‘*Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*’ They leave that out, for it does not fit in with their doctrine. It clearly implies that the condition of remaining in a state of not being condemned is to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This same thing is reaffirmed in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse. They also fail to note that he says in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> verses of this same chapter, ‘*therefore, brethren, (that means Christians) we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye (brethren or Christians) live after the flesh, ye shall die.*’ (Paul refuses to go along with those who would say, ‘Ye shall not surely die.’)”

“Now, I am frank to confess that I don’t see how any person who claims to accept the Bible as the Word of God can, in the face of these plain statements *from His Word*, and many others that might be given, teach unconditional security, and claim that it is impossible for a person to fall from grace and be lost.” (Referenced scriptures for support of Church’s comments are on pages 19, 20, and 21).

“..We have the privilege of coming into the family of God, and we have the power to take ourselves out again.”

“While I cannot accept the kind of security that some people teach, I do want to say I believe with all my heart that the Bible does teach that there is security for the child of God *in Christ*..”

## **‘HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD’---THE POWER OF SIN AND SATAN**

‘Greater is he that is in you, than *he that is in the world.*’

“In this beautiful text, John gives to us the assurance that there is adequate power for a life of constant victory, and that we may live the life of an overcomer by the power of Christ in us. These are the words of a man who not only spoke by divine inspiration, but also spoke out of his own glorious experience. When John wrote this glowing testimony, he was an old man and had tried and proven it to be a fact. He had met the enemy on many a battlefield and had come out more than conqueror by the power of the indwelling Christ. He assures us that this same power

is at our disposal. Surely this ought to encourage our hearts and give us faith to endure unto the end.”

Church interprets the testimony of scripture to require *continuing* in faith to be secure, and further, Church maintains that by *not continuing in faith*, which is as much *an individual choice* as *beginning in faith*, a person *can* and *will lose* their salvation. And, by such turning from God in unbelief one turns to “walking after the flesh”, and *thereby ceases to be “kept by the indwelling Christ”*. He does point out that such loss of salvation does not result from “failure through weakness or lack of knowledge”, but rather, by a “*deliberate* turning away from God into sin”.

MacArthur also interprets scripture to require *a continuing in faith* to be secure, however, MacArthur maintains that *continuing in faith is inevitable* because faith is a “*sovereignly granted gift of God*” and does not depend on a person’s *willingness* to so *continue*. To interpret scripture to allow an individual the prerogative of *continuing* or *not continuing* in faith would *fatally undermine* the “Lordship” concept that *at the time of “new birth”* one has a secured inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ. Ryrie and Hodges would agree with Church concerning *the concept* that a child of God can, by choice, *not continue* in faith, but they disagree with Church that *continued unfaithfulness removes* such a person from their secure position in Christ. For to interpret scripture, as do MacArthur and Church, to *require* faithfulness *would fatally undermine* the “Non-Lordship” concept that *at the time of “new birth”* one has, by that *initial act* of faith, a secured inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

The preceding consideration details less than all of the points where there are differences in interpretation of scripture within the “evangelical Christian community”. Some of these topics are identified, but not explained, in the first full paragraph on page 16 of this paper. There have been books written to explain these and other such topics.

## **WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES BY MEN WHO HAVE CREDENTIALS IN THEOLOGY? AND MORE PARTICULARLY, BY MEN WHO EXPRESSLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY AGREE THAT THESE SCRIPTURES ARE THE “INSPIRED” AND “INFALLIBLE” WORD OF GOD?**

Our final consideration will be an examination of scripture for the answer to this question.

(All bold type and underlining of scripture text are mine) (All scripture text is KJV)

### **1 Corinthians 1**

[9] God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

[10] Now **I beseech you, brethren**, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **all speak the same thing**, and that there **be no divisions** among you; but that ye be **perfectly joined together** in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**.

[11] For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are **contentions among you**.

#### **Philippians 1**

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast **in one spirit**, with **one mind** striving **together** for the faith of the gospel;

#### **Philippians 2**

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship **of the Spirit**, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye **be likeminded**, having the **same love**, being of **one accord**, of **one mind**.

#### **Romans 15**

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be **likeminded** one toward another **according to** Christ Jesus;

6 That ye may with **one mind** and **one mouth** glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**These passages of scripture**, and there are numerous other similar passages, are such clear testimony that *the great burden on the heart* of the Apostle Paul, *as he surely expressed the Lord's burden* (Paul spoke in the Lord's name-1 Cor. 1:10), and *the message of the gospel* (Paul exhorts to behave in a manner that is becoming of, or that is worthy of the gospel of Christ-Phil. 1:27), was that God's children be of *one spirit, one mind*, and that they all *speak the same thing* and have *the same judgment*.

**With this call for unity being so evident in the testimony of scripture**, how does scripture explain the lack of unity and agreement that exists within the "Evangelical Christian Community", as evidenced in the previous comments by some of this "communities" preachers and educators? It should be noted that, at least, some of the doctrines or theological concepts that were being discussed on the first twenty-nine pages of this paper are identified in scripture as the "first principles of the oracles of God". **We read in the epistle to the Hebrews the following:**

#### **Hebrews 5, Verses 8 to 14**

[8] Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

[9] And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

[10] Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

[11] Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull

of hearing.

[12] For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the **first principles** of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of **milk**, and not of strong meat.

[13] For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

[14] But strong meat belongeth to them that are of **full age**, even those who by reason of use **have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**

### **Hebrew 6, Verses 1 to 3**

[1] Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of **faith** toward God,

[2] Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of **resurrection** of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.

[3] And this will we do, if God permit.

**The previous consideration of the debate between the “Lordship” and “Non-Lordship” advocates concerned the scripture’s explanation of the gospel, faith, repentance, salvation, carnality, and eternal security.** It is apparent that some, if not all, of these topics are within what the above referenced passage in the Hebrews’ epistle identifies as “first principles”.

**While it is not the focus of this consideration to determine who may be right and who may be wrong in the “Lordship”---“Non-Lordship” debate, *their conflicting individual arguments* are necessarily an unfortunate indictment of those who are inaccurate in their interpretations of scripture.** Should one of these theologians, allowing for minor discrepancy, be accurately interpreting the scriptures, he would escape such a self-imposed indictment.

**As we inquire in the scripture to determine the cause for the differing conclusions that are reached when persons consider the words of God, we will be viewing two sources of life, and the characteristics of each.**

**God is a source of life** that is available to us through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. **We read in the Gospel of John:**

### **John 1, Verses 4 to 9**

[4] In him was life; and the **life** was the **light** of men.

[5] And the light shineth in **darkness**; and the darkness **comprehended it not**.

[6] There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

[7] The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

[8] He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

[9] That was the true Light, which **lighteth** every man that cometh into the world.

**Here we learn that the *life* that is realized in Christ is *inseparable from light*.** For the *life is the light*. And, the Light “lighteth”, or enlightens man.

Also, this *light* shined in the midst of that which the scripture calls *darkness*. And, the *darkness could not comprehend*, or perceive *the light* that was in the very midst of that darkness.

### **John 3, Verses 18 to 21**

[18] He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because **he hath not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

[19] And **this** is the condemnation, **that light** is come into the world, and **men loved darkness** rather than **light**, **because** their deeds were evil.

[20] For every one that doeth evil **hateth the light**, neither cometh **to the light**, lest his deeds should **be reprov**ed.

[21] But he that doeth truth **cometh to the light**, that his deeds may be made **manifest**, that they are wrought in God.

**In this passage of scripture**, we learn that *the darkness* into which the light shined was *the hearts and minds of men*. Those persons who would not come to the light *preferred the darkness* where their self-serving manner of life would not be reprovved or discovered. Those who do not come to the light because they *prefer* the life that is lived in the darkness, *are condemned*. But, those whose life is according to truth come to the light *that they might see* that their deeds are brought forth by God. And, living one's life in the light *frees from condemnation*.

**The following scriptures provide a rather clear illustration of the Light** coming into the midst of *the darkness*, and how the darkness of the human heart *does not understand that the Light is in its midst*. Also, how people *remain in the darkness as a matter of choice*. **The verses, or portions thereof, that have bold type plus italicization express the responses of the people in general, and that of the Pharisees, to the statements by Jesus.**

### **John 8, Verses 12 to 59**

[12] Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light** of the world: he that followeth me **shall not** walk in darkness, but **shall have** the light of life.

[13] *The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.*

[14] Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

[15] Ye judge **after the flesh**; I judge no man.

[16] And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

[17] It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

[18] I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

[19] Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

[20] These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

[21] Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

[22] *Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.*

[23] And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am **from above**: ye are **of this world**; I am **not of this world**.

[24] I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

[25] *Then said they unto him, Who art thou?* And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

[26] I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

[27] *They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.*

[28] Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

[29] And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

[30] As he spake these words, **many believed on him**.

[31] Then said Jesus to those Jews which **believed on him**, If ye continue in my word, **then** are ye my disciples indeed;

[32] And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

[33] *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

[34] Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

[35] And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

[36] If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

[37] I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

[38] I speak that which **I have seen with my Father**: and ye do that which **ye have seen with your father**.

[39] *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.* Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

[40] But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

[41] Ye do the deeds of your father. *Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.*

[42] Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I **proceeded forth** and came from God; neither came I **of myself**, but he sent me.

[43] Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

[44] Ye are **of your father the devil**, and **the lusts of** your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of

it.

[45] And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

[46] Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

[47] He that is **of God** heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not **of God**.

[48] *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

[49] Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

[50] And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

[51] Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

[52] *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*

[53] *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*

[54] Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

[55] Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

[56] Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

[57] *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

[58] Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

[59] *Then took they up stones to cast at him:* but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

**It is noteworthy that the peoples' responses to what Jesus told them are not inquiry for understanding**, but rather, they are *defiant* and *accusatory*. Clearly, *they do not comprehend* the meaning, related to any point, of what Jesus is saying. They are content to embrace *their pre-existing concepts* of both, themselves, and also God. For example: 1) They are unaware of their bondage to indwelling sin; 2) We are Abraham's seed; 3) Abraham is our father; 4) We have one Father, and He is God. *Jesus disputes each perception that they have of their relationship to both, God and Abraham*. Here we see the contrast between *the light*, which is *Jesus' true perceptions* of things, and *the darkness*, which is *how these people inaccurately perceive these same things*.

**Further**, commencing at verse 31, Jesus is addressing those Jews who "believed" on Him (Some bible commentators, to be consistent with their theological system of thought, would say that these Jews did not **truly believe**). When the scripture uses the term "believed", it is not wresting scripture to interpret it to mean "believed". Jesus does insert the condition of their continuing in His word *to be His disciples*. (The Greek word translated "disciples" means *a learner, i.e., a pupil*,

Strong's Concordance). *Discipleship* is the continuing in *God's word*, which is *the instrument that the Spirit uses to enlighten us* concerning the truth and, to *free us* from sin in the flesh (See Romans 8:1-4). These Jews who believed on Him did not appear receptive to Jesus' *additional instruction* that they needed deliverance from their sin. The *attitude of their heart* was one of devotion and commitment *to their system* of theological thought and practice, as opposed to *an inward posture* of devotion and commitment *to the God* that they called their Father. Their *system of thought and practice* provided for them a sense of *comfort and security* while they indulged the desires and interests of the flesh-  
v15, which is sin. They resisted the suggestion that they *live free* from the compelling desires and interests of sin in the flesh. *Sin provides many carnal gratifications*. Many of *the current systems of thought and practice* aid and comfort us as we walk in *the darkness of sin* and thus, *our commitment* is to the institution rather than the truth as it is in Jesus.

**Satan is most active in his effort to twist God's word that we miss its meaning and application.** In verses 41 through 44, Jesus tells them that *God is not their Father*, but rather, *their father is the devil* who *abode not* in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Also, that their father, the devil, *is a liar* and *the father* of lies. At verse 55, Jesus tells these people that they are liars. (As mentioned above, verse 31 says that Jesus is addressing those Jews that *believed* on Him). *It would seem to some that saying that they are of their father the devil suggests that these people did not believe on Him*. It might help to understand this passage by comparing it to a similar passage in the Gospel of Matthew.

#### **Matthew 16, Verses 15 to 17**

[15] He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

[16] And **Simon Peter answered** and said, **Thou art the Christ**, the Son of the living God.

[17] And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood** hath not revealed it unto thee, **but my Father** which is in heaven.

#### **Matthew 16, Verses 21 to 23**

[21] From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

[22] Then **Peter** took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: **this shall not be unto thee**.

[23] But he turned, and said **unto Peter**, Get thee behind me, **Satan**: thou art an offence unto me: for **thou savourest not the things that be of God**, but those that be of men.

**Here we have clear testimony**, and there are many other scriptures that so testify, that *Peter did believe on Him*. Jesus' telling Peter, "Get behind me Satan", does not suggest that Peter does not *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, but

rather, reference is made to Peter's *succumbing to Satan's temptation* to serve his natural affection for Jesus when such affection *opposes God's will* in the matter of Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter, in disputing with Jesus', was failing in the matter of "*discipleship*". He was *not continuing in the truth*, and he was not "*of God*" in this matter, but he was **of Satan**. Those Jews, who also *believed on Him* in chapter eight of John's gospel, were objecting to Jesus' *further instruction* concerning their need to be freed from the bondage of their indwelling sin *by continuing in His word-v31*. By *resisting His word* in this and in His additional statements, they too were not "**of God**", but rather, their attitude and responses were "of their father the devil". The issue is one of "discipleship". (Disciples means: *a learner, i.e. pupil*, as noted on bottom of page 36 above) Clearly, they were not *learning* from or *hearing* Jesus' words.

**To understand the essence of darkness and Satan's role in tempting us to leave the light to walk in darkness, we will examine scripture in the Book of Genesis.**

### **Genesis 1, Verses 26 to 27**

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

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

### **Genesis 2, Verses 15 to 17**

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

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

[17] **But** of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat of it:** for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die.**

### **Genesis 3, Verses 1 to 13**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[8] And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife **hid themselves from the presence** of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

[9] And the **LORD God called** unto Adam, and said unto him, **Where art thou?**

[10] And he said, **I heard thy voice** in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because **I was naked**; and **I hid** myself.

[11] And he said, **Who told thee that** thou wast naked? Hast thou **eaten of the tree**, whereof **I commanded thee** that thou **shouldest not eat**?

[12] And the man said, **The woman** whom thou gavest to be with me, **she gave me** of the tree, and I did eat.

[13] And **the LORD God said** unto the woman, What is this **that thou hast done?** And the woman said, **The serpent** beguiled me, and I did eat.

**There are several observations from these passages of scripture:**

- God made the man and the woman in God's own image.
- God placed the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden. They were to dress and keep the garden and were free to eat of the fruit of all the trees, except one. There were two trees of particular significance: 1) The tree of life; and, 2) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- God commanded that Adam and Eve not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- God informed them that if they ate of the forbidden tree, they would surely die.
- The serpent (Satan), described as "subtle", moves to tempt Eve to eat of the tree contrary to God's command and warning.

**Man, being in God's image, has mental, emotional, and volitional faculties.** Their environment in the Garden of Eden was a place of responsibility that required these functions. God instructed them concerning maintenance of the garden and eating of the fruit. This required understanding and choice.

**In chapter three, the serpent's approach to Eve was *to engage her in a consideration*** of the eating of the trees that were in the garden-v1. ***Eve's initial response*** to Satan's question ***about what God had said*** concerning not eating of every tree evidences ***her clear understanding*** that God had commanded them ***not to eat*** of that one particular tree and ***the consequences*** that would ensue if they did eat of it-vs. 2, 3. Notice Satan's ***suggestion*** that what God had said ***surely did not mean that*** they would die. His is a subtle way of ***casting doubt*** on what God had so clearly stated. Certainly, any ***thought*** that raises ***any form of doubt*** related to God is not from God but is ***suggested*** by Satan. Eve should have withdrawn from the consideration immediately when ***such*** doubt arose in

her mind. Scripture shows that *Satan's way of tempting* is to engage the mind with a question about *what God has said*, and *then suggesting* an inaccurate meaning or application-See Matthew 4:1-11.

**Satan continues, in chapter three, to offer suggestions that contain some truth and some falsification of what God knows**, verse 5, “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then **your eyes shall be opened**, and ye shall be as gods, **knowing good and evil**”. Verse 6 shows *the affect* upon Eve of Satan’s subtle manipulation of *what God had said* concerning the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “And when **the woman saw** that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be desired **to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” **Satan had deceived Eve**. At the beginning of the dialogue, *Eve’s knowledge* of what God had said was **completely accurate**. *This is light*. At the end of Satan’s manipulation of what God had said, Eve saw the tree and the consequences of eating its fruit as Satan interpreted it for her. Now *her knowledge* of what God had said was **inaccurate**. *This is darkness*. Eve’s initial state of being in *light* had changed to an inward state of *darkness*. The scripture informs us that Adam was not deceived, but that Eve was deceived-1Timothy 2:14. Thus, Adam knowingly and willfully disobeyed God.

**The consequences to them for such willful sin** was that, as Satan had said, “...your eyes shall be opened...” However, contrary to Satan’s statement that they “shall be as gods..., knowing good and evil”-5, *they knew that they were naked* and *had defiled themselves* before God. *Their response* to this realization was to **attempt to cover their nakedness**-7. And, when God came into their midst, they were *afraid* and *hid themselves* from Him-10. **Fear was an expression of their capacity for emotion**. They were *separated from God*.

The consequences of Adam’s sin **were not limited to Adam and Eve**. **The consequences affected all of their descendants**. **We read**: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned:”-**Romans 5:12**. **We also read at: Genesis 5, Verses 1 to 4**

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

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

[3] And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son **in his own likeness, after his image**; and called his name Seth:

[4] And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and **he begat sons and daughters**:

**Just as Adam and Eve hid themselves** from the presence of God, we have read in chapter 3 of John’s gospel, verses 19 and 20, that *men loved darkness* rather than light because their deeds are evil, and they do not come to the light

so that their deeds might be discovered or seen. However, in verse 21, we read that those who walk in truth come to the light that they may see that their deeds are brought forth by God. (For more detail concerning Adams' sin and its continuing affect on the human race, read the study topic entitled: What Happened To Man In The Garden Of Eden).

**What we have read in the Book Of Genesis** sets forth the essential elements concerning light and darkness, and the subtlety of Satan's suggestions in drawing us away from *the light where our perception of divine things is quite clear*, into *the darkness*, by *distorting or twisting the meaning* of what *God has said*. These essential elements and the means employed by Satan to draw us away from God *have not changed*. **The Apostle Paul writes to the church at Corinth: II Corinthians 11, Verses 1 to 4**

[1] Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.

[2] For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I **have** espoused you to one husband, **that** I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

[3] **But I fear**, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve** through his subtilty, so **your minds** should be **corrupted from** the simplicity that is in Christ.

[4] For if he that cometh **preacheth another Jesus**, whom **we** have not preached, ...

#### **II Corinthians 4, Verses 1 to 4**

[1] Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

[2] But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, **nor handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's **conscience** in the sight of God.

[3] But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

[4] In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds** of them which believe not, lest **the light** of the **glorious gospel of Christ**, who is the image of God, should **shine** unto them.

**It is most evident** in these passages of scripture that what began in the Garden of Eden continues, not only with those who are not born into the family of God, but also with those who are within the body of Christ.

**With such intense and active opposition to God's purpose with man, what is the divine provision for the accomplishment of His purpose, which the Apostle Paul expresses, "... I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."** Especially, when our beginning is in the image of Adam who, *by disobeying God*, fell into the depths of *the darkness of living a life that is separate from God*. Adam, knowing God's will, chose to live his life *independent of God*. This is willful sin-Hebrews 10:26-31. **The source of this life of darkness is Satan.**

**The scripture informs us that God is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. We read at: Colossians 2, Verses 1 to 4**

[1] For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

[2] That **their hearts** might be comforted, being **knit together** in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of **understanding**, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of **God**, and of **the Father**, and of **Christ**;

[3] In whom are **hid** all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[4] And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

**Thus, we see that if we have any knowledge and understanding *of divine things, such knowledge and understanding can be given to us only by God.***

**We see this grace accomplished in the following scriptures:**

**Matthew 16, Verses 15 to 17**

[15] He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

[16] And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[17] And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

**Luke 18, Verses 31 to 34**

[31] Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

[32] For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

[33] And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

[34] And **they understood none of these things**: and this saying was **hid** from them, **neither knew they** the things which were spoken.

**Luke 24, Verses 44 to 45**

[44] And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, **while I was yet with you**, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

[45] Then **opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.**

**Matthew 11, Verses 25 to 27**

[25] At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because **thou** hast **hid** these things from **the wise and prudent**, and hast **revealed** them **unto babes**.

[26] Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

[27] All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and **he** to whomsoever **the Son will reveal him**.

**In the passage in Matthew chapter 16, we learn that *Peter's recognition* of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God was *granted by the Father*. Such recognition is outside the range of *our natural comprehension*.**

**In the two passages in Luke's gospel, we see that the things that Jesus had told the disciples while He was with them, *while they heard what He said*, they could not understand *the meaning* of those things or the scriptures *until He***

*opened their understanding*. These scriptures show us that there is a vast difference between *knowing what the scriptures say as a matter of information* and *understanding the meaning* of that information. Also, we learn from the passage in Matthew chapter 11 that one cannot know the Father apart from *the Son making Him known* to a person.

**In these passages from the gospels of Luke and Matthew, we see that Jesus opened the disciple's understanding.** Now that *Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father*, what provision has God made *that our understanding* might be opened to understand the scriptures? Again, let us observe how the scriptures address this question.

### **John 14, Verses 15 to 20**

[15] If ye **love me, keep** my commandments.

[16] And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;

[17] Even **the Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but **ye know him**; for **he dwelleth** with you, and shall be **in you**.

[18] I will not leave you comfortless: **I** will come to you.

[19] Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: **because I live, ye shall live also**.

[20] At that day **ye shall know** that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

### **John 16, Verses 13 to 15**

[13] Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for **he shall not speak of himself**; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and **he will shew you** things to come.

[14] He shall glorify **me**: for he shall **receive of mine**, and shall **shew it unto you**.

[15] All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

**Here we learn that the indwelling Spirit** is the one who opened the understanding of those who have recorded such revelation that constitutes the scriptures of the New Testament. This is the ministry of the gospel after Pentecost. **We read at:**

### **Acts 1, Verses 8 to 9**

[8] But ye shall receive power, **after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you**: and ye **shall be witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

[9] And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

**The Apostle Paul was sent by Jesus to minister to the Gentiles** as he declares to King Agrippa:

### **Acts 26, Verses 17 to 18**

[17] Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, **unto whom now I send thee**,

[18] 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**.

Here we learn that the effectual ministry of the gospel *opens* the eyes of people *who are of faith* in Christ, turning them from *darkness to light*, and from *the power of Satan to God* that they might receive forgiveness and inheritance. A person does not have *God's perception* of the things of this world, nor of God and His kingdom, except *when* and *to the extent* that God enlightens one's understanding. *Thus, apart from God's grace to enlighten, a person lives outside of the reality provided by the Spirit, where Satan can, and often does, orchestrate one's view of things.*

Further, the scripture informs us that:

- 1) The prophets in the Old Testament spoke according to the ministry of *the Spirit of Christ* who was in them.
- 2) The things that *they prophesied* are the subject matter of *the gospel*.
- 3) The *gospel* was proclaimed according to *the Holy Spirit* sent down from heaven.
- 4) Those who *heard the Lord*, in their proclamation of *the gospel message*, were simply *confirming* the salvation message *spoken by Him*. Some of these scriptures are:

#### 1 Peter 1, Verses 9 to 12

[9] Receiving the **end** of your faith, even the **salvation** of your souls.

[10] Of which **salvation** the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should **come unto you**:

[11] Searching **what**, or what manner of **time** the **Spirit of Christ** which was **in them** did signify, when it testified **beforehand** the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

[12] Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, **but unto us** they did minister **the things**, which are **now** reported unto you **by them** that have preached the **gospel** unto you with **the Holy Ghost** sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

#### Hebrews 2, Verses 1 to 3

[1] Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

[2] For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

[3] How shall we escape, if we neglect **so great salvation**; which **at the first** began to be spoken **by the Lord**, and was **confirmed** unto us **by them** that heard him;

These passages of scripture testify to *the unity* that resides within the *entire message* of scripture. While there are dispensational differences in *God's administration of His Word*, there is *one unified body of truth* that has its meaning and fulfillment in *the Person and work* of the Lord Jesus. (For a

more comprehensive study of this aspect of scripture testimony, one might read the study topic entitled, Considerations Related To Interpreting Scripture).

**The scriptures referenced immediately above** provide rather clear testimony that the scriptures of the prophets, and of the apostles, came *through the ministry of the Holy Spirit* to these servants of God. And also, the Old Testament scriptures could be understood by the disciples of Jesus *as He opened their understanding* to the *meaning* and *application* of those scriptures-Luke 24:44,45.

**The scriptures also inform us** that it is *God* who enlightens our understanding that we might *know Him and His provision* for us.

### **Ephesians 1, Verses 15 to 20**

[15] Wherefore I also, **after I heard of your faith** in the Lord Jesus, and **love** unto all the saints,

[16] Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

[17] That the **God of our Lord Jesus Christ**, the **Father of glory**, may **give unto you** the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the **knowledge of him**:

[18] **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that ye **may know** what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

[19] And what is the exceeding greatness of his power **to usward who believe**, according to **the working of his mighty power**,

[20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

### **Ephesians 3, Verses 14 to 19**

[14] For this cause I bow my knees unto **the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[15] Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

[16] That **he would grant you**, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might **by his Spirit** in the inner man;

[17] That Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**; that **ye**, being rooted and grounded in love,

[18] **May be able to comprehend** with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

[19] **And to know** the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that **ye might be filled** with **all the fulness of God**.

**These passages of scripture** in Ephesians, chapters 1 and 3, explain one's knowledge of God in the following terms:

- It includes wisdom and revelation granted to us by God—1:17.
- It includes *His enlightening* of one to know *the reality* of the hope involved in our calling and the glory that attends God's inheritance in His people—1:18.
- A *comprehension* of the expansiveness of our relationship with God—3:18

- Knowing the love of Christ—3:19. This is not merely knowing that the scriptures declare, “Christ so loved the world”. Knowing the love of Christ is illustrated by a situation with which I am familiar, “The husband told his wife that he loved her, she said, ‘I know, I can tell by the way you relate to me’ ”. *Love is not our mentally assenting to a judicial declaration by God*, but rather, our inward recognition of His love, as we *have fellowship* with Him. Our calling is to “the *fellowship* of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”---1 Corinthians 1:9.
- God, in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, has made provision for this fullness of God to be *living reality* in His children---3:19.
- All of this is accomplished, not through the weakness of the flesh, but through strengthening by the Spirit who works in us---3:16. And, this Divine power is available to God’s children who believe---1:19. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith---3:17. In Christ, we stand in God’s grace, however, our *access* to this grace *is by faith*---Romans 5:2.

**The vast distance that lies between our inward state when we begin in Christ, and the inward state that God has purposed for us when we finish, even in this life is evidenced in the following passage of scripture:**

**Ephesians 4, Verses 17 to 24**

[17] This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in **the vanity of their mind**,

[18] Having **the understanding darkened**, being **alienated from the life of God** through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of **the blindness** of their heart:

[19] Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

[20] But ye have not so **learned Christ**;

[21] If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him**, as the truth is in Jesus:

[22] That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is **corrupt** according to the **deceitful lusts**;

[23] And **be renewed** in the spirit of **your mind**;

[24] And that ye **put on** the new man, which **after God** is created **in righteousness** and **true holiness**.

**This passage of scripture informs us** that when one comes to Christ by grace through faith, they have great need for inward transformation. The Apostle Paul is addressing the “the saints” at Ephesus that: ... we all come in the **unity of the faith**, and of **the knowledge of the Son of God**, unto a **perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of **the fullness of Christ**: That we *henceforth be no more children* tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and cunning craftiness*, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking **the truth in love**, may **grow up into him in all things**, which is the head, *even Christ*:---4:13-15. He is exhorting

them, from this point on, to not walk “as other Gentiles walk”. Paul describes the manner of living by the Gentiles as being:

- In the “vanity of their mind”---4:17.
- The “understanding darkened”---4:18.
- “Alienated from the life of God”-“through ignorance”-“because of the blindness of their hearts”---4:18.

**The above is a description** of the *natural state* of a person, but *does not require or suggest* that this natural inward state is devoid of intellectual capacity or the attending knowledge possessed by such intelligent beings. *The problem is* that our *unassisted perception* of God, His kingdom, this world and the things in it, and our relationship thereto *is much different than God’s* accurate perception of these same things. Because of how a person, *apart from enlightenment by God’s Spirit*, perceives things, he or she serves their natural interests and appetites which are described in this, and other scriptures as “lasciviousness”, “uncleanness”, and “greediness”---4:20. While much of the behavior that falls within these descriptions is, according to *our natural perceptions*, quite normal and acceptable, all such behavior is viewed by God as being “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”---4:22. The word “lusts” simply refers to the natural “desires” and “longings” of our heart. *The Lord will not share His life with us while we insist on gratifying ourselves by serving such desires of our heart*---4:18. Without the *understanding* that is *granted by God*, we limit the application of words such as “lust”, “lasciviousness”, “uncleanness”, “greediness”, etc., to gross immorality or a careless disregard toward others.

**God has purposed** to transform us from our image in Adam into the image of the Lord Jesus. In part, He accomplishes this transformation as we are “renewed in the spirit of our mind”---4:23. *This mental renewal involves* enlightenment by the Spirit to bring us out of *our darkened understanding* concerning our inward state into the light where God’s accurate view is seen by us. *The Spirit not only enlightens us* regarding the true nature of our thoughts, words, and deeds, *it is by the Spirit’s power* that we are saved or delivered from *our carnal propensities* that are brought into the light by the Spirit. (See Romans 7:4-8:4 on learning **how to perform** according to God’s will). *This involves* the putting off the “old man” and his ways-Eph. 4:22, and the putting on the “new man”-Eph. 4:24, whose ways are right and holy (intrinsically pure), according to truth. *We do not instantly occupy all that God has provided for us in Christ. This is a process of growing* in grace and the knowledge of the Lord---2 Peter 3:18.

**Transformation occurs** as we “hear him”, and as we are “taught by him” as the truth **is in Jesus**. It is most important to realize that *each* person moves from darkness into light (light and life being inseparable) as we, individually

*hear*, and *are taught* by Jesus. *This matter of putting off* the old and putting on the new is presented in scripture as *God's purpose and expectation* for His children. *Scripture does not present the option* of living unto oneself, and then, without consequences, being miraculously changed in our heart when Christ returns. If we are hearing and being taught by the Lord Jesus, in our *immature* years, we will be very much engaged in this process. This is the process to "...work out **your own** salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."-Philippians 2:12,13. Those who are engaged in this process are those who come to "full age", and are, "...those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"---Hebrews 5:14. *As persons mature*, they are keenly aware of how they achieved the "joy of salvation" from their sin, and they are conscious of continuing in faith (their devotion and commitment to the Lord), that they might be kept by His power, from both, the lusts of sin---Romans 6:12, and the devouring efforts of the devil---1 Peter 5:8. Thus, *one's position*, inwardly and from without, related to God and His kingdom, and to this world and the things in it *is necessarily subject to change*. This involves much more *than the acquiring of information* when reading the scriptures or listening to the messages of those who teach and preach, even when such messages are accurately presenting the truth of scripture. This **personal ministry** by the **indwelling Spirit** is the emphasis of the following passage of scripture:

### **1 John 2, Verses 24 to 28**

[24] Let that therefore **abide** in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. **If** that which ye have heard from the beginning **shall remain in you**, ye also shall **continue** in the Son, and in the Father.

[25] And **this** is the promise that he hath promised us, **even eternal life**.

[26] These things have I written unto you **concerning them that seduce you**.

[27] But **the anointing** which ye have received of him **abideth in you**, and ye need **not** that any man teach you: but as **the same anointing teacheth you of all things**, and **is truth**, and **is no lie**, and even **as it hath taught you**, ye shall **abide** in him.

[28] And now, little children, **abide in him**; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

**The Apostle John, in expressing his concern for "my little children"-v1,** because they are being seduced by those who are distorting God's Word-v26, is reminding them that *the anointing*, which is the indwelling Holy Spirit, *is their teacher*. Christ dwells in us in the Person of the Holy Spirit-see John 14:15-23. John is exhorting them to not be drawn away from the truth that they were taught in the beginning. John is addressing them as brethren *who have had*, and *recognized*, the enlightenment of the Spirit's ministry in them. And, that it is *only by the Spirit's enlightenment* that they can discern truth from error. ("Enlightened" is the English translation of the Greek word "photizo" which means to *shed*

rays, i.e. to *shine* ... Strong's Concordance. This same Greek word is translated "make... see" at Ephesians 3:9.)

When John says that *they do not need any man to teach them*, he is reminding them that *they must rely on the Spirit's witness* and not on what any man tells them. Our knowledge of the Lord *is not second-hand*, but is given *afresh* by the "anointing" that is in us. It is *a fresh* view, not necessarily *a first* view, *of the meaning* of scripture as we read, or hear the scripture proclaimed by another. **Jesus said**, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

We read at:

### 1 John 5, Verses 20 to 21

[20] And we know that **the Son of God** is come, and **hath given us an understanding**, that we may **know him** that is true, and we are **in him** that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. **This is the true God, and eternal life.**

[21] Little children, **keep yourselves** from idols. Amen.

**Understanding is through light** given by *the Spirit* whereby we *know* "the true God" and **eternal life**. To have *assurance* that we are His child; *knowing* that *Christ abides* in us; to *love* God; and to *know* God are **not judicial matters** established by Divine decree, and applicable to all of God's children.

**Assurance---**"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God"-Romans 8:16.

**Christ abides in us---**"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And **hereby** we know that **he abideth** in us, **by the Spirit** which he hath given us"-1 John 3:24.

**Loving God---**"Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because **thou hast left thy first love**"-Revelation 2:4. "But whoso **keepeth his word**, in him verily is the love of God perfected: **hereby know we** that we are in him"-1 John 2:5.

**Knowing God---**"And **hereby** we do **know** that we **know him**, if we keep his commandments"-1 John 2:3.

**Knowing God is an inward cognitive state of perceiving**: 1) **Who** He is; 2) **How** He is; and 3) **His will**.

---**Much of scripture is explaining to us, either directly or indirectly, who God is**. **One such scripture is in the Book of Job**. Even though Job was one who was "upright", "feared God", and turned away from evil, God allowed Satan to test Job's faithfulness to the Lord (See Job 2:1-10). When Job was questioning why he was experiencing such severe physical trial (see Job 31:1-8), then the Lord presented Job with many questions. For example, the Lord asked Job: **A**. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when **I laid** the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding." (Job 38:2-4). **B**. "Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as *if* it had issued out of the womb? ...And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be

stayed?”(38:8,11). C. “Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?”(38:34,35). D. “Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?” (38:36). God’s purpose in allowing Job’s suffering was to further His work of transforming Job into the image of His Son. Job’s response to these questions, and many more, evidences success in achieving this purpose. Job answered, “I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have **I uttered that I understood not**, things **too wonderful for me**, which **I knew not**. ...I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, **but now** mine eye **seeth thee**. Wherefore I abhor *myself*, **and repent** in dust and ashes”---Job 42:2,3,5,6. (See James 5:11) Job had come to a much **higher view** of God, which caused **humbling** by Job.

---We see **how God is, as we perceive** His discipline, longsuffering, mercy and the other character traits attested to by scripture. Not that the attributes of the Divine character are continually within one’s awareness, however, **we perceive them in the situations encountered in daily living**. Certainly, **discipline** is encountered when it is brought to our attention that, as the Apostle Paul wrote, “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as **he ought** to know”-1 Corinthians 8:2. As with Job, **after** we have talked about, **and even taught others** concerning a truth of scripture, the Lord grants us to see **more completely** what that truth means in our life, then we are aware of the **longsuffering** of the Lord **as He waited**, or **suffered long** with us **to add to our understanding**. Sometimes we realize that slowness to understand was caused by distraction with unnecessary things. **Or, as the Apostle Peter wrote**, “And, if the **righteous** are **scarcely** saved,...”-1Peter 4:18. Thus, God knows that our being constituted after the image of Adam is **a very great hindrance** to His work in us. (See Psalms 103:13-18; Proverbs 16:6). And, as He opens our understanding to this reality, we recognize His great **mercy** in our being reconstituted into the image of His Son.

---**Knowing God’s will, and of course doing it, should determine our manner of living each day.**

- Jesus says that the Father’s will should be a burden of our prayer, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will** be done **in earth**, as *it is in heaven*.”-Matt. 6:9,10.
- Concerning Jesus coming, “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) **to do thy will**, O God.”-Hebrews 10:7.
- After Saul’s reign, in making David king over Israel, God said of David,

“and when he had removed him [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said I have found David the *son* of Jesse, **a man after mine own heart**, which shall fulfil **all my will**.”- Acts 13:22.

- Jesus informs the Jews of ***what is necessary to know*** whether the doctrine that He proclaims is His own, or God’s, “If any man **will do his will**, he shall **know** of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.”-John 7:17
- The Apostle Peter informs us that we should be of ***the same mind*** as Christ to suffer in the flesh, for those who suffer in the flesh ***have ceased*** from sin ***that*** they might live according to **the will of God**, “Forasmuch then **as Christ hath suffered** for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with **the same mind**: for he that hath **suffered in the flesh** hath **ceased** from sin; **That** he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to **the will of God**.”-1 Peter 4:1,2
- The Apostle Paul tells the brethren at Rome that ***to prove or discern God’s will*** they must ***not*** be conformed to ***this world***, but transformed by having ***their minds renewed***, “And be not conformed to this world: 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**.”-Romans 12:2
- When Jesus was informed that His mother and His brethren wanted to speak with Him, His response was, “And he stretched forth his hand **toward his disciples**, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! **For whosoever shall do the will of my Father** which is in heaven, **the same** is my brother, and sister, and mother.”-Matt. 12:49,50
- Jesus offers a word of caution concerning who will, and who will not, enter the kingdom of heaven, “**Not every one that saith** unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven.”-Matt. 7:21
- The Apostle John, writing to those in whom ***the word of God abides***, and who have ***overcome*** the wicked one, told them (see 1 John 2:14), “Love not **the world**, neither **the things that are** in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father **is not in him**. For all that *is* in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And **the world passeth away**, and **the lust** thereof: **but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever**.”-1 John 2:15-17
- The writer of the Hebrews’ Epistle brings the letter to a close with these encouraging words, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work **to do his will**, working **in you** that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”-Hebrews 13:20,21

**Regarding the Lord's will, we read at: Colossians 1, Verses 7 to 13**

[7] As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

[8] Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

[9] For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that **ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**;

[10] That ye might **walk worthy of the Lord** unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in **the knowledge** of God;

[11] **Strengthened** with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all **patience** and **longsuffering** with joyfulness;

[12] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints **in light**;

[13] Who hath delivered us from **the power of darkness**, and hath translated us into **the kingdom** of his dear Son:

**Here we are informed that we can be filled with the knowledge of God's will.** This knowledge is comprehended as *wisdom* and *understanding* granted by *the Spirit*. And, it is by knowing and doing *God's will* that we *walk worthy* of the Lord. Also, that which *renders any work to be good* is that such work is, in truth, *God's will*. We can, through understanding which we have by the Spirit's ministry, *know* God's will in a matter. Our knowledge may be much or little *according to our growth* in grace and knowledge of the Lord. The Lord will also give us wisdom to discern what to *do* and *not do* in performing according to His will. *This is a significant part of the Spirit's ministry to us.*

**Knowing and doing God's will is equivalent to:**

- ***Walking after the Spirit***-Romans 8:1-4. The *righteousness* of the law is fulfilled in us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".
- ***Living by faith***-Romans 1:16,17. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the *righteousness* of God revealed from **faith to faith**: as it is written, The **just shall live by faith**." Also, "Now the **just shall live by faith**: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him"-Hebrews 10:38.
- ***Walking in the light***-1 John 1:5-10.

**1 John 1, Verses 5 to 10**

[5] This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is **no darkness at all**.

[6] **If we say that we have fellowship** with him, and **walk in darkness**, we lie, and do not the truth:

[7] But **if we walk in the light**, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship** one with another, **and** the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

[8] **If we say that we have no sin**, we deceive **ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

[9] **If we confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse

us from all unrighteousness.

[10] **If** we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and **his word** is not in us.

### **1 John 2, Verses 1 to 7**

[1] My little children, these things write I unto you, **that ye sin not**. And if any man sin, **we have an advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous:

[2] And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

[3] And **hereby** we do know that we know him, if we **keep** his commandments.

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

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

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

[7] Brethren, I write **no new commandment** unto you, but an **old commandment** which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard **from the beginning**.

**These scriptures provide very direct testimony** that when we are called to the fellowship of God's Son-1Corinthians 1:9, we are *partakers* of that fellowship by "walking after the Spirit", "living by faith", and "walking in the light". If, after a few years, we are not knowing fellowship in this way, we might ask ourselves the question, why not? **There are scriptures that address this question.**

### **Matthew 6, Verses 21 to 24**

[21] For where your treasure is, there will **your heart be** also.

[22] The **light** of the body is the eye: if therefore **thine eye be single**, thy whole body shall be **full of light**.

[23] But if thine eye **be evil**, thy whole body shall be **full of darkness**. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, **how great is that darkness!**

[24] No man can serve **two** masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

### **Matthew 22, Verses 36 to 40**

[36] Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

[37] Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all** thy heart, and with **all** thy soul, and with **all** thy mind.

[38] This is the first and great commandment.

[39] And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

[40] On **these two** commandments hang **all** the law and the prophets.

### **James 1, Verses 5 to 8**

[5] If any of you **lack wisdom**, let him ask of God, **that giveth to all men liberally**, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

[6] **But** let him ask **in faith, nothing wavering**. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

[7] For **let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord**.

[8] A **double minded** man is unstable in all his ways.

## 1 John 2, Verses 15 to 17

[15] Love not **the world**, neither **the things that are** in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father **is not in him**.

[16] For all that *is* in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but **is of the world**.

[17] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that **doeth the will of God** abideth for ever.

**These scriptures are substantial evidence that**, in Christ, our calling is *neither casual nor part-time*. This is in keeping with the Apostle Paul's admonition to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi"—Philippians 1:1, "wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling. **For it is God** which **worketh in you** both to will and to do his good pleasure. Do all things **without murmurings** and **disputings**: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom **ye shine as lights** in the world"—Philippians 2:12-15. **Paul also writes to the church at Corinth**, "...that ye may attend upon the Lord **without distraction**"—7:35. God is intent on *changing His children into the image of His Son*, and we must be so focused by having our attention *on the ministry of the Lord in us*. For we are changed into Christ's image *by seeing the glory of the Lord* as He ministers to us through the scriptures, *a high view* of divine things. (2 Corinthians 3:18) To be changed from the image that we received in Adam into the image of God's Son *is essentially, a work of salvation*.

**It is important to understand that most, if not all, of the warnings and admonitions in scripture are addressed to God's children.** An example are the following passages of scripture: "Wherefore, holy brethren, **partakers of the heavenly calling**, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house. ...Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief** in **departing from** the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For **we** are made **partakers** of Christ, **if** we hold **the beginning of our confidence, steadfast unto the end;**"--Hebrews 3:1,2,12-14.

(Regarding being "partakers", see the paragraph in the middle of page 53) **Also, the Apostle Paul exhorts**, "the saints" that are at Ephesus: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou **that sleepest**, and **arise from the dead**, and Christ shall give thee **light**. See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding** what the **will of the Lord is**. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with **the Spirit;**--Ephesians 5:14-18.

**God has made a full and complete provision that we might know and do** His will, and that we might *triumph over* indwelling sin. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through **the knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as **his divine power** hath given unto us **all things** that *pertain unto life and godliness*, through **the knowledge** of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given **unto us**

exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having **escaped the corruption** that is in the world **through lust.**” (2 Peter 1:2-4) **Any system of theological thought or practice** that does not hold forth *our responsibility for faithfulness* to the Lord, or that does not explain *the abundant provision* that God has made for *knowing* and *doing* His will, should be examined with an open heart and mind.

**Many systems of theological thought and practice** are founded upon conclusions that are often *the product of reasoning* that is the natural mental process of the spiritually unenlightened mind-But the **natural man** receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are **spiritually** discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth [marg. “discerneth”] all things, yet he himself is judged [marg. “discerned”] of no man.”-1 Corinthians 2:14,15. (“**Natural**” refers to one who judges or discerns according to their *natural rational faculties* as opposed to *enlightenment* by the Spirit).

**Any specific scripture** usually emphasizes *less than all* aspects of a particular truth. It is *by the Spirit’s enlightenment* of our understanding that scriptures providing *differing emphases*, even though each scripture is relevant to a particular truth, are *brought to our awareness* and are *reconciled* that our knowledge can be *complete* and *accurate* concerning any matter revealed in the scriptures. This would apply to the concepts debated in the earlier portion of this paper.

**Many false concepts can find apparent support in a passage of scripture** that is interpreted either *out of context*, or that emphasizes *only one aspect* of a scriptural concept, while the interpreter ignores other *relevant scriptures* that emphasize a *different aspect of the same concept*. Again, the earlier debate illustrates these points.

**We have seen the burden of the Lord**, that His people be of *one mind, one spirit*, and that all *speak the same things*, expressed in the passages of scripture on page 32 of this paper. We have also seen in chapter eight of the gospel of John on pages 34 through 36 of this paper that “those Jews who believed on him”, when He raised the issue of their *bondage to sin* and their need to *continue in His word*, contended for the legitimacy of their supposed relationship to both Abraham and God. *Discipleship was the issue*. They so clearly illustrate our willingness to begin with the Lord, but cling to the comforts and familiarity of *our religious tradition*. **Jesus said**, “I am the light of the world: he that **followeth me** shall not walk in darkness, but shall have **the light of life**”- John 8:12. **The Apostle John wrote**, “If we walk **in the light**, as he is in the light, we **have fellowship** one with another, and **the blood** of Jesus Christ his Son **cleanseth us** from all sin.”-1 John 1:7

**Might the Lord persuade us, according to the Apostle Peter’s admonition:** “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may

exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. Be *sober*, be *vigilant*; because your adversary *the devil*, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; Whom resist steadfast *in the faith*, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But *the God of all grace*, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, *make you* perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*. *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*. Amen.--1 Peter 5:6-11 (See also, James 4:5-10). In part, Satan devours by deceiving us with his distortions of the *meaning* and *application* of what *God has said* in His Word.

**Any system of theological thought and practice** that is in conflict with scripture is the product of the “master deceiver” to assist the adherents of such a system to think and feel that they are partakers of God’s provision that is in and through Christ when, in fact, many are not. Most, if not all of these systems had their beginnings with a few individuals and, then grew into a broadly patronized tradition. In America, an individual who the heavenly Father is drawing to His Son (John 6:44; Romans 3:10,11) can hardly miss involvement in one of these traditions.

**The preachers and teachers in these traditions** do not emphasize scriptures that contradict their false concepts, and when such scriptures are confronted their content, context, and/or their application are massaged, molded, twisted or in some manner manipulated to avoid the contradiction. And, if these means appear too awkward, deletion has been employed. (An example is Romans 8:1 where the words “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” have been rejected by some who contend that this phrase is not in “the best manuscripts”).

**These traditions are sustained**, first through learning institutions having instructors who learned the tradition from other instructors, who learned the tradition from other such instructors who were advocates of the tradition. Then the graduates from these institutions of theological studies move out to other less theologically sophisticated institutions where these “pastors”, “reverends”, “priests” and/or “fathers” perpetuate their particular system of thought and practice among the populace who will embrace it.

**When we come to the Lord Jesus, we have not come** to some form of religion to be practiced, but rather, *we have come* into a new life in which we *can* and *must learn* how to live. For as we learn how to walk after the Spirit, we increasingly realize the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance (see Galatians 5:22,23). This is life in the Spirit. But, *it is not only for ourselves* that we must partake of this life in Christ. It is more important that *the Lord’s good name* be held, *not in the shame* that attends our natural and carnal propensities, but rather, *in the glory* that is intrinsic in His Character.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints which are at Ephesus: “Be ye therefore followers of God **as dear children;**”-5:1. And, Paul continues, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: **Walk as children of light:** (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*. For it is a shame **even to speak** of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov’d [marginal rendering “discovered”] are made manifest **by the light:** for whatsoever doth make manifest **is light**”-5:8-13. (See verses 2 through 7)

**The purpose of God in the church** reaches beyond the marvelous benefits to His children. It is, that God eternally purposed in Christ *that His wisdom* would be seen *in the Church*, “now”-Eph. 3:1-11, and further, that the riches of His grace *in His kindness* bestowed on us through the Lord Jesus might show forth “in the ages to come”-Eph. 2:4-7.

**Just as the beauty of an edifice** made of many stones is the sum of the beauty *of each of the stones*, so also, *the glory of God’s* wisdom, strength, mercy, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, and His justice (through which He maintains the integrity of the body of Christ) can be seen in the world as it emanates forth from *each of the members*.

**In the following passage of scripture**, the Apostle Peter is addressing those Jewish brethren who have received the gospel of Christ, explaining that what the prophets had spoken to Israel is realized, in and through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, by those who believe (see Exodus 19:5,6; Deut. 7:6, 10:15-17; Psalms 118:21,22; Acts 3:22-26; 13:26-33).

Peter is encouraging them to grow by feeding on God’s pure word.

### **1 Peter 2:1-9**

[1] Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

[2] As newborn babes, **desire the sincere milk of the word**, that ye may **grow thereby:**

[3] If so be **ye have tasted** that the Lord is gracious.

[4] To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

[5] Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a **spiritual house**, an **holy priesthood**, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God **by Jesus Christ**.

[6] Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and **he that believeth** on him shall not be confounded.

[7] Unto you therefore **which believe** he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

[8] And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

[9] But ye are a **chosen generation**, a **royal priesthood**, an **holy nation**, a **peculiar people;** that ye should **shew forth** the praises of him who hath called you **out of darkness into his marvellous light:**



