A wooden cross is positioned in the upper center of the frame, appearing to float on a pond of water. The water is dark blue and shows concentric ripples emanating from the cross. The background is a soft-focus view of the pond's surface, reflecting light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

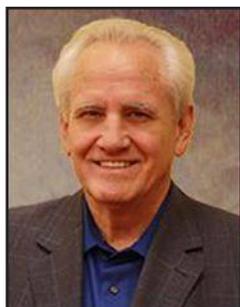
**Behold The Lamb**  
Publications

**Rocks  
in a Pond  
Volume II**

by Leroy Surface

# Rocks in a Pond - II

About twenty five years ago I had a dream from the Lord in which I was throwing rocks into a pond and watching the ripples as they went to the edges. As I threw one rock after the other, engrossed in the “ripples,” the Lord spoke to me, **“If you will say what I say, one day you will throw a rock into a pond, and the ripples will wash up on the shores of every nation.”** I told that dream many times over the years, but there seemed to be no possibility of such a thing happening. In the mean time, I had preached the message of “the cross” and “the blood” for years until a large ministry came preaching a “cross” that does not crucify, and a “blood” that does not sanctify.” I despaired for a time of seeing God’s promise to me fulfilled, until the day I agreed to say everything God says even if I must stand alone to say it. It was at this time, in December 2011, that God opened my eyes to the revelation of **“the rock,”** which Jesus said **“I will build my church upon...”** Matthew 16:18. Peter was the first to put it into words, saying to Jesus, **“Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God”** Matthew 16:16. **“Jesus is the Christ.”** The apostle John understood this revelation when he wrote, **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”** 1 John 5:1. This is “the rock” the Lord gave us to “throw in a pond.” He was faithful even to lead us to “the pond” to throw the rock into.



**Leroy Surface**

In 2015 we set our hearts to spread this gospel message every way possible. Since that time, our outreach has spread into all fifty states and over eighty foreign nations monthly. We have nothing to sell, and only the gospel to give. The testimonies of those who have been made free from the inward struggle with sin through the simple



**Keith Surface**

knowledge of the truth are truly wonderful. They have found the “rest” which Jesus promised to everyone who would come to Him and **“learn of Him”** Matthew 11:28-29.

Our prayer is that those who receive these messages will find in them “the truth,” which Jesus promised to make us free indeed from sin.

# **“Rocks in a Pond”**

## **Volume II**

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# The Proof

Published October, 2016

I received a letter from a minister asking how I could “prove” a child of God is not a sinner and does not continue in sin. Upon consideration, I realized that this is actually the only view of salvation that can be proven, both by scripture and by experience. We live in a day that many are teaching our sins are forgiven “past, present, and future,” even before we commit them, but how do you prove that it is so? Jesus said it is easy to tell someone their sins are forgiven, Mark 2:9 but how would we prove such a thing? Or, how would we prove that Jesus has “taken the penalty” for our sins, or that He has “paid our sin debt?” These views of salvation can never be proven in the lifetime of those who believe them, and it will be too late to change their mind and believe the truth when they stand before God. On the other hand, the gospel the apostles preached is proven both by the scriptures and in the life, heart, and experience of those who believe the truth.

The apostle John wrote many things in his first epistle in order that we could know who are the children of God and who are the children of the wicked one. He wrote as though his words were common knowledge to the believers of his day. For those who do not believe the word of the apostles, what possible proof is there? Is there a greater “proof” than the scriptures? Peter heard a voice from heaven say of Jesus, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* Matthew 17:4-5. What greater proof can there be than a “voice from heaven?” Why then did Peter speak of a *“more sure word of prophecy”* II Peter 1:19, referring to the scriptures of the prophets who *“testified of Jesus?”* John 5:39. Peter accepted *“the prophecy of the scripture”* as greater proof of who Jesus is above what he experienced on the mount of transfiguration.

**I John 3:5-6:** *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...”*

**I John 3:8:** *“He that committeth sin is of the devil...”*

**I John 3:9:** *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...”*

**I John 3:10:** *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil...”*

I spent years arguing against the scriptures shown above, trying to make them fit “my experience” until the Spirit of God sharply rebuked me saying, *“Stop making excuses for what my word says.”* I said, *“I know by experience that the children of God do sin,”* to which God answered, *“You know nothing by experience; you only know by my word.”* I found that if “my experience” contradicted the scripture, my experience was a “lie,” but the scriptures were true. I soon came to the place that I could tell God, *“I do not understand it, my experience denies it, but I will believe it because your word says it.”* Only then could understanding of the scriptures come to me. The person who waits to understand before they believe the scriptures will never understand, and they will never be free.

The “proof” that a person believes on the Son of God is the “eternal life” which is in them. The apostle John tells us “eternal life” can be seen in those who possess it. *“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us”* I John 1:2. The apostles saw “eternal life” manifested in Jesus Christ, and that same “eternal life” could be seen in the apostles, hence the saying, *“we ...show unto you that eternal life.”* A person may say, “I know that I am saved because I believe!” Do you “believe” a child of God is still a sinner? Or do you believe Christ was “manifested to take away our sins?” It does make a difference what you believe. The “proof” of a believer is “evidence” that the world can see in the believer. I am not speaking about “human perfection;” God deliver us from those who think they are “perfect.” I do understand, however, that Christ has *“...by one offering, perfected forever them that are sanctified”* Hebrews 10:14. “Strong's Greek Dictionary” defines “sanctified” as “made holy.” Sin has been taken out of the hearts of those who are sanctified. This is what God calls “perfected.” Their hearts have been *“purified by faith”* Acts 15:8-9. They *“believe the truth”* and *“the truth has made them free”* John 8:31-36 from the sin that held them in bondage.

God does not wait until after a thing has happened to tell us what happened. He tells us of the end from the beginning Isaiah 46:10. Who can read either the 22nd Psalm or the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and not

clearly see the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. God gave the record of His Son hundreds of years before Jesus was born to Mary. Why He suffered and died on the cross cannot be left to speculation. God gave us that record also. Over five hundred years before the event, God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to tell the prophet of the coming of Christ (the messiah). He told Daniel of a four hundred and ninety year period of time, and pinpointed the very year Christ would come in His ministry, which would be only seven years before the end of the prophetic period. God said Christ would come “*to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity,*” and “*to bring in everlasting righteousness*” Daniel 9:24. This is “*the record that God gave of His Son.*” Those who believe Christ accomplished through His death on the cross exactly what God said He would do, enter into rest and the “*glorious liberty of the children of God*” Romans 8:21. Those who refuse to believe the record God gave have “*made God a liar*” and will never be free. That is the choice that is set before us.

# Make America Righteous Again

## (An open letter to President Donald J Trump)

Published January, 2017

Dear Mr. President,

It is not by the will of man that you have been chosen to be our forty-fifth president of the United States of America, but by the will of God. You have been placed as the most powerful man on this earth for a purpose, as you have repeatedly said yourself, to “make America great again.”

The task set before you is impossible if you trust only in human resources, because America can never be “great again” if she is not also “righteous again” with the “righteousness” defined by our creator in the Holy Bible.

During the past thirty years, I have often warned about the five national sins which have destroyed the righteousness of our nation. These five sins, which the scriptures say will bring the great judgment of God upon the nations, are “*idolatry, murders,*

*sorceries, fornications, and thefts.*” They have been in the world since the time of Adam, but when a nation approves them by law and promotes them by example, that nation makes itself an enemy to God.

In America today our government approves and even promotes the worship of other gods while seeking restrictions against those who trust in Jesus Christ.

The “murders” that have been approved and promoted is “abortion,” which has taken the lives of 58,000,000 innocent Americans since it was approved in 1973.

The third of our national sins is labeled as “sorceries” in the scriptures, but actually speaks of our drug culture, which is currently being promoted and legalized from state to state.

Under the heading of “fornication,” we have become morally vulgar as a nation. If a person polluted our drinking waters, they would suffer the severest penalty of our law. If they pollute the air we breathe, they would suffer the same fate, but our courts have given the protection of law to those who pollute the minds of our children, and promote immoral lifestyles in the name of entertainment and education.

Our fifth national sin is “theft,” which does not refer those thieves we have judged, but to those we have protected, whether the politician who has used their position to enrich themselves, or the “preacher” who has done the same. Greed is a horrible national sin.

Shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed by the armies of Babylon, the prophet Isaiah asked this question: *“How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers”* Isaiah 1:21.

God gives the answer a few verses later; ungodly men attained to positions of authority to judge the people. It was their “judgment” that destroyed the righteousness of Jerusalem.

Consider this: In 1963, our Supreme Court ruled against Christian prayer and scripture readings in the public schools.

In 1965, Congress changed the immigration laws in such a way that worshipers of other gods could migrate to America, bringing their “gods” with them.

In 1973, our Supreme Court ruled in favor of “abortion on demand.” Consider that our “Justice Department” in recent years has often protected the immoral and persecuted the righteous. In the meantime, many of our federal courts have often ruled to restrict the rights of Christians and defend the “rights” of those who riot in the streets.

Finally, on June 26, 2015, our Supreme Court denied the definition of marriage which was given to us by God, and redefined it to approve and protect by law the “marriage” between two men or two women. This was the proverbial “straw that broke the camel's back” with God, because five men and women on the court set themselves up above God.

America must be restored to biblical righteousness, and truly become “one nation, under God.” Mr. President, If you will, you can lead the way.

The Bible says Jerusalem was “redeemed by judgment.” God sent the armies of Babylon to totally destroy Jerusalem so the city could be rebuilt in righteousness. In rebuilding Jerusalem, God said, “I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” Isaiah 1:26.

Mr. President, you are president because millions of Christians have looked to God for help from above. Their prayers and contriteness of heart before God have not gone unheeded. Whether you are aware of it or not, it is God who has placed you in the office of president. He has sent you, if you are willing, to be the instrument in His hands to restore America to righteousness.

You have said you will “drain the swamp;” that you will rid our government of the corruption that exists, and tear down the status quo.

Perhaps God almighty, the Father of Jesus Christ, has put it in your heart to do these things. He will be with you IF you will honor Him.

There is a necessary “key” to restoring America, one that God used to restore Jerusalem; He placed righteous judges to judge the people. Consider this as you appoint judges.

You chose a righteous man, whose “trust” is in Jesus Christ, to be your vice-president. There are others such as he, humble but just, and bold in righteousness. Place them in our Supreme Court and in our Federal Courts and the five sins which have destroyed America will be “taken away.” When this happens, America truly will be “great again” because she will be righteous again.

## Forgiven? ...or Free?

Published February, 2017

Why did Christ die on the cross? Was it to “take our punishment?” If so, who was wanting to “punish us?” Perhaps it was to “take the penalty for our sin?” If so, why did He “rise again” on the third day? Does that mean that the penalty for sin is crucifixion and three days in the grave? Did Christ die to “pay our sin debt?” If so, who demanded a debt to be paid? Centuries ago some theorized that Jesus was offered as a payment demanded by Satan for our freedom. Almost everyone today understands the absurdity of that theory, but is it not even more absurd to say God would not “save us” until His “only begotten Son” suffered to pay our debt? Each of these theories I have mentioned contains one common ingredient. Christ “took our punishment,” “suffered the penalty,” or “paid our sin debt,” whichever we may choose to believe, in order that God could “forgive us” for sinning, while leaving us in sin to continue in sin, and perhaps “learn how to sin less” as we “mature in Christ.” That, in retrospect, is the most ridiculous theory of them all. The reality of the gospel of Christ is far different from any of these theories which have been developed during the twenty centuries since Christ died for us. The “truth,” however, is very simply laid out in the scriptures for anyone who will dare to believe what God has said in His word. I ask you to take a short imaginary trip with me into the truly absurd.

A life guard is sitting at his post at the beach. He hears the cries of one who is drowning, “Save me! Save me!” Now this life guard is trained for the purpose of rescuing those who are drowning, but instead of rescuing, he simply picks up his megaphone and shouts

to the victim, “I forgive you.” As the one drowning is going down for the last time, and gives one last gasp for help, the life guard says again, “I forgive you for drowning! You must believe that I have forgiven you,” as the drowning man sinks beneath the waves to rise no more.

You are traveling through a national park, when in the distance you see a family being attacked by a wild lion. They are crying to the game warden who is standing nearby, with everything that is needed to put the lion down. He responds to their cries for help with the same response as the lifeguard, “I forgive you! Just know that you are forgiven,” as he watches the parents and children torn and ravaged by the lion. A little further down the trail, you come upon a scene that further horrifies your sensibilities. A child has fallen over a ledge hundreds of feet above the canyon below. He is clinging to the ledge by his fingertips, and slipping while screaming for someone to save him. Again, for the third time in one day, you hear the same answer given to the desperate child who cannot save himself. “Just believe you are forgiven, and when you die, you will ‘go to heaven’.” If there is no “savior” for these in my analogies, they will all die within minutes. Forgiveness is not what they need; they must have “rescue” and “deliverance,” which is what Christian salvation truly is.

The word “saved” as used in the scripture means “to deliver or protect.” A “savior” that offers forgiveness, but leaves the people in bondage to sin is no savior at all. Did not the angel say *“He shall save his people from their sins”* Matthew 1:21? Our God has always been *“merciful, gracious, and longsuffering”* Exodus 34:6. He has always forgiven those who turn from sin to serve Him Isaiah 55:7. He revealed Himself to Moses as *“...merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty”* Exodus 34:6-7. If God has always forgiven the sins of those who turn to him, Jesus' death had to be about something more than just forgiveness. According to the message God sent to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, Christ's mission was *“...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:24-25.

A translation error of one word used in the scripture has blinded many generations to the simplicity of Christ. Paul wrote *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...”* Ephesians 1:7 Colossians 1:14. The English word *“forgiveness”* was translated from the Greek word *“aphesis,”* which is defined by Strong's Greek dictionary as *“freedom.”* The word *“aphesis”* was translated as *“forgiveness,”* *“remission,”* *“deliverance,”* and *“liberty,”* but in every place it is used it means *“freedom.”* Words have meaning, and if we will believe the words spoken by our Lord and His apostles, we will know that Christ came into the world and died on the cross to make us free from sin. Believe the truth of why Christ suffered and died on the cross, and He will take sin out of your heart and nature, and you will serve Him in *“righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* Romans 14:17.

## Antichrist in the Church

Published March, 2017

Satan is the god of this present evil world II Corinthians 4:4. His strategy has always been to destroy true Christianity by replacing the gospel with his own philosophy and doctrines I Timothy 4:1. In his day, the apostle Paul warned of those who were preaching *“another Jesus, and another gospel”* and the people were receiving *“another spirit”* II Corinthians 11:4. It took three full centuries, but true Christianity died, and the entire world suffered through twelve hundred years of spiritual darkness, with the spirit of antichrist seated as the head of *“the church”* II Thessalonians 2:4.

The reformation of the sixteenth century came as a breath of life and a ray of light to millions who were held captive to a church system that actually believed it *“pleased God”* to torture and execute those who dared to contradict their doctrines, traditions, and dictates. The eighteenth century brought perhaps the greatest missionary movement of all time, which began with an outpouring of the Spirit upon the *“Moravian Brethren”* who expressed the result of their gospel as *“saving faith brings both holiness and happiness.”* Shortly thereafter came the sanctified revival with the Wesley brothers; a

“revival” that began in England and spread across America until the gospel of Christ was preached from sea to sea. At the turn of the twentieth century came the greatest outpouring of the Holy Ghost since the day of Pentecost, a “revival” that swept around the world with great demonstrations of the Spirit and power 1 Corinthians 2:4, and continued for above fifty years until it began to ebb in the late fifties. During the first four centuries after the reformation each revival exceeded the one before it to the extent it seemed we were on a projected path to reach the entire world for Jesus in a very short time. Shortly after mid twentieth century, however, something changed, and during what many believed to be the greatest revival of them all, we lost America and the western world.

I received a vision from the Lord in July, 1969, in which I saw “*another spirit*” come to the churches, pretending to be “*the Holy Ghost*.” I watched as those who received this “other spirit” began to “exalt themselves” instead of Jesus. The apostle Paul warned of this, saying, “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy...*” 1 Timothy 4:1. As a result of the “other gospel” that is being preached, the sin problem in the churches is the same as in the unbelieving world, and the ministers seem to have no answer other than another principle to obey, or another step plan to join, both of which are “another gospel,” and not that which the apostles preached.

The message preached by the apostles Peter Mark 8:29, Paul Acts 17:2-3, and John 1John 5:1, as well as Apollos Acts 18:28 was very simple; “*Jesus is the Christ!*” Every Jew knew the prophecies of “the Christ” long before they heard of Jesus of Nazareth. They understood that He would come as “*the seed of the woman*” Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14 to “*bruise the head of the serpent*” and “*destroy the works of the devil*” 1 John 3:8. Foremost among all the prophecies, they knew “*the Christ*” would come to “*make an end of sins*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” Daniel 9:24-25. The wonderful “good news” of the gospel was simply “*The Christ has come! Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ!*” Those who believed the message received Christ, and as John said, “*...as many as received him, to them gave he power (privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*” John 1:12. Their sin was “*taken away*” 1 John 3:5, out of their

heart Acts 15:8:9 and nature, and God gave them a “*new Spirit*” Ezekiel 36:26, to partake of the divine nature II Peter 1:4, because they were “*born of God*” I John 5:1.

Jesus commissioned His disciples to “preach the gospel” to every person in the entire world. Proclaim to them that “*the Christ has come,*” and “*Jesus is the Christ.*” Jesus said, “*He that believeth...shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.*” The Greek word translated in this verse as “*believeth not*” speaks of a “*disbeliever;*” those who would “*hear the truth*” and refuse to believe it. The word “*saved*” has never meant “*saved from Hell while we continue in sin*” Matthew 1:21. Everything “*the Christ*” came into the world to do, He does in the heart and nature of everyone who knows the truth John 8:31:32. That is what Jesus meant by “*saved.*”

Jesus said those who “*...believeth not shall be damned.*” This is not only “*eternal damnation,*” but those who refuse to believe the truth actually “*damn themselves*” to continually struggle in this life and never be “*free from sin.*” Recent statistics that tell us a majority in the “*church*” regularly watch pornography is proof that the “*church*” has not only lost its way, it has also lost the truth of the gospel of Christ. Those who tell the people their sinful addictions are not “*sin*” but only “*chemical imbalances*” in their brain, must believe in their heart that “*salvation*” could come in the form of another “*pill.*” When churches have their young people lying on the graves of “*departed saints*” to receive “*their anointing,*” we know those “*churches*” do not know either Christ or the Spirit which is of God. Need I say more?

**Jeremiah 50:6:** “*My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.*”

# Unmerited Favor

Published April, 2017

For the first four thousand years of human history, from Adam to Christ, grace was never “unmerited favor.” The first time the word “grace” is used in the scripture says, *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”* Genesis 6:8. The next verse tells why God showed favor to Noah; *“Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God”* verse 9. If God had shown “unmerited favor,” no one would have died in the flood. God “favored” the man who was “righteous” and who “walked with God.” This was only possible because Noah, as Abraham after him, *“believed God.”*

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives a list of men and women in the Old Testament who “believed God” and did great exploits in obedience to God. Each of these were very highly favored by God because they believed God and obeyed his voice Genesis 22:11. The apostle Peter says, *“God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble”* I Peter 5:5. “Unmerited” favor would require God’s blessing upon the proud as well as the humble, and upon the “unbeliever” as well as the “believer.” With these things in mind, where did the idea of “unmerited favor” come from?

The first manifestation of “unmerited favor” was the incarnation, when He who was *“in the beginning with God and was God,”* the creator of all things, became a *“meek and lowly”* man, *“the man, Christ Jesus”* I Timothy 2:5. Over thirty three years before His humiliation on the cross, the eternal Christ *“humiliated Himself”* to become a man Philippians 2:6-7, which is actually spoken of as *“His humiliation”* Acts 8:33. That He who was God became a man to redeem us to God, is *“unmerited favor.”*

The second manifestation of “unmerited favor” is when the man, Christ Jesus, *“...humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* Philippians 2:8. The sufferings and death of Christ were certainly “unmerited favor.” There was nothing about man that Christ should die for us. He *“died for the ungodly”* Romans 5:6; He died for sinners verse 8; and He died for His enemies verse 10. To do such is most definitely “unmerited favor,” but *“Why did Christ die for us?”*

It does not suffice to say Christ died to “take the penalty for our sin.” Where is the verse of scripture that confirms that belief? Neither did Christ die to “take our punishment,” or to “pay our sin debt.” Again, which of the apostles told us such a thing? John the Baptist says He “...*taketh away the sin of the world*” John 1:29. The apostle Paul says “...*He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” Hebrews 9:26. The apostle John says, “...*ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins*” 1 John 3:5, and “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*” verse 8.

The same day sin entered into the world through Adam's disobedience, God promised “*the seed of the woman*” would “*bruise the head of the serpent*” Genesis 3:15. Christ, the creator of heaven and earth, came into the world as “*the seed of the woman,*” who was “*born of a virgin.*” His mission to earth was to “*destroy the devil*” by “*bruising the head of the serpent,*” which He did through His death on the cross Hebrew 2:14. The death of Christ had nothing to do with His being punished, taking a penalty, or paying a debt. His death had everything to do with the destruction of sin and Satan, bringing an ultimate end of the old creation in His death, and bringing in a “*New Creation*” with His resurrection from the dead.

The erroneous belief about “unmerited favor” says we are still sinners, but Jesus gives us a “covering” to hide us from God and take us to heaven when we die. Such thinking is the modern day equivalent of the “*fig leaves*” which Adam and Eve used to hide their nakedness from God. “Unmerited favor” cannot cover sin, because “unmerited favor” offered Christ upon the cross to “*take sin away,*” out of the heart and nature of everyone who believes the truth and trusts in Christ. This is the “*gospel of Christ*” that is “*the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it*” Romans 1:16. Anything less can only leave its believer in a lifetime religious struggle that will at the end leave them in their sins and lost.

The apostle Paul spoke of the righteousness of God, which comes “*by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*” Romans 3:22. “*Unto all*” is unmerited favor because it is offered to everyone through the sacrifice of Christ. “*Upon all that believe*” is NOT “unmerited” favor because only those who believe the gospel of Christ enter into “*this grace*” Romans 5:2 of God's full salvation.

God's unmerited favor was given to us almost two-thousand years ago when he offered Jesus Christ upon a cross to destroy Satan and deliver us from the power and presence of sin. But you will never stand in this "favor" until you believe the truth of the gospel and trust in Christ. *"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"* Ephesians 1:2.

# God's Justice

Published May, 2017

The church of the dark ages believed God's "justice" and God's "wrath" were the same thing. The "fear of death" Hebrews 2:14-15 held millions of people in bondage to a religious system that exercised complete control. Their view of God was that of a tyrant whom they could never please. Before his revelation of *"the just shall live by faith,"* Martin Luther lived a life of mental torment and many self-inflicted sufferings, seeking to please God, which he never succeeded to do. To him, the *"gospel of Christ"* revealed *"the justice of God,"* and God's *"justice"* was about *"penance"* and *"punishment."*

Much has changed in the church during the five hundred years since the reformation, but very little has changed about the view of God. In the eyes of most, He is still a God that cannot be pleased. If that is not the case, why must Jesus "cover us" so God can't see us? Or, why say Jesus "took our penalty" if God was not intent on punishing us? *"Penal substitution"* is based upon the idea that God requires a punishment that we could never endure, so Jesus "endured" it for us. That is a beautiful story, but what if it is wrong? What if *"the justice of God"* were demanding our *"salvation"* instead of *"punishment,"* or *"life"* instead of *"death?"*

On many occasions I have heard well-meaning preachers say, *"You do not want justice from God; you want mercy. If we received justice, we would all be in hell."* The truth of that matter is, however, that God's justice brought salvation unto us. This is opposite of what most believe to be true, so let us see what the scripture says concerning God's justice.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul writes as though he were recording a court trial. We see an “indictment” in the first chapter, and a “prosecution” in the second chapter. In the third chapter we see the “charge to the jury,” the “findings of the court,” and the “guilty verdict,” given in these words: *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty before God**”* Romans 3:19. What were the “findings of the court” that brought a “guilty verdict” against the entire world?

The findings of the court are harsh: *“There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes”* Romans 3:10-18.

With such a verdict being brought against the entire world, surely “justice” would require the absolute destruction and damnation of every person. It is “an open and shut case,” and certainly death is what justice requires. God’s “justice” is somewhat different, however. Paul wrote in verses 21-23, *“But now the righteousness (justice) of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness (justice) of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

In God’s “*judgment of the world*” John 12:31, which took place at Calvary, there is an “extenuating circumstance” which our God took into consideration during his “deliberations: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”*” Romans 5:12. Consider this: All have sinned because all are sinners, but all are sinners because Adam disobeyed God. It is therefore not just if every person should be damned because of one person's sin. If everyone was made to be a sinner because of the first man's disobedience, there must be a second man who would make many righteous. This is the

“sentence” which was handed down by our righteous God and judge of all.

Due to the fact that every person is born in sin, there was no one who could fill the position of the “second man,” to redeem us from sin. For that reason, Christ, the creator, became a man, the “*second man*,” to undo what the first man did. The apostle Paul wrote of this: “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven*” I Corinthians 15:57. Thus, our “creator” became our “savior.” Though He “died as a victim,” He arose from the dead, the “victor” over death, having destroyed sin and Satan for all who will trust in Him.

Paul’s words, “*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*” Romans 5:19, declare for all time, to every person, the justice of our God.

## Intervention

Published June, 2017

On November 9, 2016, the entire world was shocked to learn that Donald J Trump had been elected the 45th president of the United States. When he first announced, I had said he was “unstoppable,” but during the last months of the campaign I had many doubts. I was as surprised as anyone when he did win, but I can say without reservation that God has placed him as our leader, whether for good, or for evil. Early in the campaign, during the heat of the primaries, I preached a sermon titled “*Signs of Tribulation.*” The following is an excerpt from that message.

*“The scripture tells us that if righteousness is in the land, God will give good and godly leaders. But if the people turn away from God, He will give them the “basest of men” to rule over them Daniel 4:17. That's what has happened and that is what will continue to happen. There is a man who is running for the presidency that God may put in office. He is not my choice, but he may be God's choice. He is not a Christian as we understand a Christian to be, but he is a man that God could use either for our good or for our destruction. I see that he could be to America what Nebuchadnezzar was to Jerusalem. It*

*was God who brought Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem because of her idolatry and sins. The heathen king Nebuchadnezzar actually became a friend to the righteous, but a scourge to the nation.”*

When I awoke the morning after the election, I heard the words *“I will restore your judges as at the beginning”* Isaiah 1:26. At that moment I knew for the first time, God had given us this president as an *“intervention”* for the church of Jesus Christ. I wrote a letter to the new president, telling him the secret to making America *“great again”* was to give us righteous judges on the Supreme Court as well as in the hundreds of federal courts across the land, and thus America’s laws could become *“righteous again.”* This is the one thing our president can do. The rest is up to us who believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

God rejected an entire generation of the children of Israel when the *“high priest”* (Aaron) built a golden calf and the people worshiped and glorified it as God Exodus 32:3-4, Romans 1:21-24. The sins that brought the armies of Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and the temple were committed by the priests and elders in the temple Ezekiel 8:3-18. The same sins in the modern church have brought us to the same place today. It is those who should know better who have *“built the golden calf”* for the people to worship, and it is our *“teachers”* who have *“changed the truth of God into a lie”* Romans 1:25, giving us a *“church”* in which 68% of the men and 54% of the pastors (as reported in Charisma) regularly watch pornography, and a nation which absolutely rejects any moral restraints. The candidate who lost the election had publicly stated that under her administration, the *“church”* would have to *“change its thinking.”* Thank God that He did intervene for our sake. Now it is time for the *“church”* to *“...examine itself, whether it is in the faith or not”* II Corinthians 13:5, and rise up out of the failed philosophy of religion to preach the truth of *“Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* I Corinthians 2:2.

Jesus said, *“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* John 8:32. In verses 34-36, He made it clear, He was speaking about *“freedom from sin,”* but the modern church has totally rejected the possibility of such. It is not the world, but the modern theologian who has *“changed the truth of God into a lie”* Romans 1:25, because they *“stagger at the promise of God”* Romans 4:20. Abraham had to believe God when He said Sarah would give birth when she

was ninety years old, even though she had been barren all her life. How dare we believe that Christ, the creator, who became a man to “*make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25, and was manifested to “*take away our sins*” I John 3:5, John 1:29, could not accomplish that which He came into the world to do?

We are told that God is raising up a “company of prophets” for this last day. For those in that number, the first and last thing to remember is, “*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” Revelation 19:10. You can preach the true gospel of Christ, which will make everyone who believes it “*free from sin*” Romans 6:18, 22, to serve God in “*righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*” Romans 14:17-18. Please forget about “calling people out” by their names, addresses, social security numbers etc. Those things at best are discredited gimmicks that made their rounds fifty years ago and were exposed as such. At worst they are operated by spirits of divination such as Paul cast out of the young damsel at Philippi Acts 16:16-18. People know their names and addresses. What they desperately need to know is the “truth” that will “make them free” when they hear and believe it. The “company of prophets” died in shame that day at Mount Carmel. Only Elijah, I Kings 18:21-39 who alone had heard from God, prevailed and turned the nation back to God in that same day.

## Safe in the Fold

*Published July, 2017*

“*Safe were the ninety and nine in the fold, Safe though the night was stormy and cold....*” So begin the words to a beautiful old gospel song about Jesus' parable of the one lost sheep. As I thought on the song, I began to consider what it means to be “safe in the fold.” The parable Jesus gave refers to the lost world, which was “lost” to God when sin entered through the disobedience of Adam. Jesus came “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” Luke 19:10. He gave the conclusion to this parable, saying, “*...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance*” Luke 5:17. Those who are “safe

in the fold” are those who have “repented” and abide “in the fold” where they “*need no repentance.*”

The apostle John told us “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins*” I John 3:5. That's what “salvation” is; Christ came into the world “*to take away our sin.*” The apostle continues, “...and in Him is no sin...” Christ is the dwelling place of the children of God. He is “the fold of the sheep.” John continues, saying, “...and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not” I John 3:5-6. The “sin” that entered the heart and nature of man through Adam was not in Jesus Christ, because He was “*born of God.*” Christ, who is the eternal Word of God and creator of all things, came into the world as “*the seed of a woman*” to destroy the sin that destroyed the world. He does it one person at a time, in those who “*repent and believe the gospel.*” They are “*created in Christ,*” where they will safely abide in “*righteousness, peace and joy...*” Romans 14:17. They are “...as sheep, brought into the fold.”

In the “fold” (Christ) there “is no sin.” It follows, there is no lion, no wolf, no bear, nor anything to hurt or harm the sheep “in the fold (in Christ).” Satan, sin and the Law (of Moses and all religious law) is the enemy of God. Those who don't believe “religious law” is the enemy should hear the apostle Paul: “*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law*” I Corinthians 15:56. Christ the creator came into the world as “*the seed of the woman*” (born of a virgin), to “*bruise the head of the serpent*” Genesis 3:15. He came as “*Immanuel*” (God with us), to “*save His people from their sin*” Matthew 1:21-23. He came as “*The Son of the living God*” to “*destroy the works of the devil*” I John 3:8. He came as “*The Lamb of God,*” to “*take away the sin of the world*” John 1:29. He came as “*The Messiah of the Jews*” to “*make an end of sins*” for whosoever will believe.

There are those who are “self-righteous” and believe they “need no repentance.” These have so perfectly disciplined themselves to the laws of religion that they are seen as “righteous” before men, but not before God. They are “self-righteous” simply because their “righteousness” is of their own works and not of God's works. They have “*washed the outside of the cup*” and call it clean, but the “inside” has never been cleansed. Jesus said, “...*cleanse first that which is within...that the outside...may be clean also*” Matthew 23:26. Only God can wash the inside of man. He does this by the “*blood of*

*Christ*” who died on the cross to “*make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25. The “self-righteous” are not “safe in the fold.”

There are those who believe sin doesn't matter, because (they believe), “our sins are forgiven, past, present, and future.” These also believe they “need no repentance,” because they believe their sins are forgiven before they commit them. Yet others believe we are all sinners, and must sin every day, but if we simply tell God “forgive me” when we sin, it all “goes away.” None of those who believe such things are “safe in the fold,” so, what does it mean to be “safe in the fold.”

For those who “*believe the truth*” and “*trust in Him,*” Christ suffered the horrible death of the cross to “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” Hebrews 9:26, thus “*taking away the sin of the world,*” the “*sin*” that entered through Adam's disobedience Romans 5:19. Those who are “safe in the fold” are “born again” in the likeness of Jesus Christ, who is “*the firstborn among many brethren*” Romans 8:29. They have received with their new birth “*a new heart and a new spirit*” Ezekiel 36:26. They are “*new creatures*” II Corinthians 5:17 in Christ; their “*old man* (creature)” died on the cross with Christ Romans 6:6, and they are “*all new.*” They have “*the mind of Christ*” I Corinthians 2:16, and they are “*partakers of the divine nature*” II Peter 1:4. They are not “gods,” but they are “*...blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...*” Philippians 2:15. Their hearts have been “*purified by faith*” Acts 15:8-9. Sin has been “washed” out of their heart and nature, and they do not sin, because sin is not in them. These are “*safe in the fold.*”

## What do YOU Believe?

Published August, 2017

Jesus did not commission the church to go into all the world and preach “something.” He said “preach the gospel. This “gospel of Christ” is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it Romans 1:16. Sometimes we forget that this is the same gospel Jesus spoke of saying, “*...but he that believeth not shall be damned*” Mark

16:15-16. The question for us is not whether we should preach the gospel, but what is this gospel that has such power both to save and damn based upon whether or not it is believed?

Jesus gave two criteria the gospel we preach must meet: First, it must “...*save everyone who believes it.*” Second, the “*saving nature*” of the gospel we preach must be so absolute that those who refuse it have “*damned themselves*” to eternity without God. It is this second criteria I will address first.

The apostle Paul warned of those even in his day who would preach “*another Jesus*” and “*another gospel*” II Corinthians 11:4. He spoke to the Galatians of those who had “*perverted the gospel of Christ*” Galatians 1:6-7. If anyone came preaching these “*perverted gospels,*” the apostle said, “*Let them be accursed*” Galatians 1:8. By no means did the apostle mean that we should “*curse*” the teachers of strange gospels; to the contrary, they damn themselves in believing a lie, and they increase their damnation by giving it to others. A perverted gospel has no power to “*save,*” but it will “*damn*” everyone who believes it.

Jesus explained the damning nature of rejecting the gospel of Christ. He said “*If ye believe not that I am he (The Christ), ye shall die in your sins*” John 8:24. Those Jesus spoke these words to did believe “*the Christ*” would “*make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25, but their “*faith*” would do nothing for them if they refused to believe “*Jesus is the Christ.*” Their unbelief damned them to a lifelong struggle with sin that they would eventually take with themselves into eternity.

John the Baptist knew by the scripture that Christ would come into the world “*to make an end of sins.*” As quickly as he knew that Jesus is the Son of God, John said of Him, “*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*” John 1:29. The “*sin of the world*” is “*the sin*” that entered into the world through Adam's disobedience. Christ, who was forever “*with God*” and *who “was God”* became a man in order to die, and through His death, “*take away the sin of the world,*” out of the hearts and nature of everyone who believes the truth and trusts in Christ. I BELIEVE THAT GOSPEL! It takes no action to damn anyone, but those who refuse to believe the truth damn themselves to “*die in their sins,*” and be eternally lost.

The first criteria of the gospel we preach must be that it “*saves everyone who believes it*” Mark 16:16. The message of the gospel is such that it is easy to know when a person has been saved. The apostle John said, “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself*” I John 5:10. The Greek word translated “witness” means “evidence.” The “evidence” or “proof” that a person believes is “*in them.*” John tells us “eternal life” can be seen in those who possess it I John 1:2. It is the “proof” that a person “*believes on the Son of God.*”

John makes several incredible and unbelievable statements about the gospel. For example, he wrote, “*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*” I John 3:6; “*He that committeth sin is of the devil*” I John 3:8; and, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*” I John 3:9. John does not present anything he says in his epistle to be “judged” by the reader. It is not given to help us reach a “consensus” as to what he really meant to say. John tells us clearly in the same epistle, “*We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*” I John 4:6. John boldly identifies those who do not believe the gospel he preached as “*unbelievers,*” and damned to die in their sins. Do you believe the apostle John?

A gospel that leaves you in sin can neither save nor damn. It saves no one from their sin, therefore those who reject it are as free as those who believe it. I am an “*unbeliever*” when I hear some say God has forgiven us “*past, present, and future, even before we commit the sin,*” I refuse to believe a gospel that tells me I am “justified,” and nothing has changed. If that makes me an “*unbeliever,*” then I am “*an unbeliever.*” I cannot believe such things because I know what the apostle Paul said: “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” II Corinthians 5:17. The same apostle who said we are “*justified by faith*” said we are “*new creatures.*” Everything has changed, and everything is new.

# The Faith that “Turned the World Upside Down”

Published September, 2017

The apostle John makes a simple statement that explains forever how the early church “*turned the world upside down*” for Christ. He said, “...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*” I John 5:4. What is this faith that has the power to overcome the world? Is the apostle bragging on how much they were able to believe God? Actually, not at all. John revealed what this mighty “faith” is three verses prior when he says, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*” I John 5:1. The faith that overcomes the world is contained in these four simple words: “*Jesus is the Christ!*”

“*Jesus is the Christ*” was the faith of Martha just before Jesus raised her brother Lazarus from the dead. She told Jesus, “*I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” John 11:27. This was also the faith of Peter which Jesus said he received from the Father in heaven: “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” Matthew 16:15. It is a simple message, but it is what the apostles preached everywhere they went. It is the message that “*turned the world upside down*” Acts 17:6 in their generation, and it will do so wherever it is preached in this generation.

Saul of Tarsus was converted to Jesus on the road to Damascus, where his mission was to arrest those Jews who *believed “Jesus is the Christ,”* and bring them back to Jerusalem to stand trial. What could bring about such a powerful conversion? He met Jesus, and instantly knew the truth, that “*Jesus is the Christ.*” Three days later he was filled with the Holy Ghost and immediately began preaching in the synagogues of Damascus that “*Christ is the Son of God*” Acts 9:20, and “...*this (Jesus) is very Christ*” verse 22. Fifteen years later, when he brought the gospel to Thessalonica, Paul was still preaching this same message wherever he went.

On his first visit to Thessalonica, Paul began by preaching “the Christ,” whom every Jew loved and longed for. The Jews had been taught about the coming of “*the Christ (their Messiah)*” continually from their childhood, just as the children of Christians are taught

about Jesus. They knew Christ would destroy the works of the devil John 3:8 by bruising the head of the serpent, and that he would make an end of sins and bring in everlasting righteousness Daniel 9:24-25. Before Paul even hinted the name of Jesus, he took the time to prove from the scriptures of the Old Testament prophets that Christ *“must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.”* After establishing the connection between the promise of *“the Christ”* and the prophecies of His sufferings, he boldly told the Jews in their synagogue, *“This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”* Acts 17:3.

Only a few of the Jews believed, but *“of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few”* Acts 17:4. In only three weeks a great church was established among the Gentiles. The scripture says, however, *“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar”* Acts 17:5. They brought charges before the rulers of the city against a few of the Jews that believed, saying *“...these (Paul and Silas) that have turned the world upside down are come hither also”* Acts 17:6. They *“overcame the world,”* they *“turned it upside down”* simply preaching *“Jesus is the Christ.”*

During the past fifty years there have been those who are called “faith teachers” who have actually destroyed “the faith” of millions of people. They have taught that faith is a *“substance (something tangible);”* that it is a *“power”* within itself; that we should *“have faith in faith;”* that God *“used faith to create the worlds;”* or in some cases that *“faith”* is nothing more than *“positive thinking.”* These teach that a single doubt or negative thought will keep God from doing anything for you. They have brought millions of people into the bondage of their corruption, while they have become rich on the offerings of those who are trying to believe. Their “faith” has destroyed faith.

Faith is simply *“believing God,”* and *“believing God”* is the *“substance”* (what we stand upon) to receive the promise of God, which is the “hope” of every child of God. Our *“hope”* is not for tangible things, but we *“rejoice in hope of the glory of God”* Romans 5:2. To *“believe God”* is to *“believe the record God gave of His Son”* 1 John 5:10, a *“record”* which He gave hundreds of years before Jesus was born to Mary. Christ, the creator, became a man, the “Son of God,”

to “*take away the sin of the world,*” which entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience. Believe the truth, go “*free from sin,*” and live your life in “*righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*”

# What is a Christian?

Published October, 2017

Prior to his conversion, the apostle Paul was a persecutor of the church. He loved his idea of Christ, but hated Jesus whom he believed to be an imposter. It was not until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus that he began to preach that Jesus IS the Christ. This is the reason the disciples began to be called Christians. They believed and preached that Jesus of Nazareth is “*The Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Such was the saving power of the gospel they believed that the apostle John would say, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*” They are “*Christians!*”

A “Christian” is “*born of God.*” As a matter of fact, Jesus said that without this new birth no one could “*enter,*” or even “*see the kingdom of God*” I John 3:5-7. Anyone who has been “born of God” is “born again” with a “*new heart*” and a “*new spirit.*” Ezekiel 36:26. They have, by new birth, “*the mind of Christ*” I Corinthians 2:16, and are “*partakers of the divine nature*” II Peter 1:4.

The apostle gives two more absolute truths about “Christians” (those who are “*born of God*”). First he says, “*Whatsoever (whosoever) is born of God overcometh the world*” I John 5:4. They are “*overcomers,*” not by their “*efforts,*” but because Christ lives within them and “*greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” I John 4:4.

John gives a second absolute truth about a Christian, saying, “*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...*” I John 5:18. A “Christian” is not “*also a sinner.*” They have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ Revelation 1:5.

A “Christian” does not have two natures. That would be what a psychologist would call a “multiple personality disorder.” Our “*old man*” is “*crucified with Christ*” Romans 6:6, and “*the body of sin is destroyed,*” according to the truth of the gospel.

If we believe the surveys concerning the percentages of “Christians” who are also “addicted” to everything from drugs, and alcohol, to sex, pornography, and moral perversion, we lose sight of what it really means to be a “Christian.” The apostle Paul said, *“Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God”* I Corinthians 6:9-10. Many consider this a harsh statement, but Paul continued with the remedy, saying, *“And such WERE some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Those who are *“washed, sanctified, and justified”* are no longer sinners. Christ came into the world *“to make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25, and He did it, through His death on the cross, for everyone who will *“trust in Christ.”* Although sin resides in the heart of a sinner, those whose heart has been *“purified by faith”* Acts 15:9 do not sin because it is impossible to commit a sin that is not in your heart I John 3:9. Christ shed His precious blood to *“purify the heart”* of everyone who will believe the gospel of Christ.

There is no “program” of the church that can take sin out of the heart of anyone, but that is exactly what Christ died to do. He is *“The lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world”* John 1:29, out of the heart, nature, and mind of everyone who believes the gospel. Romans 1:16.

If you are one who struggles continuously with unclean thoughts by day and filthy dreams at night, your answer is not found in something “to do” but in something “to believe.” I know, because I was there at one time. I was not “living in sin,” but sin was rampant in my thought life. I was “a sinner” who was preaching hard against sin, but had no answer. I sought God diligently for the answer, which He gave to me in understanding why Christ shed His blood for us. This was in the spring of 1991.

I was reading the passage: *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* Hebrews 9:13-14. Paul compared the *“blood of Christ”* and the

*“blood of animals.”* He posed the question that if the blood of animals could purify the flesh, *“How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience...?”* I researched the word “conscience” in this verse, and found it to be “the innermost thoughts and imaginations of man.” I wept before God, “That’s my problem!” Weeping turned to rejoicing as the light of truth flooded my heart and soul. I cried to Jesus, *“Thank you for shedding your blood to wash me inside, where I could never wash myself.”* Instantly the filth was gone. It “turned off” exactly as a water faucet is turned off, and I was gloriously free, inside and out.

## The True Report

Published November, 2017

There are six questions that every news report should answer. They are *“Who, what, where, when, why, and how.”* A single verse of scripture answers five of these six questions concerning the death of Jesus Christ, and does so in only seventeen words. Everything we need to know about why Christ died is given in this one verse. Leading up to this powerful verse, the apostle Paul warns us against *“...divers and strange doctrines,”* saying, *“It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats (doctrines), which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”*

Have you believed a doctrine that says you will *“always be a sinner as long as you live?”* That “doctrine” is a self-fulfilling prophecy for those who believe it. As Jesus said, they will *“die in their sins”* John 8:24, and be lost. Why not believe what the scriptures clearly say about sin and salvation and live free from sin for the rest of your life in *“righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost?”* Romans 14:17. The apostle gave us just such a “doctrine” in only seventeen words. If you can believe the message of this verse, you will certainly be *“made free from sin”* Romans 6:18. You will find that Jesus meant exactly what He said, *“My yoke is easy, and my burden is light”*

**Hebrews 13:12:** *“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”*

1. Who? "...Jesus..." Jesus Christ is the subject of this verse.
2. What did Jesus do? "...suffered..." Jesus suffered and died on the cross at Calvary.
3. Where did He suffer and die? "...without the gate..." Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem.
4. When did Jesus suffer and die? This is the only question not answered in this verse, but we know when.
5. Why did Jesus suffer and die? "...that He might sanctify the people..."
6. How did Jesus sanctify the people? "...with His own blood..."

The truth of this passage denies all the "theories" of Jesus dying to pay penalty, punishment, or debt. He died to sanctify the people! Sanctification is not a process you enter after salvation. Jesus accomplished and finished our sanctification upon the cross.

The word "sanctify" used in this verse is properly defined by Strong's Greek Dictionary as "*to make holy.*" Many theologians define the word as "set apart," but that is not what the average man on the street in the apostle's day would have understood. If you want to know the truth about the meaning of words, avoid theological definitions, because the apostles did not speak "theological Greek." For example, if you really want to know what "justified" means, don't ask a theologian; ask an officer of the "U.S. Bureau of Standards and Weights," and he will tell you that the unjust measure must be "made just" to be "justified." Ask a "Certified Public Accountant," and they will tell you "the books must balance" before they are considered "justified."

Concerning sanctification, the "holy vessels" in the Old Testament Temple had to be thoroughly "sanctified" before they could be "covered with clean linen," and "set apart" until needed for service. Christ has "*sanctified the people*" with His own blood. He has "*purified their hearts*" from all sin, and made them fit vessels to be filled with the Spirit of God almighty. The apostle John, writing in his "*Revelation of Jesus Christ*," begins, "*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...*" Revelation 1:5.

Paul, comparing the sacrifices of the old and the new covenants, wrote, "*If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer*

*sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* Hebrews 9:13-14. If the blood of animals could ceremonially cleanse the outer man, how much more does the blood of Christ wash the heart, mind, and conscience, of those who trust in Him?

The apostle continues this thought in the next chapter, *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"* Hebrews 10:4. Pay close attention to the next several verses; *"Wherefore when He cometh into the world..."* This speaks of the incarnation, when Christ received His body in the womb of Mary. *"...He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me..."* Hebrews 10:5. His "body" was prepared to be a sacrifice to *"take away the sin of the world"* John 1:29. *"...I come to do thy will O God..."* Hebrews 10:7. The "will of God" concerning Christ Jesus was that He would suffer and die for us, not to take our "penalty" or "pay our debt," but to *"take away our sin"* I John 3:5. *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* Hebrews 10:10.

## The Coming Reformation

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I thoroughly enjoyed reading the recent article in Charisma by R.T. Kendall concerning the need for another reformation in the church. I was especially blessed because it took me back to an incident in my life almost twenty five years ago. My son Keith and I had been preaching *"freedom from sin"* through the *"cross and blood of Christ"* on television for about two years at the time. One day Eldred Thomas, the owner of channel 22 in Houston at that time, asked me to ride with him to Athens Texas. Along the way, Brother Thomas brought the conversation to the message we were preaching on his station. He said, *"Brother Surface, what you are preaching is 'reformation theology'."* I had no idea what he meant. I responded, *"No, I am not preaching what Luther and Calvin preached."* He

answered, “*I understand that, but if the church ever sees and believes what you are preaching, it will transform the church even more than Martin Luther's reformation.*” I dropped the subject, because I knew what he was saying was far too big a task for me, and it still is. In retrospect, however, there are a few things about the “*reformation*” we should be aware of.

When reading the “*History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*” by Merle D'Aubigne, I wept as I learned of the early years of Martin Luther, and his struggles with inward sin. I identified with him in all he suffered, trying to please God with the monastic lifestyle he submitted to. As a young man, I had fasted more days in a year than I ate for three years straight. I gave over fifty percent of my income to the church and tried to pray three hours a day, trying to “please God” by the things I suffered. I was in my own “dark ages,” and reading the things Luther suffered until he understood “justification by faith” did much to deliver me from the darkness of religion, but it did nothing to deliver me from the bondage of “*inward sin,*” which Luther also struggled with. As I continued reading the history, I became aware that in later years, the Lutheran reformation became more “political” than “spiritual.” Millions of people were delivered from the bondage of a religious/political system that ruled the people with the “*fear of death*” <sup>Hebrews 2:15</sup>, and punished, even to burning at the stake, any who dared to contradict them.

The reformation began when Martin Luther wrote ninety-five “theses” against the practice of selling “indulgences for sin.” In order to raise money to build “St Peter's Basilica” the Pope had decreed that forgiveness for every manner of sin could be purchased with money. It was a cruel system that kept the people in poverty as the Cardinals and the Pope became incredibly rich. Luther's writings on the subject brought swift and fierce action against him from his superiors in the church, and threatened even the loss of his life. His efforts toward reformation made little headway until he received the “*revelation*” of “*justification by faith.*” This doctrine, instead of being “*the truth*” which Jesus said would make the people free from sin, turned out to be “*a truth*” that delivered millions of people from the bondage of the cruel religious system. If the people could be “*justified by faith,*” they had no need to confess their sins to a priest,

or pay money to be forgiven. If every person could go directly to God through Jesus Christ, they did not need any man between them and God. The bonds of fear were broken off the people, and they abandoned the Catholic Church of the dark ages in such numbers they could not be restrained, even by the threat of death. It was wonderful deliverance for the people, but it left them in the same bondage to inward sin as before. Five hundred years later, sixteenth century theology has given us a weak and sin-laden church that fights against the idea that we could ever be free...from sin.

The coming reformation will be spiritual in nature. Multitudes will hear "*the truth*" for the first time, that Christ died to make them "*free from sin*" Romans 6:22. The "*light of the glorious gospel of Christ*" II Corinthians 4:4, will shine into the hearts of many as they hear, in the exact words of the apostles and prophets, the message of "*the Christ;*" who He is, and why He became a man to die on a cross. The "chains" will fall off the prisoners of sin, and they will go out free. Those who "*walk in darkness*" will "*see a great light*" Isaiah 9:2, and those who have lived without hope will "*rejoice in hope*" Romans 5:2.

The reformation of the twenty-first century is coming, and it's already beginning. It will not be spread by the devices of men, nor will it require millions of dollars to send. It will spread around the world quickly simply because it works, and those who receive it cannot be quiet about it. If you know the truth, and Christ has made you "*free from sin*" in your own heart and nature, stand up and say so. Don't be intimidated by those who are blinded to the truth. Preach the truth of the gospel of Christ without fear or favor, and God Himself will stand with you.

I have seen a vast majority of modern day preachers who have come under such bondage to "orthodoxy" that they must continually "twist the scriptures" in order to believe what their teachers have taught. Why not "believe" exactly what the apostles actually said, and make the same stand for the truth that Jesus said will "make you free" from sin? Stand as firm as Luther did at "Worms" in the face of those who hated him, and say with him, "*Here I stand. I can do no other.*" This is the "reformation" that must come to the church in the twenty-first century.

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