

*May I never boast about anything except the
cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

(Galatians 6:14)

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

(1Corinthians 1:18-19)

Christ is lovely upon Olivet and Tabor,
and by the Sea, but oh! there never was
such a matchless Christ as He that did
hang upon the Cross. There we beheld all
His beauties in perfection, all His
attributes developed, all His love drawn
out, all His character expressed.

Charles Spurgeon

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INTRODUCTION

In setting about to write on the Cross of our Great God and Saviour, one becomes immediately aware of his inability to adequately describe what must be considered the most important event of all Ages!

However, we are consoled by the fact that the Word of God Itself is written in very simple and easy to understand language. The Lord purposely designed His Revelation to mankind in this way so that even a child can come and discover its life-giving truths by himself.

This being established, I urge you, dear reader, to follow me through the following chapters where we will examine the Good News of how through the redemptive work of His Dear Son, God the Father can now satisfy mankind's three greatest needs – forgiveness of sins, healing from sickness and deliverance from bondage. And how you can avail of these incredible gifts by simply placing your faith in God's promises!

In addition to this, we will also examine how the Apostles of Christ silenced those who slandered this Good News as encouraging people to sin. They disproved these false allegations by demonstrating how grace is actually the only way a person can truly fulfil God's Holy Law, and that the believer does it out of love, not fear, which was God's intention from the very beginning.

The Apostles also demonstrate that salvation by grace through faith was not a new concept, but had been clearly preached in types and shadows in the Old Testament Law and Prophets.

We will take many of the Scriptural resources for these important issues from the New Testament Epistle to the Romans, of which the Apostle Paul is the author.

It is significant that this Epistle is placed first in the order of the other New Testament Epistles. This is because the Book of Romans contains the doctrinal foundation for the Christian faith. So the truths it puts forth must be correctly understood before moving on to other doctrinal matters.

It is also a fact worth mentioning that a revelation of the foundational truths presented in the Book of Romans was what ignited the inner fire of the Reformers during the Middle Ages.

The explosive Reformation that followed delivered the world from the spiritual darkness and religious bondage that had covered it for centuries.

I believe today, more than ever, a revelation of those same truths presented in this Epistle are absolutely necessary for the salvation, maturity and total victory of every Christian as he makes himself “*ready*” to meet Christ.

FORGIVENESS FOR ALL

It is an amazing truth that Jesus' sacrifice of Atonement was for all mankind. Every man woman and child of every generation was involved in His redemptive work, as it is written, "*One has died for all; therefore all have died.*" This means God's mercy, forgiveness and eternal acceptance are available to *all* as a free gift. The clearest New Testament passage of this promise can be found in the Gospel of John:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

The two simple requirements that release these wonders of mercy and grace to you are given by Jesus Himself in the Gospel of Mark:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.

(Mark 1:15)

Why a Sacrifice Was Necessary

GOD IS LOVE; unconditional love. Yet at the same time He is Holy and Righteous and Sole Judge of the Universe. Consequently, God could not leave sin unpunished; His righteous judgement for all wrongdoing is death and hell.

Only the Cross of His Son could resolve the problem. Through it the Father could display His justice, righteousness, forgiveness and mercy all at the same time. In the Book of Romans we read:

He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

(Romans 3:25-27)

Note, however, the death of a sinner could not be efficacious for other sinners; the sacrifice had to be someone sinless. So only God Himself could qualify. We read:

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

Just think about that. The Creator of everything that exists and breathes literally becomes our substitute; the Just and Holy for the unjust and sinful. Absolutely amazing!

Our substitute also had to be someone who shared our humanity and had been subject to all the temptations and difficulties we experience:

Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered he is able to help those who are being tested.

(Hebrews 2:17-18)

Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

(Hebrews 5:8-10)

From the dawn of time man has insisted that God has no right to judge His creatures, because He is unable to understand suffering and has never done anything to relieve the world of it. The above Scriptures prove otherwise. Outside of the Bible, I believe the following article ranks first in making this point clear:

At the end of time, billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly – not with cringing shame but with belligerence. “Can God judge us?”

“How can he know about suffering?” snapped a pert young brunette. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp.

“We endured terror ... beating ... torture ... death!”

In another group a black man lowered his collar.

“What about this?” he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. “Lynched for no crime but being black!”

In another crowd, a pregnant schoolgirl with sullen eyes. “Why should I suffer?” It wasn't my fault.”

Far across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering he had permitted in his world. How lucky God was to live in heaven where all was sweetness and light, where there was no weeping or fear, no hunger or hatred!

What did God know of all that men had been enforced to endure in this world? For God leads a pretty sheltered life, they said.

So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. A Jew, a black, a person from Hiroshima, a horribly disabled arthritic, a thalidomide child.

In the centre of the plain they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was rather clever. Before God could be qualified to be their judge, he must endure what they had endured.

Their verdict was that God should be sentenced to live on earth – as a man! Let him be born a Jew. Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted. Give him a work so difficult that even his family will think him out of his mind when he tried to do it.

Let him be betrayed by his closest friends. Let him face false charges, be tried by a prejudiced jury and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let him be tortured. At last, let him see what it means to be terribly alone. Then let him die in agony. Let him die so that there can be no doubt that he died. Let there be a whole host of witnesses to verify it.

As each leader announced the portion of his sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people assembled. When the last had finished pronouncing sentence, there was a long silence.

No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew God had already served his sentence!

An Ever-Flowing River

It is undeniable. The Cross not only shows us the seriousness of sin, but the amazing love of God in taking the cruel punishment upon Himself in Christ Jesus (see *2 Corinthians 5:19-20*). And if all this was not enough, the Lord also provides us the mercy to avail of His mercy. In the Gospel of John we read:

No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.

(John 6:44-45)

In his fallen state, man could not even come to true repentance and faith without the Holy Spirit drawing him, convicting him of sin, and then making him a new creation through the New Birth.

Neither can the believer make it to the end of his journey without the Holy Spirit protecting his inheritance and striving with him until the nature of Christ is formed in him.

This may appear that God is a respecter of persons; that He shows favour to some and not to others, but that is not the case. The Scriptures say:

I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live.

(Ezekiel 33:11)

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

(2 Peter 3:9-10)

The quotation from the Gospel of John above is describing a person who might not know the One True God, but would receive the Truth when presented to him. It is to such a person that the Father sends His Holy Spirit to do His mighty works of drawing and convicting.

The problem with the people Jesus was speaking to in this passage from John's Gospel was that they were not open to the Truth. They followed Jesus in the hope that He would say what their itching ears wanted to hear. Practically the same explanation applies to the following passage from the Epistle to the Romans:

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

(Romans 8:29)

God does not want anyone to be lost against his own will, but He knows from the beginning what each person will do; whether he will resist the Holy Spirit and refuse Christ, or accept Him.

IN HIM FROM BEGINNING TO END

As every human being comes into the world with a sin nature that makes him transgress God's Holy Law, God had to go to the root cause of the problem – the part of us that was corrupt and causing us to do wrong. To do this He places the repentant sinner “*in Christ*,” so that he literally participates in the Lord's death and resurrection.

This means that when Jesus went to the Cross to pay the penalty for sin, He took the sinner with Him as well, that he might die in Him. Water baptism is an outward sign of this. The Apostle Paul writes:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

(Romans 6:3-6)

Allow me to repeat this very important truth. **THE OLD YOU IS DEAD AND EXISTS NO LONGER.** And because Jesus conquered the grave and was raised to life again, those who receive Him are **RAISED TO NEW LIFE IN HIM** also.

At salvation God gives the believer His Holy Spirit to help him live out the Christian life in total victory and to appropriate all God's promises to himself. We will discover how this is done in the following chapters. But for now, we will continue to focus on the believer's position “*in Christ*.”

Jesus Is Made My Righteousness

Righteousness, simply defined, means right-standing with God. The Bible declares that through our union with the Lord Jesus, He literally becomes our righteousness. Or, to put it another way, His righteousness is imputed to us. We read:

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, that is righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

(1 Corinthians 1:30)

Again, in both the Old and New Testament, we read:

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

(Isaiah 53:11)

For just as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

(Romans 5:19-20)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Scriptures also say that Jesus' righteousness is imputed to us THROUGH FAITH at salvation. Consider the following Scriptures:

But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and it is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

(Romans 3:21-23)

Therefore his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

(Romans 4:22-25)

Let me give you a practical illustration of what this means. When you go out of your house, you put on clothes so that people do not see your naked body. In the spiritual realm, your clothes are the Lord Jesus. So when you are "in Christ," or when you have "put on the Lord Jesus," God does not see your nakedness, your sin, when He looks at you, but He sees Jesus.

This brings to mind the parable of the wedding banquet in the Gospel of Matthew. Here we see a man without a wedding garment. The wedding garment is a reference to Christ's righteousness. This man could not enter into God's Kingdom because he had rejected God's method of salvation and was trusting in his own merits to save him.

“Do Not Submit Again to a Yoke of Slavery”

Some believe that God gives each person a righteousness when he is saved and from then onward he is expected to live according to that righteous standard. Such teaching is absolutely false. The Word of God says:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

(Romans 1:16-18)

It could not be clearer! According to this Scripture a believer receives the gift of righteousness imputed to him at salvation “*through faith for faith.*” In other words, BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH.

Misunderstanding of these truths has caused great frustration to many, because even after salvation every child of God still sins and is prone to failure.

If it were true that God imparts righteousness to you at the moment you are born again, and expects that your on-going relationship with Him was dependent on you walking perfectly according to that standard, you would never become acceptable to Him. The only standard of holiness and righteousness acceptable to God is perfection.

Moreover, you would be left in legalistic bondage. As we will demonstrate further on, as soon as you try to please God by your own efforts, you place yourself under the Law – the very thing Jesus delivered us from – and immediately the experience of the individual in Romans chapter seven – “*Wretched man that I am!*” – becomes yours.

This is the Apostle Paul's very argument to the Galatians. He is very angry with the believers in this Church because they had listened to legalistic preachers who taught that the new Gentile converts had to submit to the Written Code and Jewish traditions in order to be saved. He asks:

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!

Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you ending with the flesh?

(Galatians 3:1-4)

These false ministers also taught that the Jewish converts to Christ had to continue to fulfil the Law of Moses and observe Jewish traditions. Paul points out that this completely denies and sets aside the work of the Cross and the grace of God:

Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

(Galatians 5:2-5)

Paul himself was very zealous in observing the Law of Moses before his encounter with the Lord Jesus and was a very respected and honoured member of the religious movement to which he belonged. But after his conversion he began to understand that no one can be justified by observing the Law, and that the Law was never given for that purpose.

More than that, Paul discovered that all his achievements were worthless and a waste of energy compared to having Christ as his righteousness. This is the message in most of his Epistles to the Church, a message that got him into a lot of trouble wherever he went – “*the offense of the Cross.*” To quote his own words:

I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

(Philippians 3:8-10)

Finally, to try and please God by your performance has another negative effect. It produces a character trait that God hates – a hard-hearted, self-righteousness, in which it is difficult to experience the love of God and to be merciful towards the weaknesses and failures of others. The story of the Prodigal Son and his brother in the Gospel of Luke is a good example.

“Grace Upon Grace”

Dear reader, remember this liberating truth which we have spoken of. Even when you sin and fail Jesus is still your righteousness. Your sin does not affect your position in Christ, once there is true repentance. Such grace delivers you from being discouraged or burdened with guilt over past failures or fearful of those to come.

Slanderers Then and Now

As there were in the days of the early Church, there are also many today who totally scoff at the message of being justified by grace through faith and accuse this teaching as being a licence to sin. They insist and teach that people will be judged by works. Once he had received revelation of the Truth, the Apostle Paul was deeply grieved and mourned for his own fellow countrymen who had such an attitude:

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.

For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness.

For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

(Romans 10:1-5)

Disproving these false claims will be our theme in the following chapters. But let me just say one thing on the subject before we close. The Gospel message of salvation by grace through faith DOES NOT mean that Christians are to have a careless view of how they live, or that performance is irrelevant. On the contrary, the Lord wants the requirements of the Law to be fulfilled in the believer:

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourself to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.

For sin will not have dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

(Romans 6:12-15)

It is very interesting how the Word of God says the believer will succeed in living holy. It says he will succeed in living a holy life because “*you are not under law but under grace.*”

Summary of Chapter One and Two

Because no human being could reach the perfection that God's Holy Law commanded, and was unable to pay the tremendous debt he owed for sin, God did what man could not do, He paid the price Himself by shedding His holy blood.

Now that this debt is paid, and God's justice satisfied, He gives the believer His righteousness as a free gift; the righteousness that Jesus earned for us through His obedience unto death.

In biblical terminology, no other method of payment is acceptable. Therefore, any deviation from trust in Jesus Christ and His *imputed* righteousness, to reliance on our own holiness for right-standing with God is error!

Imputed righteousness means we have put on the Lord Jesus and all His virtue has become ours. The believer's acceptance before God is dependent on what Jesus has done and not on what *he* does, and it is to be that way until the end.

This gives the believer freedom from guilt, condemnation, fear and legalistic bondage. The gift of righteousness also makes you humble and merciful and boasts not in self, but in the finished work of Christ.

Last, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, God's purpose is that the believer's performance will eventually match his position in Jesus more closely and so fulfil the Law.

EXPLAINING GRACE

In the first three chapters of Romans the Apostle Paul provides a very strong argument for the necessity of salvation by grace through faith. In the first chapter he shows that the Gentiles were guilty before God for their actions because they have an intuitive knowledge of God's Law within their conscience and did not live up to it.

In chapter two he shows that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles, because they had received the Written Word of God and had not kept it as they should have.

In chapter three he brings all this together and concludes that every human being, whether Jew or Gentile, pagan or religious, is hopeless, guilty, and without excuse.

After this, Paul shows his disapproval and rejection of all the false allegations against the Gospel he preached and its encouraging people to live in sin and goes on in that same Epistle to clearly demonstrate how this is not the case.

Christians Are Dead to Sin!

First, and most importantly, Christians do not live in sin because they are dead to sin:

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it.

(Romans 6:1-3)

What does “*dead to sin*” mean exactly? Paul is saying that the old nature that loved to sin is dead. Consequently, it is no longer the nature or desire of a born-again Christian to live in sin as he did before salvation. This is why Paul immediately after asks:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

(Romans 6:3-4)

He is saying that if a Christian would continue to live the old life, then he should not have consented to baptism. The reason he stepped down into the water is because he recognized and acknowledged that God had already placed him in Christ and made the things Jesus died to a reality in his life too. Paul repeats these truths again further on in this same chapter:

We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 6:6-12)

These verses repeat what Paul said earlier; that when Jesus went to the Cross, He took the sinner with Him. But he now stresses that the Lord Jesus had to die only once to accomplish salvation for all mankind. The crucifixion was a historical event that will

never have to be repeated; He died to sin, or the old sin nature, “*once for all*,” and was resurrected with a new life. And Paul also says that this is to be true also for the believer; he too has died to sin; this too is a historical event that will never have to be repeated!

“Work Out Your Own Salvation”

However, by saying that a believer no longer has a sin nature, the question as to why he still sins arises. Some Christians struggle in this area and mistakenly believe they still have a sin nature. They often quote Romans chapter seven to justify their claim.

To answer the above question correctly it is important to realize this fundamental truth. As an objective fact, the believer is “*dead to sin*.” On the Cross, everything that had authority over his life and caused him to behave contrary to God’s Law – the world, the flesh, and the devil – were all done away with and disarmed.

Subjectively, however, he needs to lay claim to these great truths by faith. In other words, he needs to KNOW, BELIEVE and, through the power of the in-dwelling Holy Spirit, LIVE continually as one who has died with Christ, as it is written, “*You must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus*.” This is what Paul means when he says:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

(Philippians 2:13-14)

“*Work out*” means every time the Christian is faced with something tempting and seductive, and every time his mind thinks on something that is contrary to the Word of God, he is to

boldly say, “No, it is written that I have died to that.” It is just that simple, friends. In Galatians we read:

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(Galatians 5:24)

Notice again the use of the present perfect tense. The term, “*have crucified*,” describes something already accomplished. The Christian does not have to try to crucify himself. He is already crucified and exists no longer! Yes, even the sinful passions and desires of his flesh exist no longer.

Stressing again the Importance of Faith

As we stated earlier, in the Christian life every provision of the Cross is to be received by faith and maintained by faith. Concerning faith, the Epistle to the Galatians reads:

I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

(Galatians 2:19-21)

The writer of Hebrews says that, “*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” In other words, faith does not go by how one feels, but by what the Word of God declares. This is what Paul means when he encourages the believer to put on the new life Jesus has given us. He writes:

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provisions for the flesh to gratify its desires.

(Romans 13:14)

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

(Ephesians 4:22-25)

And how do we put on this new life? Simply by taking off the old. And how do we take off the old? As we have laboured to demonstrate, we take off the old life by *believing* that you have been “*crucified with Christ,*” that you are “*dead to sin,*” and that “*it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me,*” and by acting accordingly.

Believing and acting on the Word of God will break sin’s power and result in the Resurrection Life of Jesus being manifest in the soulish part of us and also in the physical body.

Therefore, it is never true for the believer to say, “I can’t stop doing that,” or “It’s all out of my control.” God has given His children all the resources to say NO and have complete victory over sin. But it is not automatic, you have to choose daily who you will obey – the flesh or the Holy Spirit.

The “grace” that Does Encourage Sin

Dear reader, there are very dangerous and erroneous representations of God’s grace being taught today. Such false teachings lead many to believe that they can become Christians without abandoning their sinful lifestyles.

This is a total misinterpretation of the overall Gospel message that we have examined so far, and if anyone lives that way, then he is not a true Christian and he is not saved. In agreement with the Apostle Paul's teachings, the Apostle John says:

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness, sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

(1John 3:8-9)

John writes again:

Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.

(1John 3:9-10)

Obviously, the Apostle is not speaking of the born-again Christian sinning from time to time or making mistakes unintentionally, which we said we all do sometimes. Therefore, he writes:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1John 1:8-10)

In First John chapter three quoted above, John is speaking of people who define themselves Christians, but are wilfully practicing sin and show no repentance or heart-felt sorrow over their ungodly lifestyles. Sadly, such behaviour gives place to the devil to come into their lives and bring absolute destruction.

Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter we saw that every false and toxic authority over the Christian has been destroyed through the work of the Cross. But these changes all took place in the spiritual realm, which cannot be discerned through the five senses.

Therefore, God's promises need to be first appropriated by faith before they can become a reality in the natural realm. This requires action on the part of the believer.

Any time he is faced with a trying and difficult situation, he needs to believe what God's Word says and not what his feelings, facts or circumstances say. He must believe the Word and speak it to the situation.

We also explained that this is accomplished when we collaborate with the in-dwelling Holy Spirit and that this is not a one-time single event; but an on-going, daily process.

Finally, we said there is an important difference between sin committed in ignorance and weakness and wilfully sinning with no remorse.

DELIVERED FROM THE LAW TO FULFILL THE LAW

Having explained how God delivered mankind from the plague of sin, and how everything of the Old Creation was done away with by Jesus' Cross, and that an entirely New Creation came into existence by His resurrection, the Apostle Paul makes these amazing statements:

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

(Romans 6:14)

In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ.

(Romans 7:4)

But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

(Romans 7:6)

“Not under,” “died to,” “discharged from,” the Law! Paul goes on in chapter seven of Romans to explain what these Scriptures mean, and why deliverance also from the Law is necessary in order to gain victory over sin.

What does it mean to be delivered from the Law exactly? If being under the Law means I have to do something to obtain right-standing before God, then deliverance from the Law means that I do not have to do anything whatsoever to please Him in and of myself ever again.

To explain why deliverance from the Law is necessary to overcome the power of sin, it is necessary to first understand why God introduced the Law.

Purpose for the Law's Introduction

Contrary to what many believe, God never gave the Old Testament Law for the purpose of justification. The real purpose for God giving His Holy Law was simply to show man that he already had a depraved nature and that he had no chance of ever being saved without a Saviour:

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

(Romans 3:19-21)

Before God had introduced His Holy Law, sin had already defeated man, but he was not aware of it. People were deceived into thinking that although they were not perfect, they were not as bad as others.

They had simply rejected and hardened themselves toward the conscience, to the truth as to how sinful their actions were. They made the mistake Paul speaks of in his Second Letter to the Church in Corinth: "*They measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another.*" We find a good example of this in the Book of Genesis where Lamech assures his wives:

Adah and Zilah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young

*man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly
Lamech seventy-sevenfold.*

(Genesis 4:23-25)

In the eyes of God, it makes no difference if you are better or not as bad as someone else; sin is sin. The Apostle James says that if a person manages to keep the whole Law, but then fails in just one point, he has become accountable for all of it.

Therefore, God had to reveal this deception that mankind had fallen into. The way He did this was to give the Law, which awakened people to the sin that was already present and how bound to it we were. This is Paul's argument in chapter seven of Romans, where he says:

What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.

Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

(Romans 7:7-13)

There have been various interpretations of Paul's words, "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Some expositors have interpreted the phrase to mean that Paul was describing a time when God brought to his attention some hidden sin, and it was this which found him out.

Other commentators believe Paul is here describing the time before one reaches the age of accountability. Before this time, even though sin is already present in a person's life, God does not impute it to him because there is no Law to transgress, as it is written, "*apart from the law sin lies dead.*"

Yet there comes a time in his life when he recognizes that he is transgressing God's Holy Law, and when that happens, the Law, which is already in existence, comes to him, and from then on God imputes sin and he dies spiritually.

Others believe the whole of chapter seven describes the believer's great advance in holiness and the depths of his self-abasement and hatred of sin, especially in his own heart.

Whatever the case, the main point of Paul's argument is that the Law gave sin power over people, to deceive and work in us all manner of lust, and that the commandment brought death and condemnation instead of life. Paul gives many other examples of this in Romans and elsewhere:

But the law came in with the result that the trespass multiplied.

(Romans 5:20)

While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

(Romans 7:5-6)

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1Corinthians 15:56)

Our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.

(2 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory.

For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory!

(2 Corinthians 3:7-10)

The Fault Lies in Man

After explaining the purpose for the Law's introduction, and his point against the Law as a means of obtaining right-standing before God, Paul warns that we are not to consider the Old Testament Law as being at fault or as something evil:

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

(Romans 7:13-14)

The Law itself did not cause anyone to sin; it only empowered sin that was already present and gave it an occasion against us. The fault lies in man. Because of the rebellious sin nature inherited through Adam, each time there was a holy commandment, "you

shall not,” that same commandment made sin and its lust come alive and rise up on the inside of us to rebel against it.

Now here is where many born-again believers stumble. As we said in chapter two, some Christians believe that God gives him a righteousness of his own at salvation and expects him to live according to that holy standard from that day forward. But as soon as he tries to please God by works the result is this:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.

For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

(Romans 7:15-25)

Again, many debates have occurred over whether Paul is describing himself before his conversion in these verses, or whether he is describing the carnality that still existed in him even as a mature Christian. And over whether the experience pictured here is autobiographical or hypothetical.

I agree with the interpretation that Paul is describing the impossibility and futility of anyone genuinely trying to please God in his own power, whether lost or saved, or whether a carnal or mature Christian, without the help of the Holy Spirit.

Because when we try to please God by our own efforts and power, we are operating out of the resources of the “old man,” the nature of Adam, and by doing so we fall from grace and place ourselves under the Old Testament Law. Everything of the Old Creation is subject to this Law. And as we said, the Law stirs up sin.

Paul only uses the word *Spirit* once in Romans chapter seven; a chapter dedicated to describe the utter inability to ever keep the righteousness of the Law in our own strength. In contrast, the word *Spirit* is used more than twenty times in chapter eight, a chapter that gives the answer to the problem.

In this chapter, we are given a picture of the true Christian life, that is made possible to every believer and that God expects from each one of us. Paul writes:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

(Romans 8:1-3)

The Law of the Spirit versus the Law of Sin

What are these laws described here and how do they operate? We can define a law as something which happens over and over again. Laws can either be man-made or natural. A familiar example of natural law would be the Law of Gravity. The difference between these two types is that the former is subject to change and

discussion, whereas the latter is constant and not subject to change, but discovery.

We are all familiar with the expression, “What goes up, must come down.” When used in a literal sense, it refers to how gravity works; that things which go up in the air and left to their own devices, will return to the ground shortly after.

The law of sin described by Paul is like the Law of Gravity; it is something natural and constant, making no exception, and preventing us from doing what is right.

Now let us look at an example to show you how “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” comes to our rescue and delivers us from this “*law of sin and of death.*”

We said that if something is launched into the air, it naturally falls to the ground and that this is the effect of gravity. But if I were to put out my hand and catch the object, the Law of Gravity would still be there and operating, but the object would not fall. Why? Because there is another law superior to it in operation, working against it.

In just the same way, God delivers us from one law by introducing another law. The law of sin and death is always there, but God has put another law superior to it in operation – “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” – to resist the law of sin and overcome it.

This is the Resurrection Life of the Lord Jesus who has destroyed death in all its forms and triumphed over it forever. He now dwells in the believer’s heart in the Person of His Holy Spirit, and if we obey Him, He will produce the righteousness which the Law of God outside of us cannot accomplish because it is weakened by the flesh:

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do; by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirements of the law might be

fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

(Romans 8:3-5)

To walk according to the flesh means living independently of God and setting your own rules and moral standards. A person may believe in God's existence and be very religious, engaged in good works for others, or he may be a very immoral man living with no regard for God and conscience. In either case, neither are submitted to God and His directions for their lives and therefore cannot please Him:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit.

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

(Romans 8:5-9)

Only when we “walk according to the Spirit” can we experience the “law of the Spirit of life” in full operation and the “just requirements of the law,” that I have been trying to fulfil myself, being fulfilled, not by me, but by Christ in me – “the hope of glory.” Speaking of Jesus' Resurrection Life in the believer Paul says elsewhere:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

(Philippians 2:13-14)

And Jesus said, “*it is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless,*” and “*apart from me you can do nothing.*” Finally, speaking of his strong desire to have the Resurrection Life of Jesus manifest in himself to the full, Paul continues in his Letter to the Philippians:

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

(Philippians 3:10-12)

It is obvious that this passage is not referring to the physical resurrection of the righteous, because the Apostle goes on to say:

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

(Philippians 3:12-13)

The King James uses the word *perfect* instead of *goal*, which is a more accurate translation. In Scripture, this always speaks of spiritual maturity, as well as being without defect, flawless. This was also Paul’s goal for every member of the Body of Christ:

My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.

(Galatians 4:19)

Can Oil Be Mixed with Water?

Dear reader, I believe it has become very clear why the Word of God insists repeatedly that we are saved by grace through faith

FROM BEGINNING TO END, “*through faith for faith.*” Because for the New Covenant to be effective, it must be *all* and *always* *Jesus’* work – His work for me, in me and through me, forever! One of Satan’s greatest deceptions is to take a truth and add to it, thus making it a lie. In case that should happen, before closing his Epistle to the Romans, Paul repeats the point once again, even clearer than before:

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. But if it is by works, it is no longer on the basis of grace, otherwise work would no longer be work.

(Romans 11:6-7)

In the same way that oil and water will not mix, so we cannot combine grace and works. It has to be either one or the other. Jesus also made this clear:

No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed, but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

(Matthew 9:16-18)

So, It's Freedom FROM sin, not TO sin!!!!

Far from salvation by grace through faith encouraging sin. As the above analysis powerfully proves, if we do not have a performance mentality, and we truly understand and live the true Gospel message, we automatically fulfil God’s Law and live holy lives, as it is written:

*Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means!
On the contrary, we uphold the law.*

(Romans 3:31)

But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

(Romans 7:6)

And more importantly, we do it out of love for the Lord, not fear, which was God's intention from the very beginning. God is the Lover of lovers, and is after the heart of man, to be one with him in a loving relationship forever!

Summary of Chapter Four

In this chapter we demonstrated that observance of the Old Testament Law for justification was never God's intent for man. The Jewish leaders had misunderstood and misapplied the Law in that area and continue to do so to this very day, as do many Christians. On the contrary, the Law was given to reveal how sinful sin really is and to strip man of every excuse and comparison, and to show him his guilt before God.

We saw also that the Law was not at fault, but that the fault was with man, in the sinful nature. We added to this the important fact that Christians should not think that the Law has no significance to us today.

On the contrary, God's Law is still to be the believer's model and moral code in his walk towards perfection. When the Scriptures say that Jesus abolished, set aside, and delivered us from the Law, it means He removed the Law as a means of obtaining right-standing with God. But the Law is still to be fulfilled under the Covenant of Grace.

However, this cannot be accomplished by ourselves. We said that to serve God with the flesh is to derive life from the old natural source inherited from Adam, which brings us back to where we started from.

But when through experience we become aware of our complete inability to please God, and in utter helplessness surrender our every thought and every purpose and every desire and every affection to the absolute control of the Holy Spirit, then He takes control and brings every hour of our lives into conformity to the will of God.

Therefore, the requirements of the Law are still fulfilled, but it is Christ in me who fulfils them!

WHAT IT MEANS TO WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT

As we have observed, we must live in the Spirit and walk after the Spirit, or according to the Spirit, if we are to have continuous victory. But what does it mean to walk according to the Spirit and how can I be sure I am doing it?

First, as the Scripture implies, it is not a work, but a walk, a relationship, where the Holy Spirit becomes my Helper, my Guide and my Friend. Second, to walk after the Spirit implies subjection and obedience.

Subjection means that I cannot act independently of the Holy Spirit. And the essence of obedience is total surrender of the will to Him. This means that you will do whatever He asks you, give Him whatever He wants from you, and go wherever He sends you.

Before we continue, a word of caution is necessary here. In speaking of surrendering the will to God, this does not mean the will should become passive to the point where the believer ceases to choose, determine, and act on his own volition.

By an incorrect interpretation of the following Scripture passage, some people have done this very thing and as a result became prey to demonic influence and oppression:

For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

(Philippians 2:13-14)

The passive person interprets this to mean that God wills and acts instead of himself. The truth to be emphasized is that God never wills instead of man, and whatever a man does, he is himself responsible for his actions.

The true meaning of this Scripture passage is that God creates in you the desire to do His will and the power to carry it out. This does not mean that you will always like what He tells you to do, but you will want to do it because it is what *He* wants. This was always Jesus attitude. He had His own will, yet He says:

I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just, because I seek to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

(John 5:30-31)

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.

(John 4:33b)

Jesus lived and loved to do His Father's will. But we learn from Scripture that sometimes His flesh did not like what that meant. Read of His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane to have an idea. On the positive side, it is the believer's privilege to be absolutely set free from all care, worry and anxiety as to the decisions he has to make at any turn of his life. The Holy Spirit undertakes all that responsibility for him.

Finally, in speaking of surrendering the will, we must remember that the soul, with all its natural energy and resources, will continually try to exert itself above our spirit until the last breath. Therefore, there will be a day-by-day need to die to self. This is why Jesus tells us to take up our cross "*daily*" and follow Him.

"If Your Son Asks for a Fish, Will You Give Him a Snake?"

Now to the question of how to be sure the Holy Spirit is leading. Once you believe that the Spirit of God's Son dwells within you, and once you have totally surrendered the absolute control of your life to Him, and look to Him to sanctify you and guide you at every turn, or at least earnestly desire it, then you can be 100% sure that your Heavenly Father will not let you go astray or be misled.

He will make His presence and His will known to you in ways you never dreamed possible. However, the first and primary way He does this is through the Written Word of God. Paul exhorts us:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is good and acceptable and perfect.

(Romans 12:2-3)

We speak of big sins and small sins, but sin is sin. So here we are told it is of utmost importance to continually cleanse and renew the mind through reading the Bible. Again, in the Psalms we read:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

(Psalm 119:105)

I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

(Psalm 119:11)

It is the testimony of many successful Christians that when one dedicates a lot of time meditating on the Word of God, he soon discovers that much of what he once put down to character traits,

cultural differences, and just bad habits, was actually transgression against God. So it is futile to speak of being led by the Holy Spirit and yet neglect feeding daily on the Word. As we said, it is the primary way through which He works on our souls.

I may also add one very important fact that perhaps many have overlooked. It is that where there is much of the Word, there is much of the Spirit! It carries a very powerful anointing!

Remember You Are a Child, Not a Slave

Finally, in relation to walking after the Spirit, it must be said from the outset that there will be moments of failure. But when in moments of weakness we stray from the Lord's ways, we need never be filled with an overwhelming sense of condemnation and fear of an offended God:

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption.

(Romans 8:15)

Instead, we will go to our Father, confess our going astray, believe that He has forgiven us completely, and go our way light and happy of heart to obey Him and be led by His Spirit:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1John 1:8-10)

Summary of Chapter Five

In this chapter we have shown that the true Christian life is a personally conducted life, conducted at every turn by a Divine Person.

However, we said that this does not imply passivity. On the contrary, believers refuse to act without the Holy Spirit's leading and guidance, but once He instructs, we voluntarily and joyfully carry into effect what He commands.

We added to this the important fact that once we earnestly desire to obey God, He will not allow us to be deceived or led astray.

We also explained that it is of utmost important to feed daily on the Holy Scriptures. First, because the Word instructs us as to what is right and wrong.

Second, because the more we feed on the Word, the more pure and holy the heart becomes, and the more sensitive it will be to the sin that still remains in it.

THE GOSPEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Up until the time of Christ the only way for the people of God to be forgiven for sin was through fulfilling the Law as best they could and then offering the appropriate sacrifice commanded in the Law for any offences committed. This was all to change after Calvary. The Apostle Paul makes this radical statement to the people of his day:

But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

(Romans 3:21)

Here Paul says that salvation is now available to all through faith without keeping the Law, and that this method of obtaining right-standing with God was promised under the Old Testament Law and Prophets and that all the sacrifices and offerings were only types and shadows of Christ.

This means Paul was not putting forward a new doctrine, but was expounding the true doctrine which the Old Testament Law and Prophets had advocated all along.

Quoting from the Law and the Psalms, he then uses two of Israel's greatest leaders, David and Abraham, to prove that the Gospel was preached in Old Testament times:

For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

(Romans 4:3)

Many to this day believe that Abraham was justified by his holy life, but this was not the case. The Old Testament clearly says that righteousness was imputed to him thirteen years before he received the sign of circumcision which was, “*a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.*”

You will remember we showed that some Jewish converts were trying to impose the act of circumcision on the Gentile converts to the Gospel. Now it becomes even clearer why Paul was so annoyed with them. They were missing this point!

The Apostle Paul also says in his Letter to the Galatians that the Gospel was preached to Abraham:

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the Gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, “All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.” For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

(Galatians 3:6-10)

Quoting from Psalm 32, Paul then describes the man after God’s own heart, King David:

Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

(Romans 4:7-9)

Here David is describing the work of the Messiah. He was given a divine revelation that a Saviour was going to come to atone for sin and David gave many examples of this in other Psalms:

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but a body you have prepared for me. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

(Psalm 40:6)

For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

(Psalm 51:16-18)

These were very revolutionary statements to make in the Old Testament Period, as the Law prescribed these sacrifices to be made for Atonement. Yet King David did not offer them; he simply repented of his terrible sin with Bathsheba, because he had a revelation that the Law provided only types and shadows, and that the real thing God desired was a repentant and pure heart. Also the Epistle to the Hebrews powerfully demonstrates that the Gospel was preached in types and shadows in the Old Testament. Quoting word for word from the Prophet Jeremiah the writer says:

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one. God finds fault with them when he says: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord.

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

(Hebrews 8:7-13)

Here the writer of Hebrews agrees with what Paul said in Romans chapter seven; that the Old Covenant was not flawed or inadequate in itself, but, "*God finds fault with them,*" the people. The flaw in the Old Covenant lay in the fact that it could not change the sinful heart.

What was needed was a new covenant relationship between God and His people; a new and better way of approaching Him. Jesus is the Mediator of this new relationship.

And as we have revealed throughout this book, the New Covenant of Jesus not only brings Good News to the Jewish people, but reconciles all people, Jew and Gentile, into one group, which was a major part of God's original covenant with Abraham (see *Genesis 12:3*). Paul writes:

For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?

(Romans 3:28-29)

For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

(Romans 10:4-5)

Summary of Chapter Six

In this chapter we showed that salvation by grace through faith was not a new doctrine, but was promised under the Old Testament Law and Prophets and that all the sacrifices and offerings were only types and shadows of it. We also said that it was God's plan from the beginning to reconcile both Jew and Gentile into one group through His Son Jesus.

DOES JESUS STILL HEAL TODAY?

The evidence that Jesus heals today is absolutely overwhelming. There are thousands of recorded testimonies of people receiving sudden, complete, and permanent healings and miracles with no known medical explanation for the cure.

Yet there are some professing Christians who totally deny this. They say that healings and miracles, as well as the power gifts listed in First Corinthians and elsewhere, passed away with the Apostles. They assert this based on an incorrect interpretation of the following Scripture:

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

(1 Corinthians 13:9-11)

The “*complete*” in this passage is interpreted to mean the whole Bible combined. While it is true that God’s Word is complete, this cannot be what is referred to here. Further on in that same portion of Scripture we read:

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

(1 Corinthians 13:12-13)

This clearly says that when “*the complete comes*,” we will see the Lord face to face, instead of “*dimly*,” as is the present case. It also says we shall know all things, “*know fully*,” which is not yet the case. Therefore, these verses must be interpreted to refer to the

Lord's Second Coming and our being gathered to meet Him in the sky. That being the case, the spiritual gifts are still valid gifts today and will remain so until "*the complete comes,*" and we will need them no more. Moreover, if spiritual gifts and ministry gifts passed away with the Apostles, then why does Paul tell the Church to covet them?

Dear reader, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,*" and it is God's very nature and delight to heal. In the Old Testament we read:

If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the disasters that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you.

(Exodus 15:26-27)

And in the New Testament we read of Jesus' very active earthly ministry:

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

(Matthew 4:23)

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

(Matthew 10:1-2)

As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.

(Matthew 10:7-9)

Jesus also commanded the Church to heal the sick after His Ascension. And we have the authority to do this in His Name. He said in the Gospel of Mark:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

(Mark 16:17-19)

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

(John 14:12-15)

In the Epistle of James we learn that God also heals today through believing prayers of other Christians and through the prayers of the elders in the Church. It says:

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess

your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.

(James 5:14-17)

Finally, in both the Old and New Testament we are given one of the most powerful and amazing of all God's promises:

Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?

(Genesis 18:14)

All things can be done for the one who believes.

(Mark 9:23)

For nothing will be impossible with God.

(Luke 1:37)

“*Nothing*” means nothing excluded! These are just a handful of the numerous Old and New Testament examples that God always desires to heal His people from physical pain and suffering. But they suffice to demonstrate that anyone who denies this fact does not do so on the basis of biblical evidence. Perhaps their rejection of this plain truth is to justify the total lack of faith and anointing power in their lives or ministries. For “*which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk?’*”

There is Healing in the Atonement

To say there is healing in the Atonement means that God has shown in His Word that every need of the believer has been met through the Cross. That just as the promise to be forgiven sins is completely sure and can be claimed by faith, so we can claim freedom from sickness also. Is this backed up by Scripture? It certainly is! In the Book of Isaiah we read:

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:4-6)

The Gospel of Matthew gives us an account of the healing that accompanied Jesus' ministry and explains that these things were happening as a fulfilment of the Prophet Isaiah:

This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

(Matthew 8:17)

There are also many other Scriptures that mention the healing of our bodies in conjunction with the forgiveness of our sins. For instance:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.

(Psalm 103:2-4)

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.

(Jeremiah 17:14-15)

The most obvious New Testament example can be found in the Book of Romans. It says:

But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

(Romans 8:10-12)

Some interpret this passage of Scripture to be referring to the resurrection of the physical body at Christ's Second Coming. But it is evident from the context that this is speaking of the here and now.

Earlier in chapter eight of Romans Paul had shown how the Holy Spirit delivers the believer from "*the law of sin and death*" and enables him to fulfil the Law.

Paul now says that although sin has left and leaves its negative effects on the physical body, that same Spirit who delivers us from our spiritual sickness, will deliver us from our physical ills also "*because of righteousness.*" This is why it is imperative for Christians to "*walk after the Spirit*" and not the Flesh. Paul says:

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

(Romans 8:12-15)

Many Christians are not able to receive physical healing because they are not putting “*to death the deeds of the body,*” by reckoning themselves “*dead to sin.*”

Do not be fooled, sin has serious consequences on the physical body (see *1Corinthians 11:29-31*), especially sexual sin, which is why Paul exercised such severe discipline for those practicing it and those tolerating it (see *1Corinthians 5:1-12; 6:18*).

However, when we are walking in obedience to the Holy Spirit, even though sometimes we may fail, He does a mighty work for our bodies as well as for our hearts and minds.

Dear reader, it is appointed for every human being “*to die once,*” but no Christian has to die of sickness.

It is also the testimony of many that when we are walking with the Holy Spirit, and feeding on His Word daily, the power of His Presence will also slow down the aging process.

I wonder if you are familiar with the Principle of Entropy. This Second Law of Thermodynamics states that in a closed system the amount of available, useful energy always decreases.

Energy still exists, but it degrades into useless forms. This means that in any closed system, things will sooner or later run down and burn out.

The Entropy Principle is true in all branches of science. In biology, it means that any living thing will quickly die without the input of food and energy from the outside, and will die in any case as it becomes older and weaker.

Every human being is born captive of this disintegration process. The only way to avoid the bad implications of the Entropy Principle is to seek new energy from outside the system.

God Almighty, who is the source of all power, and who alone remains untouched by the Law of Entropy, provides that power from outside the Cosmos to all who belong to Him.

In the Old Testament we get a glimpse of what it is like when God sustains in this way. In the Book of Deuteronomy and Nehemiah we are told that the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years, and yet their clothes and shoes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. They also had a very simple diet yet did not suffer from malnutrition.

Obviously, God miraculously upheld their bodies and clothing so that they would not wear out and fall apart as the rest of Creation is doing. And we read again from the Book of Deuteronomy that when Moses died “*his sight was unimpaired and his vigour had not abated.*”

The visible Church has been very much subject to a spiritual entropy over the last few decades. And unless she repents of her repentance that needs repenting of, and receives new energy and life from God Himself through revivals and new revelations, she will eventually run down into formality, disorder, and both spiritual and physical death.

“Work Out Your Own” Healing

The physical healing made possible through the Cross of the Lord Jesus is to be received in the same way that forgiveness of sin is received, and in the same way that deliverance from sin is received – by ACTIVE FAITH in God’s Word.

Let me give an example of what we are speaking of and how it would operate in an everyday situation. A believer is told by his doctor that he has cancer. This is a fact because he has seen the medical exams to prove it, and he also feels the symptoms of the cancer all over his body.

However, the facts and the Truth are two different things. The facts show he has cancer, the Truth says that by the stripes of Jesus he is healed. The Christian must choose what to believe. If he puts his faith in the facts, his sickness remains. If he puts his

faith in God's Word, he will be healed. Believing the Truth does not deny the facts, it cancels them!

It is not "seeing is believing" in the Kingdom of God, but the very opposite. Jesus makes this point when He said:

Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "be taken up and thrown into the sea," and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.

So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

(Mark 11:23-25)

First, in this teaching Jesus makes it clear that every believer is to speak with faith to the need or problem himself using the authority He has in Christ; He must not expect the Holy Spirit or any other person to do it for him. Second, he must believe that what he has asked for has already been granted before it can be manifest. Put another way, he has to see it with his spiritual eyes before he can see it with his natural eyes.

Faith Without Action Is Dead

Once this truth has been established, it has to be acted upon. Many Christians seeking deliverance from physical illness and suffering do everything right, but fail on this one important point. They believe God heals, they open their Bible and rebuke the symptoms and quote the appropriate Scripture verses to build up their faith. But time passes and nothing happens. Often the situation gets worse.

What is lacking? Their faith is passive. They have to stop sitting around waiting to be healed, and go about their business as if they had already been healed, independently of how they might feel. It

will take a lot of physical and spiritual strength to do this, but I guarantee you, if you persist without giving up, you will be completely restored!

Just think of what the Ten Lepers in the Gospel of Luke would have missed if they had not understood and put into practice this principle.

Obstacles to Sure Promises

As stated above, the Lord has promised in His Word that every need has been met through Jesus's Cross, and that active faith must be the key that unlocks all His promises. Yet there are other conditions to be met in order to avail of all these blessings; conditions that if neglected will make God's promises of no effect. For instance, unrepentant sin:

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.

(James 5:16-17)

In this Scripture passage something else stands out. There should be confession of sin by those ministering the healing and also by those receiving it. Un-forgiveness can also be a great obstacle:

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

(Mark 11:25)

Notice that this warning on forgiveness follows immediately after Jesus' teaching on moving mountains and receiving anything you ask for in prayer through exercising faith in God.

As we touched on above, doubt that God can and wants to heal can also be another obstacle:

And he did not do many deeds of power there because of their unbelief.

(Matthew 13:58)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

(Hebrews 11:6-7)

Very often when the believer's problem is very serious, their faith can begin to weaken or ebb away. In this case, he would need the prayers of the community and the elders of the Church. He could also seek out someone with the Power Gifts of Healing and Miracles.

The Epistle of James chapter five gives clear instructions to follow for those seeking and ministering healing or deliverance. However, it will only be possible to exercise this authority over sickness and the enemy when one is completely under the authority of the Holy Spirit himself. Jesus could not have exercised the authority He exercised if He had not been completely obedient to the Father's will.

"Yes, yes and No, no"

While there are some Christians that believe God still heals today, they deny there is healing provided in the Atonement. They say God is not obligated to heal everyone. That He is sovereign and therefore heals whom He wants to heal and when and where and how He wants to heal them.

Let us say first that believing the Atonement makes provision for healing as well as for forgiveness of sins does not deny God His sovereignty. Although He has made promises in His Word for His people that are to be received by active faith, He still has the right to make exceptions to His Covenant Promises if He sees fit.

God has a perfect plan and purpose for each of His children; a plan that will bring them great joy and happiness beyond imagination. But because each individual is very unique, His way to bring about His purpose for their lives may vary from person to person.

For example, if you are a very impatient person, He may choose to heal you gradually rather than instantly. Or He may decide that for a period instead of healing or delivering you, it would be better to give you strength to endure. The Apostle James encourages us in this regard:

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

(James 1:2-5)

Was that not what the Lord did with the Apostle Paul? We are not told what Paul's affliction was, but we are told that God denied him deliverance from it, even though deliverance is a promise from God. And we know from Paul's testimony the positive results suffering and affliction produced in his life.

So, yes, there is healing in the Atonement and we should claim it by faith as we do forgiveness and deliverance from sin. But if after meeting all the requirements, our faith should not produce the desired effects immediately, it should not be a cause to doubt God's promises or to give up. God sees the bigger picture. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning.

Trust Him. Never give up. Remember the widow and the unjust judge.

The Truth Will Make You Free and it is Free!!!

In light of these incredible truths that we have examined above and in other parts of this book, you will agree it would be a great day for the Church, and for the glory of the Lord Jesus, if Christians would renounce all the devil's counterfeits and alternative methods of healing, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our spirit, soul and body through the power of the Cross.

Sadly, this is not the case. Some resort to christian science, inner healing, mental healing, hypnotism, and many other forms of occultism to substitute the Lord's work.

Inner healing has become very popular in some Christian circles in these times. Some professing believers say they cannot give themselves completely to Jesus Christ until all their hurts of the past are healed, so off to the therapists they go to dig up the past over and over again.

I believe there are various reasons for this. One, they are waiting to *feel* whole before making any decisions, without knowing they will never feel anything unless they first *believe* the Truth.

The Truth is that if you are truly born again "*everything*" has become new. All those negative feelings of rejection and inferiority, and all those negative emotions of anger, hatred, fear, envy, jealousy, un-forgiveness, and so forth, are done away with. We have already demonstrated this point in previous chapters, so no further clarification is needed.

Another reason why some people keep bringing up certain things from the past is because they have not forgiven the person or persons who have caused their trauma or hurt. But such an unforgiving attitude towards others is actually a sign that their repentance is not really authentic.

True repentance is when we are brought to a realization of the awfulness of our own sin and the incredible mercy Jesus had towards us. Such an awareness should make it easy to be merciful to others. This is the meaning of Jesus' words to His self-righteous dinner host in the Gospel of Luke:

Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven, hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.

(Luke 7:47-48)

However, in saying this, we are not denying that there are things in people's lives which they need to speak about with other people, instead of keeping them bottled up or buried inside. But once this has been done, any offenses should be forgiven and forgotten forever; buried with Christ. This is Jesus' only method for inner healing.

Before closing on the subject, it might help people struggling in this area to know that forgiveness is not a feeling, but an act of the will. Once you decide to do it, the right feeling will follow.

One more reason why I believe some people resort to alternatives to the healing power of the Cross is because they are seeking an excuse to justify some sinful practice that they do not want to abandon, and blaming others soothes their conscience.

Dear friend, once we have received the Truth, let us live by it. Instead of investing energies seeking healing for the soul, let us "lose" the soul. Let us shift the attention from ourselves to Jesus, so that He will "increase" and you "decrease."

Summary of Chapter Seven

One of the greatest mistakes in the Church has been to associate the work of the Cross with the initial forgiveness of sins only. On the Cross Jesus provided for physical and emotional healing as well.

KINGDOMS OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM

The Bible makes it clear that there are only two kingdoms in the spiritual or invisible realm, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and that these two kingdoms are constantly at war with each other. The portion of Scripture that most clearly introduces this conflict and describes its nature is to be found in the Letter to the Ephesians. It says:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything to stand firm.

(Ephesians 6:10-14)

Here we see some interesting points. First, that Satan has a very highly structured and well-organized kingdom with different rulers and sub-rulers responsible for different areas of their territories. The fact that Satan has a very highly organized kingdom can be seen in many other parts of the Bible. In the Gospel of Matthew we read:

He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan casts out

Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?”

(Matthew 12:25-27)

Again, in the Epistle to the Colossians, we are informed there are two domains or kingdoms in the invisible realm:

Giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in who we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Colossians 1:12-15)

The second point we learn from Ephesians chapter six quoted above is that this conflict involves *all* Christians and that every believer has the responsibility to defend himself from the enemy's attacks. Therefore, Paul provides the appropriate spiritual armour for the warfare which he divides into weapons of defence and weapons of attack:

Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

(Ephesians 6:14-19)

So God has given believers all the resources he needs to overcome the evil one. It is significant that Paul says twice in this passage to “*put on*” and “*take up*” “*the whole armour of God.*” He gives us the reason for this:

So that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything to stand firm.

(Ephesians 6:13-14)

Some commentators believe “*that evil day*” is not so much a reference to the Great Tribulation or spiritual warfare in general. Rather, they believe this refers to a particular time when every Christian must confront the forces of evil, when his faith will be violently challenged, and where every kind of opposition and problem will come against him as never before.

Location of the Battleground

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul speaks again of the nature of our spiritual warfare and of the weapons to be used. But he also tells us the battleground where the war is concentrated:

Indeed we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards, for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

(2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

From the words that Paul uses we can see the battlefield is the human mind. The enemy has built strongholds and fortresses in the minds of human beings, and Christians are no exception.

We also learn from this passage that it is the responsibility of every believer to use his spiritual weapons of defence and attack to break down these strongholds in his own mind and in the minds of others, to liberate them and bring them into captivity to the obedience of Christ. In unbelievers, these strongholds resist the Gospel and prevent them from being saved:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

(2 Corinthians 4:3-5)

These strongholds are many in nature and can consist of prejudices, preconceptions and bigotry – religious, racial and denominational. Below we will show how to deal with them.

Being a Good Soldier

Jesus won an entire victory over the entire satanic kingdom by His death on the Cross (see *Colossians 2:13-16*). Now we will see it is God's purpose for this victory to be worked out and demonstrated by the Church. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus says:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus here says that He has taken back everything that Satan stole. He then tells His disciples to go and exercise His authority. Therefore, it is the Church's responsibility and privilege to be active in building the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Obviously, this mandate can only be fully accomplished through preaching the FULL GOSPEL. And we demonstrated throughout this book that the full Gospel includes the forgiveness of sins, healing from sickness and deliverance from bondage.

That is why Jesus continually told His disciples to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons. The Kingdom of God can only be fully realized in the world when *all* the works of the devil are being destroyed.

Having established these facts, before engaging in work for the Kingdom of God, like any soldier in the natural realm, the believer must know the enemy's tactics, the authority he has over the enemy, and how to exercise that authority. Let us examine these briefly one by one.

The Enemy's Tactics

One of the devil's main tactics against believers is to make them feel guilty and afraid over sin. But through the Cross of Jesus, God has dealt with these problems of guilt and fear, both for the past and for the future.

The Lord made complete provision for the past because He "*forgave us all our trespasses.*" And as we saw in chapter one, He can do this without compromising His justice.

He made provision for the future by doing away with the Law of Moses, the “*record*,” or “*written code*,” as a means of obtaining righteousness.

However, as we also stated elsewhere, “living in sin” makes these promises of no effect and gives Satan an inroad into your life to bring destruction. Sadly, instead of repenting, many often blame the devil and other people for the things that are going wrong in their life, which makes them even more vulnerable to demonic oppression and attacks. As Christians, we need to have the attitude of King David:

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

(Psalm 139:23-24)

The Believer's Authority

We read in the Gospel of Luke that when the disciples of Jesus delighted that even the demons submitted to them, He pointed out that this should not be the main reason for their joy. They should rejoice more in the reason *why* they were able exercise power over the enemy.

It is because their names are written in Heaven. In other words, because they belonged to the Kingdom of Light, which is infinitely more powerful than the kingdom of darkness. So if you are a Christian, your name is written in Heaven and you have power over every demonic force that opposes you. Jesus promised:

See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing will hurt you.

(Luke 10:19-20)

You also have the authority to prevent and permit whatever is prevented and permitted in Heaven:

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

(Matthew 18:18)

To bind is to prevent something from happening, to loose is to permit or release something. The word “*whatever*” not only applies exclusively to demonic activity; it can apply to almost anything. Finally, in His Second Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul said the following:

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him.

(2 Corinthians 2:14-15)

“*Always*” and in “*every place*” means there is absolutely no time and no place where we cannot use and share the triumph of Jesus over the kingdom of Satan.

How to Exercise Your Authority

You will have noticed that part of the offensive armour in Ephesians chapter six is the Sword of the Spirit. There is tremendous power in the preached Word of God. When proclaimed to the lost without compromise, it will not return void. It will be like a hammer that will break in pieces every rock that opposes its message. It will bring out into the open the secrets and thoughts of men's minds and hearts.

And on a personal level, the Word of God is the only way you are to answer the enemy. We are not to accuse or bring any accusation against spiritual beings with our own ideas and words (see *Jude 1:8*; *2 Peter 2:10-12*). This was always Jesus' way and it is to be ours too.

Summary of Chapter Eight

In the spiritual realm there are two kingdoms that are constantly at war with each other – the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Through His Cross, Jesus has totally defeated and disarmed the enemy. He has given the Church spiritual weapons to protect themselves from any attack or interference from the powers of darkness and spirituals weapons and authority to advance the Kingdom of God on Earth.

THE FINAL REDEMPTION

So far we have seen that through the Cross of His Beloved Son, God the Father has provided deliverance from all the devastating consequences of Adam's Fall – deliverance from the bondage of sin, guilt, condemnation, physical and emotional sickness, and from demonic attacks and oppression.

Yet the Lord's promises do not finish here. He has also promised His children Eternal Life in His presence forever, and in new tangible and glorified bodies!

Although some of the world's religions teach a resurrection from the dead, they generally mean a spiritual resurrection, which allows the spirit and soul of a person to live on after death, but leaves the body to decay and return to dust never to rise again.

This is not the case with the Christian faith. Both the Old and New Testament speak of a bodily resurrection for the people of God. In the Book of Job we read:

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth; and after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.

(Job 19:25-26)

In both of his Letters to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul assures the believer he is to anticipate life in a new resurrection body with which God is going to clothe His people in the future:

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a

spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

(1 Corinthians 15:42-45)

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made from hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling – if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked.

For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

(2 Corinthians 5:1-6)

The New Testament teaches that this will occur at the Second Advent. We read:

For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever.

(1Thessalonians 4:16-18)

When Jesus comes for His Church, He will bring the believers with Him from Heaven and their body will be raised up incorruptible to be re-joined with the spirit and soul; so the separation that took place at physical death will be forever reversed.

The believers who are still alive when Christ comes will be caught up to meet the resurrected saints in the air and their bodies too will be *transformed* from mortal to immortal:

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery!

We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised in-perishable, and we will be changed.

(1Corinthians 15:50-53)

Dear reader, if you have repented and believe in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, your physical resurrection is guaranteed. You will be a partaker in the “*blessed hope.*” In the Letter to the Ephesians we are told:

In him you also when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

(Ephesians 1:13-15)

The dictionary defines the word *pledge* as money paid in advance as part payment to bind a contract; a token of something to come; a promise or assurance or guarantee. Our salvation has been purchased through the sacrificial payment of Jesus, but it will not be completed until we receive our glorified body and assume our position in Eternity with God.

The Apostle Paul is saying in this Epistle to the Ephesians that until this is a reality, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is our pledge or guarantee that the rest of our salvation is secure and coming.

And we know that Paul's use of the word "*redemption*" is a reference to the redemption of the physical body, because he confirms it in his Letter to the Romans:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

(Romans 8:22-24)

An Illustration from Nature

Most people would say that there is nothing in our natural experience that allows us to grasp the idea of a physical resurrection. To the carnal mind – whose knowledge and logic rests on experience – such an idea would seem foolish. But God says that those who would doubt the resurrection because of that type of logic are the fools. In that same passage from First Corinthians quoted above Paul wrote:

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fools! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

(1Corinthians 15:35-39)

Here Paul draws on nature itself as ample proof that God can bring life from death and change the physical elements of a substance as it pleases Him. Therefore, there is nothing strange in the doctrine

of a physical resurrection, as there are plenty of examples in nature that illustrate the concept.

Conclusion

As we said at the beginning of this chapter, a bodily resurrection is the true goal of the Christian's redemption. It is the true fulfilment of the work of God the Son at Calvary and the future physical Kingdom of God the Father. It is not in terms of the immortal soul or the realm of disembodied spirits. Jesus Christ will come again to restore to life and perfection all that was corrupted and lost through the Fall.

Summary of Chapter Nine

In this final chapter we have revealed that every believer that ever lived is to anticipate life in a new resurrection body with which God is going to clothe His people at the Second Advent.

We also demonstrated how the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is the guarantee, promise and assurance that he will enter into this glorious inheritance.

Dance with me
O Lover of my soul
To the Song of all songs
Romance me
O Lover of my soul
To the Song of all songs
Behold You have come
Over the hills
Upon the mountains
To me You have run
My Beloved
You've captured my heart
With You I will go
You are my love
You are my Fair One
Winter is past
And the springtime has come
Dance with me
O Lover of my soul

Song by Chris DuPre