



Extraordinary

GRACE

Todd Bryant

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by

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Dedication

To Wendy, my beloved wife since 1993.

**I cannot begin to thank you for all of the support you
have given me over the years.**

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FOREWORD

Salvation is one of the most important topics that a Christian will ever consider. At the moment that we are called out of our darkness into the light the truth, we know very little about salvation. The only real thing we know is that Jesus died in our place and because of him we are made free from sin. My hope is that everyone who picks up this little book has experienced that moment for themselves.

I suppose that some are saved and never learn much more than Christ crucified. There is, however, much more to the salvation story that we should consider. The Word of God speaks multitudes on why we need to be saved and how we are actually saved. Differing theologies abound as to the who's, why's and how's of salvation and can often cause the new believer to be confused. Perhaps that has been you. Perhaps, even, you have even been a Christian for a long time and you have been taught a certain theology and when you read certain scriptures it leaves you scratching your head wondering if you're right.

If that is you or ever has been you, then you will do well in reading this booklet. Todd's desire in writing this book shows from the very beginning that he is not out to add to the Word of God or take the place of the Word of God. The Bible shines in the following pages as Todd shows us the nature of sin and salvation.

I would suggest to you to resist the urge to read it all at one time. Though that could easily be done, I would suggest the best way to read this booklet is one chapter a day. It won't take long to read, but then spend the rest of the day meditating about what you have read. Be like one of the saints at Berea by examining the Scripture to see if what has been written here is so (**Acts 17:11**). In the end it doesn't matter what man says. In the end only the Word of God will stand. That being said, I think you will find this little book will take you through the Biblical teachings about salvation precept upon

precept and line upon line from the depths of our depravity to the completeness of the work of Christ to our need to share the gospel with others.

I applaud Todd for his desire and effort to put this booklet together for our better understanding of salvation. I know you will enjoy it too.

John Fry
Pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Ceredo, WV
August, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Soteriology is the study of salvation. Many books have been written on this subject from various points of view. Most of these are meant to emphasize positions already embraced by the reader. That is not the purpose of this book. This work is intended to be an “early primer” for those that have never considered the doctrine of salvation on a deeper scale. This book will lay a Biblical foundation for the reader to build upon in the years to come.

The majority of the books which consider the whole of salvation often delve deeper than the average believer is prepared for. In today’s Christian world, many (if not most) pulpits do not offer the congregation much in the way of theological meat. So much time is spent attempting to make converts during the worship service that little time is left over for healthy Bible teaching. This ought not to be. The job of being a witness for Jesus is to be done primarily outside of the church assembly. This is the duty of the entire congregation. When the church assembles, it is for the purpose of “**building up**” the knowledge of the assembly (**1 Corinthians 14:26**). So there is, at least, a need for some spiritual “**meat**” for believers who aren’t receiving much more than milk.

Also, a high percentage of these books were written several generations ago, at best. In no way does that discredit any book. Oftentimes, some of the best information can be gleaned from reading authors of yesteryear – or “yester-century”. That said, much of the language is out of step with the average English speaker today. Fresh doctrine is not needed. In no way will this book seek to change any of the doctrines of salvation outlined in the Bible. It is the desire of the author that the language of the book is fresh and readable.

Perhaps this is the first time you have considered many of the points made in this book. Whatever you do, use the Bible to research

anything you have questions about. Many Scripture references are given. Please, do not take the word of the author only. Keep a Bible nearby so that you can quickly read the context of any quoted verse that you may have questions about. No matter what, seek to be Biblical. If it means changing your mind, disagreeing with your current Bible teachers or disagreeing with the author of this book, aim to follow God's Word. Only the Bible is completely right. The words and opinions of men are just that.

Lastly, do not let your study of this most important subject end with this book. This book is in no way meant to be an exhaustive study of the doctrine of salvation. It is meant only to lay the groundwork for deeper study. Use it like a springboard to get you into deeper Bible study. If that is accomplished, this book has served its purpose.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REAL PROBLEM

“See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes” – Ecclesiastes 7:29

If ever we are to study the doctrine of soteriology (or salvation), we must begin at the beginning. We must consider those who need saving. What exactly do they need saved from? What part do they have in their own salvation? What ability do men have to seek out Christ in their natural state? Far too often, men have tried to argue deeper points of theology before answering these important questions. Until these issues are satisfactorily dealt with, nothing else can truly be understood.

Though we would assume all readers of this book understand this, one point should be made before we proceed further. God is God. Certainly that sounds simple. And, without a doubt, it is. That said, many times this simple truth isn't properly understood. **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)**. This means He is in charge. He calls the shots. It is His world. His rules are THE rules. His standard is the only standard that ultimately matters.

So, what is God's standard? **“God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day” (Psalms 7:11)**. Simply put, God demands absolute obedience and perfection. Being Himself righteous, He can require no lesser standard out of His own creation. God must punish sin or He Himself ceases to be **“a righteous judge”**.

What is man's state? **“None is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10)**. This puts men at odds with their Creator. Since the creature logically has no power to overcome his Creator, man couldn't be in a worse state. We are sinners. God is **“a righteous judge”**. There's a gap between our God and us that we simply

cannot overcome. Something surely must be done. However, being sinners, we cannot do it.

So What Happened?

One may wonder where we, as a race, went wrong. Or even, perhaps, some may wonder how it is that all humankind ultimately chooses sin as a practice. One needs only to go back to the Fall of Man (**Genesis 3**). Adam was given one rule with a consequence – **“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’ (Genesis 2:16-17)**. Initially, there was no other law. One chapter later, Adam chose to rebel against God’s command by eating this forbidden fruit. As a result, he was guilty before a thrice holy God.

But, how did the Fall affect people today? We must understand that Adam was the root of the human genealogy tree. When he fell, the tree was cut at the root and the whole race fell. **“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12)**. That is, when Adam sinned, we all sinned. He was our corporate head. We are his descendants. Just as children bear a resemblance to their parents by certain inherited traits, so we naturally bear a resemblance to Adam by the trait of sin. Two sinners (Adam and Eve) can only produce another sinner. As we are all ultimately descended from those two sinners, we are all sinners our own selves.

Just after Adam fell, he and his wife **“hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8)**. Being rebels, they ran from the Law. They had chosen sin over God. Now, they had to face the consequences. However, naturally they sought refuge out of God’s presence. Little did they know, **“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3)**. It is this very

nature that we inherited. They were rebels running from God and so are we. Humankind has been running from God ever since the Garden for **“no one seeks for God” (Romans 3:11)**.

Man’s Feelings toward God

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot” (Romans 8:7). Is not this what we saw in Adam? Without a doubt, it is. And, furthermore, all of Adam’s descendants possess this same hostility towards their Creator. As was previously said, when Adam rebelled, we all rebelled. Being rebels, we run from the State.

It is not the fault of society that we sin. The psalmist declared, **“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies” (Psalms 58:3)**. This is who and what we are. Take note, we are not sinners because we sin. That position is a misunderstanding of what occurred at the Fall (**Romans 5:12**). The truth is, we sin because we are sinners. Naturally to our core, our minds are **“set on the flesh”** and are **“hostile to God”**. We are certainly depraved. However, we are willful participants in this depravity. We cannot blame Adam as we intentionally cooperate with our sinful nature.

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews of His day, **“you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:40)**. Though Jesus was standing before them having just healed a man that had been an **“invalid for thirty-eight years” (John 5:5)**, they refused to come to Him. Though He, as God’s Son, fulfilled some 333 prophecies in His lifetime, they refused to come to Him. Though He rose from the grave, they refused to come to Him. This is the nature of man. Their response to the person of Jesus Christ is the common response. Simply put, all of mankind is **“hostile to God”** and refuses to come to Jesus for salvation.

God is not the cause of these feelings of hostility; Adam is. God does not hold people back from being saved. Their own inherent Adamic nature does this. Simply put, they do not want to be saved.

God is not to be blamed for man's ill will towards Him. Man's rebellion occurred at the Fall. Certainly, God was Sovereign over Adam's Fall. However, He was not the cause of it.

Man's Natural Understanding

As though man's natural feelings of hostility weren't enough, it does, in fact, get worse. Naturally, we simply have no innate understanding of spiritual things. The following passage needs to be examined closely:

“But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:9-14).

This passage teaches us that man in his natural state does not see or understand the things that God has prepared. In fact, not only is he hostile towards God, he has no understanding of Him and His work. Man may casually admit he sins, but he has no comprehension of how to fix it. Just as we cannot know the thoughts of another human being, so we cannot know the thoughts of God unless He reveals them to us. The passage is summed up with **“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned”**. Man is not as bad as he

can be. But, he is as bad off as he possibly could be. He is completely separated from the God he hates without any desire or ability to know Him. No wonder the apostle declared that we are **“dead in” [our] “trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).**

Perhaps no passage better sums up our standing before our Righteous Creator than **Romans 3:9-18:**

“For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

‘None is righteous, no, not one;

no one understands;

no one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

no one does good,

not even one.’

‘Their throat is an open grave;

they use their tongues to deceive.’

‘The venom of asps is under their lips.’

‘Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.’

‘Their feet are swift to shed blood;

in their paths are ruin and misery,

and the way of peace they have not known.’

‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’

These few points ought to be enough to show the state of death which man naturally lives in. As Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, **“you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27)**. It matters not how one may clean up the outside. As long as the inside remains corrupt and hostile before God, we remain dead in our sins.

Man is Still Yet Responsible

Inability and responsibility are two completely different things. No, man is not able to save himself. No, he is not desirous to know the God he daily sins against. Nonetheless, God still holds him responsible. God **“commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30)**. Some may question God here. We must remember two points made prior in this chapter. Firstly, God is God. He can require what He will. Nobody can question His motives (**Romans 9:19-20**). Secondly, God is righteous. He simply cannot allow sin to go unrepented of and unpunished. It would violate His holy nature. We are limited in our understanding of God and His Word. He has no such limitations.

Jesus Himself said, **“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (John 3:18-19)**. The unbeliever is condemned because he refuses to believe **“in the name of the only Son of God”**. The Gospel offers salvation through Jesus. When left to himself, the sinner refuses every single time without exception. For this, he is held responsible by God.

Certainly we see that the natural man is in need of help. But where will that help come from?

“I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

My help comes from the LORD,

who made heaven and earth.” – Psalms 121:1-2

CHAPTER TWO

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

“When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” – Matthew 19:25-26

The previous chapter left us with a somewhat bleak view of man’s natural condition. In fact, we learned that man is without hope in himself (**Ephesians 2:12**). How then are people to ever be saved? How can a man be changed from such a miserable, natural condition to a redeemed, uncondemned saint? The answers to those questions will be answered in the following pages.

God is the Actor in Salvation

From what we have seen, it is certain that man cannot save himself and it is just as certain that he has no desire to. Therefore, if he is ever to be saved, a third party must do it. **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil” (Jeremiah 13:23)**. Clearly, animals cannot change their nature any more than people can change their skin color. These are traits which will stick with us throughout our lives. Just so, man is stuck with his Adamic nature – that nature which is hostile towards God – for his entire life. He cannot change it. And to press the point once more, he has no desire to.

When Jonah was sinking into the depths of the water and was about to drown, God sent a great fish He had prepared to save Jonah’s life. There was nothing in the world Jonah could do. He was helpless and hopeless. In his own strength, he was as sure to die as the sun rises every morning. But God’s fish took Jonah in and was salvation to him. Now certainly, God had a bigger message to Jonah

concerning the salvation of the people of Nineveh that we won't get into. But one lesson Jonah learned for sure, **"Salvation belongs to the LORD"** (Jonah 2:9). This is the main lesson we must see in the study before us. If depraved, hostile, rebellious, sinful and spiritually ignorant men are ever to be saved, they must be given the gift that **"belongs to the LORD"**.

God Loved a People with an Everlasting Love

The love of God for us is what has caused our love for Him – not vice versa. **"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** (1 John 4:10). Clearly, God was the Actor here in sending Christ to redeem a fallen people. The extent of Jesus' meritorious work at Calvary will be considered in the next chapter. But that attribute which caused the Father to send His spotless Son into this world to redeem men is His love. This love is said to be an **"everlasting love"** (Jeremiah 31:3).

When speaking of the Father's love for His own, Jesus said, **"I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:23-24). The Father loved Jesus before the foundation of the world. As unthinkable as it is, He is said here to love us the way He loved His Son. So, His love for us is from before the foundation of the world. It is everlasting.

God Chose to Save these Loved Ones

God's love for us moved Him to choose us. He **"chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will"** (Ephesians 1:4-5). Again, His love caused Him

to choose us. His love caused Him to predestine us to be adopted as his children. Certainly, an orphan's only hope of adoption is that a set of parents would show up one day to take him home. Spiritually, our only hope was that our Heavenly Father, having loved us before the foundation of the world, "**chose us in him**". Take note, this adoption would occur "**through Jesus Christ**". A transaction would have to be made. These loved ones had to be purchased.

Though the Fall may have seemed to Satan as a great accomplishment, God had already made provision to save us and call us "**to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**" (2 Timothy 1:9). God's purpose was to save those loved ones. He purposed to give them that which they did not deserve (that's what grace is). As we saw in Ephesians, this grace was given to us "**in Christ Jesus before the ages began**". That is, before God wound the clock of time, He had already chosen us in Christ to be saved. Satan didn't thwart God's plan in any way. Despite the idea of the world, we are not on Plan B, my friend. We are still on Plan A.

Paul often recounted his conversion. He told of the atrocities he committed prior to being saved. He spoke of the persecution he had meted out towards God's children. It was on one of these "persecution trips" that Paul was saved. Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus and saved his soul (**Acts 9**). In recounting his conversion, Paul said, "**But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone**" (**Galatians 1:15-16**). Who does Paul say set him apart? God did. What was he set apart from? The multitude of mankind. What was he set apart to? Salvation. When did this occur? Clearly, Paul says "... **before I was born**". God chose this murderer before he was born to serve Him. And, God's plan was not in any way thwarted.

The new convert, Paul, was sent on to a saint named Ananias. The Lord had informed this man that Paul would be coming to see him. Ananias knew of Paul's persecution of the Lord's people and questioned the Lord about him. **"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name'" (Acts 9:15-16).** Now, if we had not read the words of Paul in **Galatians 1**, we might assume this was some recent choice by God ... some response to Paul's conversion. However, we know this is not the case. God had chosen Paul **"before [he] was born"** as an **"instrument of [His] to carry [His] name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel"**. Despite Paul's natural hostility towards God, he was chosen to be a missionary for the Gospel. This is the way of salvation.

Jeremiah tells of a similar experience. He wrote, **"Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (Jeremiah 1:4-5).** When did God know (or love) Jeremiah? Before He formed him in the womb. When did God consecrate him and appoint him to be a prophet? Before he was born. Though these men lived centuries apart, they were saved the same way. Both fell in Adam. Both were naturally hostile towards God. Neither had the natural ability to come to Christ. Yet, both were set apart and chosen by God before they were born to be His servants.

In speaking to the disciples, Jesus said, **"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit ..."** (**John 15:16**). This in no way implies that the disciples didn't respond to the call of Jesus. That is not at all the point here. Jesus is speaking of who is the actual Actor in the salvation of these men. Clearly, He chose them to be His servants.

Paul, in speaking to the saints at Thessalonica, said, **"For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you"** (1

Thessalonians 1:4). Remember, natural men don't respond to the Gospel. They have no desire or ability to do so. But these had responded. But why? What is the underlying reason they had responded? Paul said they had responded because God had chosen them.

That God chose His own before time began is an easily proven point in God's Word. It may naturally rub us the wrong way. We all like to be in control. To learn that we aren't gives us a bit of uneasiness. However, if we remain in control of our own destiny, then we remain slaves of our own innate depravity. As long as our will guides us, we will continue to rebel against God and His Kingdom. The fact that God chose us out of the fallen multitudes of mankind is one of the most blessed truths in His Word. For had He not chosen some, all would be condemned. As Paul declared about the Thessalonian saints, so it can be said about every person that is ever brought to faith in Christ. Whether we ever understand it or not, all who are believers are so because He chose us to be. To this, we ought to be ever grateful.

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:39)

CHAPTER THREE

THE MISSION OF JESUS

“Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities” – Isaiah 53:11

In the previous chapter, we learned that God had well prepared for the Fall of Man. Though Adam condemned his entire posterity through his sin, God chose to save some. The covenant of grace (as it is commonly called) was entered into before time began. In eternity past, the Trinity agreed on the salvation of men. The Father chose a people for His namesake and the Son would save them. This chapter will deal with that specific point. In the next chapter, we will learn of the Spirit’s work.

Why Did Jesus Come?

The mission of Jesus was declared to Joseph by an angel while Mary was pregnant. The angel said, **“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21)**. Notice, there is no room for doubt as to why Jesus came. He wasn’t merely opening some random door of possibility. Salvation wasn’t left up to hap and circumstance. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, was coming to bear the iniquities of many so that this many would **“be accounted righteous” (Isaiah 53:11)**. This **“many”** referred to in Isaiah is labeled **“his people”** by the angel to Joseph. This is the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. If He failed at this mission, the whole of mankind is still yet condemned.

Jesus certainly knew His purpose in coming here. He became a man for a specific reason. **“Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the**

likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus came to die. His mission was that He would suffer the just penalty of the sins of “his people”.

Jesus is a Worthy Substitute

Why, though, was Jesus worthy? Clearly He became a man. What makes Him a more suitable sacrifice than anybody else? Simply, Jesus is not “a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Paul said of us, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one” (Romans 3:10-12). Yet, the writer of Hebrews distinguishes Jesus as having a much better character than we all do. He was “without sin”. Speaking of Jesus, Peter said, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). Only Jesus meets God’s standard – complete perfection.

God gave the Law. Therefore, there’s nothing wrong with the Law. “So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12). However, righteousness cannot come through the Law. We are all condemned by the Law. “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it” (James 2:10). How many of us have put God first since our first breath? How many of us haven’t set up idols in our hearts? How many of us have never lied, cheated or stolen? How many of us love our neighbor as ourselves? How many of us have never desired the property of our neighbor? All of these things (and many more) are violations of God’s righteous standard. When measured by the Law, we are guilty.

Jesus’ mission is elsewhere stated by Paul who said, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son,

born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus was **“born under the law”** and yet He came **“to save His people from their sins”** who were under the Law themselves. So, if Jesus was **“born under the Law”** like we were, why can He redeem us? Again, because He was without sin. He explained, **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matthew 5:17-18).** Jesus completely kept the Law and, therefore, proved Himself to be a suitable sacrifice for sins. He is worthy and we are not. He is our only Hope (**John 14:6**).

So, Jesus was worthy to bear the sins of **“His people”**. He was also willing. He said, **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:38-39).** As a man, Jesus was completely submitted to the will of the Father. And lest we question what that will is, Jesus declares it. He came to **“save His people from their sins”** and in doing so He would **“lose nothing of all that [the Father] had given [Him]”** (emphasis mine, WTB).

Perhaps for just a moment, we should consider the legality of the death of Jesus. The shedding of Jesus’ blood was not like some random amount of money thrown into the air and any that caught a bill benefited from it. The sacrifice of Jesus is often portrayed as just such an act. However, there was a specific price set by the Father for the salvation of His own. The apostle twice told the Corinthian saints **“You were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20 & 7:23).** Man did not set the price. Certainly Satan didn’t set it. Only the Father could set such a price. Only the Son was both willing and able to pay it.

To **“save His people from their sins”**, Jesus had to pay the price set by the Father. This price involved the second person in the Trinity becoming fully man, living a completely spotless life free of sin, and then paying the penalty for each of those He was sent to save. He was to **“make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11)**. Again, this is not a random price. This is a specific price. And, Jesus paid it. All that would ever be brought to faith were **“bought with a price”**. This price having been paid, no further payment of sins is required. Furthermore, if it is, we are back to where we started because we are unable to pay ourselves. Jesus’ sacrifice for sins was a one-time act never to be repeated (**Hebrews 10:10**) and never to be added to. Even more, God doesn’t require double payment for sins. If Jesus paid our debt, we will never have to pay it. If one person for whom Jesus died must then pay their own debt in the Lake of Fire, double payment will be made for that person’s sin. If we don’t expect such a practice out of an honest banker, then we certainly wouldn’t expect such a practice from a righteous, holy, just God. Jesus came **“to save His people from their sins”**

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus did something for the sheep that they could never do for themselves. He said, **“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11)**. The price was set and the Good Shepherd paid it. His life must be sacrificed for theirs. As we’ve stressed, He was both willing and able to do just what the requirement was. He laid down His life **“for the sheep”**. Interestingly, Jesus told the Pharisees in this same passage, **“... you do not believe because you are not among my sheep” (John 10:26)**. Where does this put those unbelieving Jews so far as the sacrifice of Jesus is concerned? He laid down His life for the sheep – a group which they are specifically said not to be among. If Jesus died for the sheep and they weren’t His sheep, there was no benefit in the sacrifice of Jesus for those people. Therefore, they will be required to pay their own sin debt. The price set for that is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire forever and ever (**Revelation 20:10-15**).

A Successful Savior

Was Jesus successful? This is a serious question. If our sins weren't paid and we are unable to pay them, there is no hope for us. If Jesus did not complete His mission, our everlasting destiny will be the Lake of Fire. There is no middle ground here. But, gloriously, Jesus was successful!! Just before He died, He said, "**It is finished**" (**John 19:30**). That is, His mission to bear the iniquities of His people was finished. He completed the payment which our sins required. He has put our sins away.

Jesus' success isn't only measured by His own words, however. Jesus' resurrection was God's stamp of approval on His meritorious work on the cross. It has been said that the check was written for our sins when Jesus died on the cross. When He rose from the grave, the check cleared the bank. Paul said, "**And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins**" (**1 Corinthians 15:17**). Oh, but Christ has been raised! And, this resurrection from the dead proves His work in saving His people from their sins was accepted by the Father.

The work of Jesus was a successful work. He completed the mission He was given to do. Jesus satisfied the righteous penalty of our sins. This was the Father's will.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out” – John 6:37

Chapter 1 discussed the incapability of humankind to save themselves. It was presented from the Scriptures that natural men are in a terrible condition. They fell when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They have been a willful participant in their own depravity which resulted from the Fall. They are lawbreakers and subject to the due punishment of their transgression. Thankfully, God made provision to save some of Adam’s posterity and then Jesus, the Son, willingly came to pay the penalty of their sins.

Though Jesus has paid the sin debt for **“his people”** (**Matthew 1:21**), these people are still rebels against God and His kingdom (**Romans 8:7**). God has commanded **“all people everywhere to repent”** (**Acts 17:30**). Jesus went so far as to say, **“unless you repent, you will all likewise perish”** (**Luke 13:3, 5**). Even after Christ had paid the sin debt, Paul declared that we are all naturally **“dead in the trespasses and sins”** (**Ephesians 2:1**). People aren’t born into the world saved. All people without exception are born into this world lost and undone **“having no hope and without God in the world”** (**Ephesians 2:12**).

This booklet touches on some deeper theological points. However, our “deep theology” can never contradict the plain teachings of Scripture. On the most elementary level, Jesus declared, **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he**

has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:16-18). Believers are saved. Unbelievers are condemned. Jesus could not be more plain about this point. Whatever our doctrinal position is, if it contradicts this clear teaching of Jesus, we have mistaken something. If ever we have unbelievers saved or believers lost, we have arrived at a position which is in direct conflict with the clear teaching of Jesus Himself.

On the most elementary level, man is born an unbeliever and must become a believer if he is ever to go to Heaven. This may often seem an easily rectified problem. However, considering the state we have already seen man to be in (i.e. dead), this problem simply cannot be corrected by ourselves. We are in a helpless state naturally without either ability or desire to save ourselves. We are antagonistic, unbelieving rebels against God’s cause and we are quite satisfied to be just that. Something must change.

God is the Life-Giver

In discussing these matters with Nicodemus, Jesus said, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).** This act of being **“born again”** is often referred to as “regeneration”. Since we are dead, we must be given life. Just as Lazarus was raised from the dead by the power of Jesus, so we must be raised from our deathly state by the power of God. A dead person cannot raise himself. And a person dead in their trespasses and sins cannot raise himself. This is why God uses the term **“dead”** to describe our natural state. The Greek word here rendered **“born again”** could also be translated **“born from above”**. Unless one is born from above, he cannot be saved.

The necessity of regeneration is a commonly discussed subject in the Bible. Jesus said, **“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:44).** Though man is unable to come to Jesus by faith naturally, God Himself draws men to the Son. You will search the Scriptures in vain for an example of a person God sought to

bring to faith but was unable to do so. When God draws men, they come. In the same chapter, Jesus said, **“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out” (John 6:37)**. All ... everyone without exception ... that the Father has given to the Son before time began will come to Him by faith. They will come when they are supernaturally birthed into the family of God.

Just after discussing our natural deadness, Paul gloriously says, **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5)**. God **“made us alive”**. This is the equivalent of being **“born again”** or **“regenerated”**. This is an act of God. Though we naturally were dead, depraved rebels against God’s cause, He **“made us alive together with Christ”**. To this, the apostle follows up with **“by grace you have been saved”**. That is, despite what you wanted and deserved, God gave you something else. You deserved the penalty of your sins. God **“made you alive together with Christ”**. This is precisely what grace is – that is, getting what you do not deserve.

God is the Actor in regeneration. He is the Cause of our coming to Christ. God **“has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3)**. Lest any of us believe that our faith somehow brought about the new birth, Peter informs us the very opposite is true. God birthed us. He **“caused us to be born again”**. He lovingly and graciously saved us by grace through faith. **“And this is not [our] own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9)**. The Lord is the great Founder of our faith (**Hebrews 12:2**). When the dead are raised, the Creator Himself is the Actor. When those dead in their sins are raised, the same rule applies. God **“has caused us to be born again”**.

The Purpose of the Gospel

How does the new birth work? Does God just spiritually unscrew the top of our heads and pour faith in? Or, is there more involved? The Scripture is not silent on this whatsoever. The work of God in regeneration does not in any way eliminate the Gospel. Paul said, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16)**. Every person that has ever been saved has been brought to Jesus through the Gospel. Paul said, **“It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”**. There is no exception to this. Perhaps one may argue that this limits God. That is entirely incorrect. God was pleased to save people through the Gospel (**1 Corinthians 1:21**). He certainly could have brought about our conversion any way He desired – and He did! He chose to save people through the message of the Gospel.

In speaking to the saints at Thessalonica, Paul said, **“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)**. Paul knew God had chosen these blessed saints to be saved because they responded to the Gospel when it was preached to them. But how did these natural men respond to the Gospel? Simply, the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied **“in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction”**. That is, the Gospel was **“the power of God for salvation”** to these people. Paul later told this same group, **“But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)**. God chose them. He set them apart **“by the Spirit and belief in the truth”**. Paul further explains this by declaring that God called them **“through our gospel”**. No further clarity needs to be added to this statement.

It may serve well to show at least a couple of Scriptural examples of the new birth as God uses the Gospel to reach His people. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Antioch in Pisidia, they preached the message of Jesus dying for sinners in the synagogue. God blessed their efforts so much that **“the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord” (Acts 13:44)**. This would have been a mixed audience of both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews **“were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him” (Acts 13:45)**. However, the Gentiles received the message of the Gospel with gladness. Luke explains this by saying, **“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48)**. Certainly the entire crowd did not believe. But **“as many as were appointed to eternal life”** certainly did. This is a clear example of who God regenerates in the new birth.

On another occasion, Paul and his companions made their way to Philippi. Prayer was customarily made by the riverside in this community on the Sabbath day. The disciples met one particular day with some women who were gathered there. It is unclear as to how the majority of the women received the message. However, there is no doubt as to how one particular lady did. Luke recounts, **“One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:14)**. This woman was **“a worshiper of God”** in that she was not a pagan worshiper of idols. She regarded Judaism as her religion. She was not, however, a believer in Jesus until Paul arrived preaching the Gospel. Once the **“Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul”**, she was saved. This is a wonderful example of how God works in the new birth. He takes the heart and opens it to the Gospel. In response, the sinner happily comes to Christ (**Matthew 11:28; John 6:37**).

Lives Changed by God

The instant that the Lord saves a person, things change. This does not mean they are fully mature at the point of salvation, for they are not. Initially, all a person knows for sure is that they are a sinner and Jesus paid their sin debt on the cross of Calvary. They are a spiritual infant (**1 Corinthians 3:1**). However, the Holy Spirit immediately starts leading them (**Romans 8:14**). A battle begins to rage inside a person between the old man and the new man (**Romans 7:21-23**). They are alive in a way they have never been before. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”** (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Whatever worldview they had before, all has now changed.

The duty of the Lord’s churches is to **“make disciples of all nations”** (**Matthew 28:19**). Simply, we are to go preach the Gospel to the world in hopes that God will use us to reach people. Since God’s means of birthing people into His kingdom is the Gospel of Christ, it is this Gospel He has entrusted His churches to carry forth (**Mark 16:15**). This is the example set by the early churches in the Book of Acts. If ever we hope to be used by the Lord to reach lost sinners, we must be found carrying forth that Gospel which is **“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”** (**Romans 1:16**). A clear understanding of God’s work in converting sinners ought to encourage each of us to be more faithful in being a witness of the work of Jesus as Savior (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**).

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” – James 1:18

CHAPTER FIVE

SALVATION COMPLETED

**“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” –
Philippians 1:6**

Logically, if all of the information presented in this booklet is correct, the completion of the work of salvation is a certainty. However, we cannot derive our doctrine by logic. Our beliefs must ever be founded on God’s eternal Word. What does the Bible have to say about the preservation of the saints? This chapter seeks to explore that question.

Without a doubt, every one of us has started a project we haven’t completed. Most of us have started many projects we haven’t finished. Our God is not such a God. There was no doubt when He said, **“Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3)** that He would complete the creation of our universe and rest seven days later. When God starts a project, He finishes it. One will search the Word of God in vain from cover to cover looking for a half finished project by God. He doesn’t work that way. In every case and on every occasion, when He starts something, He completes it. Our God declared, **“I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it” (Isaiah 46:11).**

Up to this point, it has sufficiently been proven that God is the Author of the salvation of men. He **“began a good work”** in us. Knowing this, we can be assured that He **“will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ”**. We may stray from time to time. We may struggle with sin. Our faith may be weak at times. We will all make mistakes, for sure. But, God will complete the work He began in us. Remember, we are **“predestined to be conformed to the image of his son” (Romans 8:29)**. This is the work which God has begun. This work, He will complete.

God is the Preserver

Just as our salvation is a gift from God, so is our preserving. The Psalmist wrote, **“For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off” (Psalms 37:28)**. God preserves his children. We do not keep ourselves saved. Just as He began the work in us, so He is completing it. God preserves us. For this reason, this doctrine is often referred to as “eternal security”. Is not there great security in knowing that God is holding on to us?

In His teaching on the Good Shepherd, Jesus explained just how tightly God is holding on to His sheep. He said, **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:27-29)**. Consider this security for a moment. Jesus says that the life He has given to us is **“eternal life”**. Firstly, if it can be cut short of Heaven, it was far from eternal. Of His sheep, He says **“they will never perish”**. Are we willing to declare the Shepherd of our souls to be anything less than what He is declaring to be? This passage describes Jesus as that Good Shepherd of the sheep. He is the one protecting them. He is the one guarding them. He is the one keeping them. We must consider that if we leave room for the sheep to be lost, the Good Shepherd illustration loses its meaning.

He goes on to speak of the double security we have in Him. He first declares that **“no one is able to pluck them out of my hand”**. So, we are safely in the hand of our great Shepherd. He has a tight hold on us. The Good Shepherd does not lose sheep. Secondly, Jesus says, **“no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand”**. This is double security. It’s as though we are in the hands of Christ and Christ’s hands are in the hands of the Father. Though the nature of a sheep is to wander, the Good Shepherd watches over His sheep. He preserves them. He keeps them.

The Extent of Preservation

As our great High Priest, Jesus **“is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrew 7:25)**. We are saved **“to the uttermost”**. That is, He has saved us completely and at all times. We are perfectly saved by our perfect High Priest who **“always lives to make intercession for them”**. No matter what we do, Jesus is our Mediator between us and God. As was the case with the Good Shepherd, our great High Priest perfectly intercedes for us. Our salvation is not dependent on our actions to keep us saved any more than it is dependent on our actions to save us initially. The foundation of our security is the work of our Mediator, Jesus Christ.

This point is stressed in the plainest terms by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the saints at Rome. Following his teaching on God’s sovereignty in salvation, he wrote, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39)**. If this passage were all we had on the preservation of God’s people, it would be enough.

In no uncertain terms, Jesus said that all that come to Him by faith are assured that they have received permanent forgiveness of sins. He said, **“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out” (John 6:37)**. The words of Jesus here ought to give great comfort to every one that has trusted Him today. If you have come to the Father through Him, you will **“never”** be cast out. There simply is no chance of one losing their status in Jesus. He gives eternal life – not temporary life (**John 3:18, 36**). When He saves, it is **“to the uttermost”**.

How Strong is our Faith?

It should be stressed that **“without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6)**. Perhaps then one would ask, “what if somebody loses their faith?” To this, we must understand that our faith was not our own to begin with. It (along with all facets of salvation) is declared to be God’s gift to us (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). God gave us the gift of faith and He will not take it away. Jesus is the **“the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2)**. He gave us our faith. And, He is perfecting our faith – not only daily, but until the end. God makes sure **“all things work together for good”** for us (**Romans 8:28**). He is perfecting our faith even when we feel weak. His purpose is always greater than our own.

Do Works Matter?

One of the most common misconceptions of eternal security is that it doesn’t require obedience in the lives of children of God. If ever a pastor has applied the doctrine as such, he is in gross error. Just following that wonderful declaration that our salvation was effected by God and not ourselves, Paul said that **“we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10)**. God has prepared us to walk in good works. A mere casual perusing of the New Testament should discount any

idea that we are not to serve God with all that we have in us. Certainly, all that we do should be **“to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)**.

The desires of a regenerate child of God should be vastly different than their desires before they were saved. When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we walked the same sinful way as the rest of the world (**Ephesians 2:1-3**). Now that we have been raised from the dead by the power of God, we should walk in the **“newness of life” (Romans 6:4)**. A dead corpse has no movement at all. However, a living being is full of life. We have been called to life in Jesus Christ and are to live in just that way. Our entire worldview changes when God saves us. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**. This **“new”** marks a drastic change in a person’s life. Before salvation, they were devoid of spiritual interest. Now, they have a desire to serve the One that died in their place.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained that works would result from hearing God’s Word and believing it. He said, **“As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty” (Matthew 13:23)**. New creations in Christ bear fruit. Now, certainly not all believers yield the same amount of fruit. Even in this parable, some yielded **“a hundredfold”**, some **“sixty”**, and some **“thirty”**. However, there’s no place for the one that had no change in their life. If God has made a person to be alive, they will show some proof of that life. It may be stronger sometimes than at other times. But, there will be some evidence of the Spirit’s work.

What of Those that Turn Back?

Today, we often see people make a profession of faith in Christ one week only to return to their former life after a little while. The vast majority of these professions are merely false professions

brought on by the “easy-believism” of our day. Multitudes are coerced to repeat a magical prayer that supposedly opens Heaven’s gate to them much like “open sesame” opened the magical cave door for Ali Baba. Without question, there is no magical prayer in God’s Word which produces some “hocus pocus” result. Never once do we find any New Testament missionary instructing people to “repeat after me”.

When Paul and Silas were questioned by the Philippian jailor, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**” they responded “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household**” (Acts 16:30-31). The proper instruction to those in a lost condition is to tell them to “**believe**” in Christ, which means to trust in Him. He is the only Way of salvation. All who believe in Him have eternal life. Give Biblical instruction and pray God blesses it.

Yet, all false professions are not the result of bad doctrine. Sometimes, even in the best doctrinal situations, people make false professions of faith. These happen for various reasons. Speaking of some that had, no doubt, made a false profession, John wrote, “**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us**” (1 John 2:19). Certainly John’s Gospel was good. The Holy Spirit inspired the Gospel that bears his name. And yet, some there made false professions. This became evident when they left the faith. Understand, these people were never saved to begin with. God had never begun a work in their lives. For if He had begun a work, He would have brought it to completion.

With the understanding that false professions are made, Peter encouraged believers to “**be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election**” (2 Peter 1:10). This is done by prayer, study and gathering with God’s people for worship and edification. If a person has no desire for those things, it’s not a good sign. However, for the one that has been changed by the miracle working power of God, these things are necessary.

Whatever we may see from human beings, our confidence in God and His power to completely save us must be founded in God's Word. In no uncertain terms, our salvation in Christ is declared to be permanent ... eternal ... everlasting. God saved us by His grace and He will keep us by His power.

**“Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you”
– Jude 1:1-2**

CHAPTER SIX

SO WHAT?

“But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine” – Titus 2:1

Why does it really matter? I mean, if we’re all working to get the Gospel to people, why debate “lesser issues”? These are common questions when discussing the subject of salvation with people. Many would say that a deeper understanding of doctrines which surround salvation aren’t really necessary for a church and her membership. Why then did God inspire Biblical writers to include them in the Bible? Certainly God knows our needs far more than we do. The fact that many passages related to the doctrines discussed in this book were inspired by God, one can conclude they are important. Nothing in the Bible was written just to take up space. And certainly, there’s a lot of space given to the truths surrounding the salvation of sinners.

How We View Ourselves

Not only are these truths beneficial because they are Biblical, but they change the way we approach life. For instance, to see that God is the Author of your salvation is to understand with Paul, **“by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10)**. If we are of the opinion that we brought about our own new birth, we honestly have a tendency to thank ourselves for our standing in Christ. God has freely given us what we do not deserve – that’s what grace really is! Understanding this will bring us to see why **“no human being might boast in the presence of God” (1 Corinthians 1:29)**. So, our attitudes about our own selves and our great Savior are greatly affected by proper Biblical understanding concerning what He has done for us.

How We View Others

If we see ourselves for what we are, then we ought to see unbelievers in a different light. It's easy in certain doctrinal systems to be frustrated with a lost friend that they won't "make a decision for Christ". However, realizing man's natural state will alleviate such feelings. When we see that in ourselves we are no different than those sinners around us, our heart will be more likely to break for them. A proper understanding of our need for the Lord will lend our heart to pray more for those around us. The idea that man is the author of his own salvation deters our prayers to God for the salvation of others. If God doesn't save in spite of man's rebellion, praying to God for the salvation of any soul is useless. However, since God is the Cause of the new birth, prayer to God is appropriate. He alone can bring a dead soul to life!

All of us have friends and family that are deeper in sin than others. This does not imply that anybody is "more lost" than anybody else. However, some people appear to be more hopeless than others do in our eyes. A Biblical understanding of extraordinary grace teaches otherwise. No sinner is too far gone for God to reach. Paul, once "**breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord**", was immediately changed by the power of the Lord on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:1-9**). This murderous persecutor was certainly thought by many to be too far gone. However, his immediate response to our Lord was, "**What shall I do, Lord?**" (**Acts 22:9**). This man was used by God to carry the Gospel further than any other Biblical missionary. The Lord used him to pen the majority of the New Testament. Friends, God's sovereign grace can reach any sinner. The truth will encourage us all when we understand it in the proper light.

How We View Our Work

Most believers today struggle to share the Gospel with those around them. Often, this is a result of bad doctrine. There is great fear that one won't be persuasive enough. Many churches give classes on how to "sell" salvation to the lost. Seminary professors have taught as truth that pastors needn't say "in conclusion" or "for

my last point” because this will cause the lost to prepare to reject the message. Books have been written on soul winning which teach much the same. All of this is foolishness in light of God being the Actor in the new birth. All of the lost are dead. They need God to raise them. Their conversion is dependent on this one thing and nothing else. We are commissioned to share the Gospel. This is our duty. As has been pointed out, the Gospel is the means by which God saves souls. However, the growth of the Gospel seed is God’s work, not ours (**1 Corinthians 3:5-6**). This ought to remove the pressure of witnessing and encourage us to do the work God has called us to do.

In short, a Biblical understanding of the truths surrounding salvation will affect all that we do. It will affect our prayer life. It will affect the way we approach the Word of God. It will affect our worship services. It will increase our adoration of our great God and Savior. If there was no other benefit, this would be enough.

Closing Thought

If you have learned anything from this book, you’ve learned that the Bible is a deep book. It takes much more study time than the average believer gives. Whatever you do, do not let your study of God’s extraordinary grace stop here. Use this booklet as a foundation for your growth. This growth should continue until you meet our Savior face to face.

About the Author

Pastor Todd Bryant was raised in Northport, Alabama. His parents, Charles and Nadine Bryant, were godly parents that taught him the importance of serving the Lord in church. At the age of twenty, the Lord began to convict him of his sinful state. The Holy Spirit empowered the Gospel and through it the Lord caused him to trust Christ as His Savior.

In the summer of 1998 while the church was without a pastor, the Lord placed a burden on Todd to preach. The church immediately licensed him to preach and he began to fill the pulpit weekly at Sovereign Grace as well as some meetings at nearby churches. In December 1998, the church called Todd as pastor upon his ordination. After praying to the Lord for guidance, Todd accepted the call and the church ordained him that same month. Brother Milburn Cockrell presided over the ordaining council while Brother E. D. Strickland assisted. After a thorough examination including numerous theological questions, the council recommended to the church that they move forward with the ordination. The church voted to do so.

Todd has been the pastor of Sovereign Grace here in Northport since his ordination in 1998. He has been blessed to see many saved and baptized. He has preached for churches in twelve states.

The church has been blessed to begin a number of new missionary endeavors under Todd's ministry including a (former) radio broadcast, a CD ministry, a tract ministry (including the printing of several booklets and books), a web-site and a mobile app across all platforms (iOS, Android, Windows). His prayer is that God would use him to reach the lost with the Gospel and edify the saints with the truth of God's Word.

Todd and wife Wendy were married August 28, 1993. They have two children, Wesley and Caleb.