

Can a Christian Fall from Grace?

By David Lasseter

This is yet another vital topic to those who wish to spend eternity in heaven, but one about which much disagreement exists in the religious world today. Can a Christian fall from God's grace and face eternity in hell, or will his salvation persevere despite his return to a lifestyle of wickedness. To illustrate the degree of confusion among religious people today regarding this issue, please consider the positions of two different groups within the Baptist church:

Southern Baptist (URL <http://www.utm.edu/martinarea/fbc/bfm/5.html>): "All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Freewill Baptist (URL <http://www.kymtnnet.org/pfwb/pfwb3.html>): "We believe that there are strong grounds to hope that the saved will persevere unto the end, and be saved because of the power of divine grace pledged for their support. We believe that any saved person who has sinned (whether we call him a backslider or sinner), but

has a desire to repent, may do so and be restored to God's favor and fellowship. Since man, however, continues to have free choice, it is possible because of temptations and the weakness of human flesh for him to fall into the practice of sin and to make shipwreck of his faith and be lost."

So different groups within the same denomination disagree on the doctrine of the "Perseverance of the saint." As in our other studies we must ask ourselves whether the Bible is so unclear as to make our understanding of such an important issue impossible. The answer must be no! In 1 Corinthians 14:33 we read, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Let's look to His word and determine whether a Christian is guaranteed salvation no matter what, or is it possible for such a one to be lost.

An understanding of Biblical teachings regarding God's love for man, God's grace, mankind's works and law are necessary to correctly understand the teachings dealing with the Christian's possibility or impossibility of eternal damnation. We'll consider each of these topics in detail. I'll close our study with a review of additional scriptures that deal with our question and a summary.

God's Love

A fundamental misunderstanding of God's love for mankind has been the source of much confusion in the religious world

today. When an English-speaking person uses the word "love" in everyday conversation, the meaning may be as insignificant as one's personal dietary favorite or as profound as the deep emotional connections he feels for his spouse or children. Between these two extremes exist many degrees of "love". This limitation of the English language has found its way into our study of God's word. Nearly always, when one speaks of God's love for mankind, a warm emotional attachment is portrayed. In many ways it is not unexpected that such an attachment would be implied. After all, how could God not have a warm emotional attachment for mankind, seeing His willingness to send Jesus to die on the cross while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8)? However, we must consider whether we are attributing human feelings to God. When we read the word "love" in the scriptures, is it conveying human emotion or something else?

The Greek language was much more specific in its expression of "love". Rather than have a single word that conveys so many different feelings, the Greeks used several words that have very specific meanings. The Greek words translated "love" in the New Testament are:

1. *Phileo*: carries the idea of "tender affection." Several Greek words are combinations of *phileo* with another word:
 - * *Philarguria*: Love of money
 - * *Philadelphia*: Brotherly love
 - * *Philadelphos*: Loving one like a brother
 - * *Philoteknos*: Love one's children

- * *Philandros*: Loving her husband
- * *Philanthropia*: Love of mankind
- * *Philotheos*: Lover of God
- * *Philagathos*: Loving goodness
- * *Philautos*: Loving one's self
- * *Philedonos*: Loving pleasure
- * *Philostorgos*: Loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly
- * *Thelo*: To take delight in, to be fond of doing

2. *Agape* (noun): "Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered."
3. *Agapao*: The verb form of *agape*.
4. *Agapetos*: Beloved

So one can see the complexity of the Greek language when the concept of "love" is being considered. Two of the Greek words listed above, *phileo* and *agape*, are extremely important as we consider God's love for mankind. If the writer is expressing a warm emotional feeling God has for mankind, we should expect to see *phileo* or a derivative of this word being used. Let's consider these two words in more detail.

Phileo: This word is used 25 times in the New Testament. 22 times it is translated "love", the remaining 3 the English word used is "kiss." Only twice is this word used to reference the love God has for man:

1. John 16:27: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."
2. Revelation 3:19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

In each of these verses, God's love is a warm emotional feeling only for those who have obeyed His commandments! In contrast to the way most religious people today consider God's love, it is not a warm emotional feeling for the disobedient. So what Greek word is used to reference God's love for the sinner?

Agape or *Agapao*: These words are used 258 times in the New Testament (a ratio of 10:1 compared to *phileo*). Let's consider a few verses everyone quotes to portray the magnitude of God's love for man:

1. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
2. Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
3. 1 John 3:16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
4. 1 John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

In each of these verses, the Greek word translated "love" is either *agape* or *agapao*! Please consider the significance behind the words used by the NT

writers. When they expressed God's love for disobedient man, they *never* used the word that carries with it the warm emotional feelings we usually think of as "love." Each time, the word used conveys the thought of an unselfish act performed despite the emotional feelings one has for another. Many people today are confused by the apparent contradiction between God's love and His wrath. They say, "God would never send one of His creatures to hell for eternity." The one who makes such a statement does not understand the nature of God's love. When we understand that the love of God led Him to send Jesus to die for our sins *because that was what we needed to have any hope of salvation and not because of His warm feelings for us*, we then can properly understand the relationship between His love and His wrath. Consider these verses:

1. Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
2. Psalm 5:4-6: For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."

In these two passages we see another part of God's nature: There are things He hates. Not only are there *things* He hates, He hates *all workers of iniquity*! He *loathes* (abhors) the bloodthirsty and deceitful

man! These aren't *things*, these are *people*! David tells us that God *hates* people who work iniquity and those who are bloodthirsty and deceitful. Their fate will be to dwell apart from Him, not stand in His sight, and to be destroyed!

Failure to understand the Biblical concept of love has led to much false teaching in the religious world today. Each time *phileo* is used to reference God's feelings toward man it was limited to those who were obedient to His commandments. *Agape* refers to the *attitude* one has toward another. When I determine to do what is best for you regardless of my emotional attachment to you, I have *agape* love for you. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:44 to, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;". Many people stumble over this verse because of their misunderstanding of love as commanded in the Bible. Jesus isn't commanding us to have a warm emotional attachment for our enemies. He is commanding us to have the attitude toward our enemies that we will do what is best for *them* no matter what! This is the love God had for us while we were sinners. His attitude toward us was such that He was willing to send Jesus to die on the cross despite our sinfulness. When we understand God's love for us we understand how God may hate those who work iniquity at the same time He loved them. His love for them was not an emotional attachment. He gave them what they needed to receive forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life in heaven. However, if they refuse to obey His commandments and die in their sinful state His hatred for them will be manifest as pure wrath as they are condemned to an

eternity in hell.

God's Grace

Before we can determine whether a Christian may fall from God's grace, we must understand what God's grace is. Let's begin by examining the Greek words translated "grace" or "gracious."

1. *Charis*: Used 156 times by the NT writers. It has been translated into English using the following words: "grace", "gracious", "acceptable", "benefit", "favour", "gift", "joy", "liberality", "pleasure", "thank", "thanks", and "thankworthy."
2. *Chrestos*: Used 7 times by the NT writers and translated "better", "easy", "good", "goodness", "gracious", and "kind."
3. *Euprepeia*: Used once, translated "grace." Refers to the goodly appearance of a flower that withers under the burning heat of the sun (James 1:11).

As we've seen with other Greek words in our studies so far, the translation into English is complex. We have 17 different English words translated from 3 Greek words. With *chrestos* we have the word used 7 times in the NT, with 6 different English words used to translate it! Only one word ("kind") is used twice in the KJV to translate *chrestos*. With such a complex English rendering of these words we must be very careful to apply them properly as we seek to understand the message the Holy Spirit is sending us through the word of God.

As we begin our quest to understand the grace of God, let's begin by considering

chrestos and how it is used in the New Testament. Let's begin with Luke 6:35. Luke writes, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Beginning with verse 27 of the same chapter Jesus tells us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, turn our other cheek to the one who smites us, give our coat also to the one who takes away our cloak, and to do to others as we would have them do to us. In verses 32-34 Jesus asks us what thank we have if we love those who love us, if we do good to those who do good to us, or if we lend to those from whom we hope to have a return. He then summarizes His teaching with verse 35 noted above. These few verses tell us much about the grace of God. In verse 35, the word translated "good" and "kind" is *chrestos* in the original Greek. In verses 32-34 the word translated "thank" is *charis* in the Greek! Please consider the meaning behind these few verses. Jesus uses the same Greek word translated "grace" elsewhere in the NT when He asks us "What thank have ye?" When Jesus asks us "What thank have ye?", is He saying that our actions will lead to thanksgiving from those who before had hated us? No! While it may be true that some may change their attitude toward us if we behave in such a fashion, many will not. We see example after example of those who had received unbelievable good from Jesus failing to thank Him for His blessings. Once He healed 10 lepers, but only one returned to thank Him for making him whole (Luke 17:11-19). We shouldn't expect any more as we do good to those who hate us. But Jesus tells us that we will be "thanked" by behaving in such a fashion. If our thanks (Greek *charis*)

doesn't come from men, then it must come from God. Jesus tells us of our reward in verse 35. He tells us to love our enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. He then uses the coordinating conjunction "and" twice to tell us of the benefit we will receive. He tells us that our reward shall be great, and that we shall be the children of the Highest. Why will we be the children of the Highest? Because God is characterized by His kindness to those who are unthankful and evil. We are to do good (Greek *chrestos*) to those who do evil toward us, just as God is kind (Greek *chrestos*) to those who are evil. Our fellow man may not thank us for the good we practice, but we are promised that the grace (*charis*) of God will be ours should we act in such a fashion.

But do these words of Jesus apply to everyone who behaves in such a fashion? No! Please note how Jesus starts this passage. In verse 27 He states, "But I say unto you *which hear...*" Those who hear will receive a great reward and will be the children of the Highest. But who are the children of the Highest? We've considered Luke 8:21 in other studies. Jesus tells us, "And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." Please review my study "How is one called by God today?" and consider how one becomes a brother of Jesus. The blessings of a great reward and being the children of the Highest don't come to everyone who may do good to those who hate them. These blessings are promised *only* to those who hear the words of Jesus and are obedient to them. Please review my studies "Who is a Christian?" and "Does God hear a sinner's prayer?" for further information regarding this exceedingly important issue.

In these few short verses recorded

by Luke we learn of two aspects of God's grace. First, He is kind to everyone regardless of his or her obedience or thankfulness. Secondly, however, He has a great reward in store only for those who hear His word and are obedient to it. It is this second form of grace that we will consider in detail in our current study.

We now know that God is kind to those who are evil. What response should his goodness evoke in those who receive His blessings? Please turn to Romans 2:4. Here Paul writes, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Each time "goodness" is used in this verse, the Greek is *chrestos*, the same word translated "kind" in Luke 6:35. Those who experience the goodness of God should be led to repent. Who experiences this goodness of God? *Everyone!* But does everyone repent? No! But if everyone experiences God's goodness that should lead him or her to repent, why do many fail to repent? *Because of their hard heart!* In verse 5 of Romans 2 we read, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;". So those who fail to repent despite receiving many good things from God store up for themselves wrath in the Day of Judgment! But Paul doesn't stop there. He tells us more about the Day of Judgment. Consider verses 6-11: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first,

and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God." Why do many have wrath stored up for them in the Day of Judgment? *Because of their evil deeds!* Paul tells us that God will render judgment to every man *according to his deeds* (verse 6). Those who do evil receive tribulation and anguish. Those who work good receive glory, honor, and peace. Here we see a direct connection between salvation (eternal life, verse 7) and good works. We also see a direct connection between eternal damnation (indignation, wrath, tribulation, anguish; verses 8-9) and evil-doing. Many who teach that it is impossible for a Christian to fall from grace and be lost claim that a Christian who sins falls from a present experience of grace, but not from salvation. Bob Wilkin is one such author, and his essay may be found at <http://www.faithalone.org/news/y1988/88jan1.html>. Mr. Wilkin claims in his essay that those who teach the possibility of eternal damnation for Christians who return to a life of sin "have taken the verses out of context and forced a meaning upon the text which the author never intended." Can one reach the conclusion that deeds do not play a role in our eternal destinies from Romans 2:6-11? Let's review them again briefly. First, Paul states that eternal life awaits those who continue in well doing (verse 7). Next, he states that indignation, wrath, tribulation and anguish await those who do evil (verses 8 and 9). Is this a present experience of wrath, or eternal damnation? From the context of the passage it *must* be eternal damnation. First, we see that wrath is *treasured up* against the day of wrath (verse 5). God's righteous judgment *will be revealed* on this day of wrath (same

verse). Each of these events is *yet to take place!* So those who commit evil are treasuring up for themselves indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish that will be revealed to them on the Day of Judgment. It is certainly true that evil-doing oftentimes results in present day tribulation and wrath, but this *does not* represent the wrath to be revealed to them at the Day of Judgment. From these verses in Romans 2 we know that our eternal destinies are directly related to our deeds while alive on earth. The one who says they are unrelated is the one guilty of taking the verse out of context.

We now know that God's goodness has been given to all men (Luke 6:35, Matthew 5:45) and that His goodness should lead us to repent (Romans 2:4). Many will fail to repent because of their hard heart (Romans 2:5). Those who fail to repent continue to commit evil deeds and store up for themselves wrath to be revealed on the Day of Judgment (Romans 2:8,9). As we continue to seek the answer to our question as to whether a Christian can fall from grace and be lost we must determine whether a Christian can be guilty of evil-doing and of unrepentance. Paul tells us that eternal anguish will come upon *every soul* of man that doeth evil (Romans 2:9), and that there is no respect of persons with God (Romans 2:11). Therefore, if a Christian can be guilty of evil-doing then his eternal fate *must* be damnation, since this fate awaits the soul of *every man* that is guilty of evil-doing. His status as a Christian will not save him from eternal wrath, since God is no respecter of persons. Everyone who commits evil will receive wrath at the Day of Judgment.

Before we consider whether a Christian may return to a life of evil-doing we must understand who is a Christian. I'd

like to review a few points from the study published on my site (taken from the study titled "Who is a Christian?"):

1. Disciples were given the name "Christian." (Acts 11:26)
2. The New Testament gives specific criteria which define a disciple of Christ:
 - * The disciple is not above his master (Matthew 10:24,25)
 - * The disciple continues (remains) in Christ's word (John 8:31,32)
 - * The disciple recognizes nothing as being greater than or of more importance than Christ (Luke 14:26,27)
 - * The disciple bears much fruit for Christ (John 15:1-8)
 - * The disciples of Christ will be known by all because of their love for each other (John 13:34,35)
3. It is possible for a disciple of Christ to go back and stop following Him (John 6:66)
4. Paul warned that leaders of the church would speak perverse things, drawing disciples away unto them (Acts 20:17,30) From these verses we learn who may truthfully be called a Christian (a disciple of Christ), and we learn that a disciple may stop following the Lord. Since a disciple is one who remains in the word of Jesus, is one who has failed to obey His word a disciple? No! Was such a one ever a Christian? No! When a disciple ceases to manifest the characteristics of a disciple, are they still a

disciple? No! Since only disciples may truthfully be called Christians, when a disciple ceases being a disciple do they continue being a Christian? No!

Now we understand who is truly a Christian, and that many people claim this name but do so falsely. We know that the name "Christian" is applied when specific criteria are met, and the name is removed when one who initially met the criteria ceases to do so. But there is another term that is used to describe one who has been obedient to God's commandments: He is a *child of God*. Are the terms "Christian" and "child of God" interchangeable? If they are, then a child of God is a disciple of Christ, and ceases being a child of God when he ceases manifesting the characteristics of a disciple of Christ. Can we find scripture indicating the synonymous nature of the terms "Christian" and "child of God?"

We've already considered in this and in other studies who is a brother of Christ (the one who does the will of God, Matthew 12:50 and Mark 3:35), how one becomes a brother of Christ (who is the Son of God) and therefore a child of God (through adoption by Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:5), and what benefits are available only to the brethren of Christ (joint-heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17). Keeping these facts in mind, let's turn to 1 Peter 1:13,14. Here Peter writes, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:". How did Peter describe those who do not fashion themselves according to their former lusts? He called them *obedient children*! If there are *obedient children*, then there must also be *disobedient children*! Are they both

children? Yes! What might one think would characterize a disobedient child, considering the description of an obedient child used by Peter? *A child of God who fashioned himself after his former lusts*. Are there scriptures that support this conclusion? Turn to Ephesians 5:3-7. Here Paul writes, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them." Paul gives us a list of sins we are to not even have named among us (fornication, all uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting). He then warns us to let no man deceive us with vain (empty) words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the *children of disobedience*. What do these sins remind you of? The former lusts we are commanded by Peter to not fashion ourselves after. Paul tells us that those who commit such things are children of disobedience, and the wrath of God cometh upon them! Considering the context of these few verses in Ephesians what might the vain words be by which Paul warns us others might deceive us? ***Words indicating the absence of wrath coming upon those children of disobedience who commit these sins!*** Can you think of an example of such teaching? Yes! The very topic we're considering in this study. To claim that a child of God is incapable of falling from grace and having God's wrath come upon them are empty words, deceiving millions

of people today!

The passage in Ephesians is not the only passage teaching us of wrath coming upon children of God who are disobedient. Paul writes in Colossians 3:5-8, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." Here again we have Paul telling us of those who are disobedient children of God and what makes them so. They have failed to put to death (mortify) the lusts of the flesh, which we know Peter also taught characterized those who were not obedient children of God. Paul even contrasts those who are obedient children with those who are disobedient in this passage in Colossians. He tells those who are obedient children that they "also walked some time, when ye lived in them." The obedient children put to death the lusts of the flesh and did not fashion themselves after their former lusts. However, the disobedient children returned to their prior way of life and continued to fashion themselves after these lusts.

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1-3, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even

as others." Again he speaks of the children of disobedience. Notice the two groups of people spoken of here: one group has been quickened, *was dead* in trespasses and sins, and *in time past walked* according to the course of this world. This quickened group fulfilled the desires of the flesh in times past. This is the obedient child of God, who has mortified the deeds of the flesh and no longer fashions himself after his former lusts. But what does he say about the children of disobedience? The spirit that used to work in the children of obedience *now works* in the children of disobedience! This is *present tense* for this group of children! This group of children has not mortified the deeds of the flesh and continue to fashion themselves after their fleshly lusts. But they are both children!

In 1 Corinthians 5:11 we read of a *brother* who is a fornicator, covetous, idolater, railer, drunkard, or extortioner. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 we are commanded to withdraw ourselves from every *brother* that walks in a disorderly fashion. And in 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 Paul warns us to note the man which obeys not the word spoken by Paul and to have no company with him. However, we are not to count him as an enemy but admonish him as a *brother*. In each of these passages we see an ongoing familial relationship (brotherhood) with these disobedient children of God. They don't cease being our brethren, but they do cease being an obedient child of God. Such a one is subject to the wrath of God as we learned in Ephesians 5:6. What does Paul teach us in 1 Corinthians 6:9,10? Listen to his words: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? 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." So a brother who is a fornicator, an idolater, an adulterer, is effeminate, who abuses himself with mankind, is a thief, is covetous, is a drunkard, a reviler, or an extortioner will not inherit the kingdom of God! But Paul doesn't limit such disinheritance to those who commit only these sins. He begins his statement with the all-inclusive phrase, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The brother who commits one or more of the sins Paul proceeds to list is unrighteous, but unrighteousness is not limited to these sins. A brother who commits any other form of unrighteousness will also fail to inherit the kingdom of God!

John tells us something else about a disobedient child of God in 1 John 3:10,11. He says, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." Think of what John is telling us! Two things separate a child of God from a child of the devil: working righteousness and loving his brother. So a child of the devil does not work righteousness or he doesn't love his *brother*. But who is his brother? Another child of God! *So one who fails to work righteousness or love his brother is both a child of God and a child of the devil at the same time!!*

As we've seen in several New Testament passages the terms "Christian" and "child of God" are NOT interchangeable. A disciple who fails to manifest the characteristics of a disciple can no longer claim the name Christian, but continues to be a child of God. Such a one

is a disobedient child and is subject to the wrath of God should they die in that state.

What else can we learn about the grace of God? Please turn to Ephesians 2:4-9. Paul writes, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." This is one of the passages most often misrepresented by those who teach that a child of God cannot fall from grace and be lost. We've already considered verses 1-3 in detail. He tells us that those to whom he was writing had been dead in trespasses and sins but quickened by God (verse 1). In verses 2 and 3 he discusses the children of disobedience. Despite the fact that those who were now obedient at one time were disobedient and dead in sins God quickened them together with Christ (verses 4 and 5). It wasn't because of anything they had done that they received this great salvation, but it was by the grace of God (verse 5). They had been raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (verse 6). In the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (verse 7). Paul re-emphasizes the source of their salvation: It wasn't of themselves, but it was by grace through faith and it was the gift of God. Nothing they had done had made them worthy of this gift. If they had done something worthy, then they could boast about it. But

since they hadn't done anything worthy of this gift, they had nothing about which to boast. (verses 8 and 9). In these verses we learn the following about our salvation:

1. We are saved by the grace of God.
2. We can do nothing deserving of salvation.
3. We gain access to God's grace through faith.
4. It is through Christ Jesus that God shows the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us.

But what else can we learn about this faith through which we gain access to the saving grace of God? We know that it comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). So faith, which comes from hearing something other than the word of God, is not faith through which one gains access to the grace of God. Paul warns us of the possibility of believing a lie in 2 Thessalonians 2:11. We also know that faith can be seen by the works performed by the one who has faith. James tells us, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:18-20) So what must we conclude about the faith through which we gain access to God's grace as spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 2? *It is accompanied by works!* It's not enough to simply believe in God. The devils believe and tremble! We've already learned that a disobedient child of God is a child of the devil at the same time. What makes him so? Failure to work righteousness or lack of

love for his brother. James shows us the necessity of works before righteousness will be imputed in chapter 2, verses 21-24. He writes, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." I can never *be* righteous. I can only hope to have God *declare* me righteous. Before He will do so, however, I *must* have faith in Him. But it's not enough to simply believe. To simply believe makes us no better than the devils. Just as righteousness was imputed to Abraham *after* he laid Isaac on the altar and prepared to slay him, good works must accompany our faith before God will declare us righteous. In Ephesians 2 we see that the faith spoken of by Paul *must* be alive, since through it we gain access to the grace of God. According to James, since this faith is alive works must accompany it. But what works accompany this faith through which we gain access to the grace of God? Please turn to Colossians 2:12-13, where we read, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" Does this sound familiar? It should, since it duplicates much of what Paul said in Ephesians 2:1-9. In Colossians 2 Paul reveals to us a work that accompanies the faith through which we gain access to the saving grace of God. In baptism we are raised with Christ through the faith of the

operation of God, who raised Christ from the dead (verse 12). Prior to baptism we were dead in sins (verse 13). But our faith in the operation of God in that He raised Christ from the dead led us to be buried with Christ in baptism (verse 12). Just as Christ was quickened from the dead by the power of God, we are also quickened together with Him, having all our trespasses forgiven (verse 13). Please note the emphasis Paul places on our being quickened *with Christ*. Paul reminds us of our dead state, being in sin (verse 13). Christ also died, and was buried (Romans 6:3-4). In baptism we are buried with Him, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Romans 6:4), we are quickened together with Christ, having our sins forgiven by the Father (Colossians 2:13). Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:6 that those who have been quickened have been *raised up together* with Christ. How can one be raised up together with Christ if one hasn't been buried with Him? One cannot! So just as Abraham's faith required works before God imputed righteousness to him, our faith is dead until we manifest the works necessary to have our faith quickened and receive the gift of salvation the Father offers us by His grace.

In this study of God's grace we have learned:

1. God's goodness has been bestowed upon all, whether good or evil.
2. God's goodness should lead us to repent.
3. Many will not repent because of their hard hearts.
4. Those who fail to repent store up wrath for themselves in the day of judgment, because of their evil deeds.

5. God's wrath awaits all who work evil.
6. Since there is no respect of persons with God, His wrath will fall upon all who work evil, whether a child of His or not.
7. Specific criteria define a disciple of Christ, and therefore a Christian.
8. It is possible for a disciple of Christ (a Christian) to stop manifesting the characteristics of a disciple, and therefore cease being a disciple of His.
9. One who is obedient to God's commandments becomes a brother of Christ and therefore a child of God.
10. A child of God who resumes fashioning himself after his former lusts remains a child of God, but is a disobedient child.
11. The terms "Christian" and "child of God" are not interchangeable, since one may cease being a Christian but not cease being a child of God.
12. A child of God who works unrighteousness or fails to love his brother is also a child of the devil.
13. We are saved by grace through faith.
14. The saving grace of God is different than the goodness he bestows upon all of mankind.
15. Faith without works is dead.
16. Since the faith by which we gain access to the saving grace of God is living, works must accompany it.
17. We are quickened together with Christ if we have been buried with Him in baptism.

Works

What role do good works play in our relationship with God? What role, if any, do they play in our salvation? These are issues commonly debated among sincere religious people today. Some people say that works are essential for one to be saved, while others say that any work at all prior to salvation renders the one wishing to be saved guilty of seeking salvation by the law and not by grace. Are we to believe that the scriptures are so unclear as to render this question without a definitive answer? Let's look to them and find out. As with all of my studies I'll begin by defining the terms we're seeking to understand, look at works in detail as they are spoken of in the scriptures, and use our understanding of the scriptures to answer our question about works.

Definitions

This is a list of the Greek words translated "work" in the KJV. Each word is followed by the part of speech it occupies, the number of times it is used, and the English words used to translate it.

1. *Ergazomai* (verb, 39): work, wrought, do, minister about, forbear working, labour for, labour, commit, trade by, trade
2. *Ergasia* (noun, 6): gain, craft, diligence, work
3. *Ergatees* (noun, 16): labourer, workman, worker
4. *Ergon* (noun, 176): work, deed, doing, labour
5. *Logos* (noun, 330): translated "work" in Romans 9:28.
6. *Pragma* (noun, 11): thing, matter, business, work
7. *Praxis* (noun, 6): deed, work, office
8. *Energeo* (verb, 21): work, show forth (one's) self, wrought, be effectual, effectually work, effectual fervent, work effectually in, be might in, to do
9. *Energia* (noun, 8): working, effectual working, operation, strong
10. *Energema* (noun, 2): operation, working
11. *Katergazomai* (verb, 24): work, do, do deed, to perform, cause, work out, wrought
12. *Poieo* (verb, 579): translated "work" 8 times
13. *Poiema* (noun, 2): thing that is made, workmanship
14. *Ischuo* (verb, 29): translated "work" once (Acts 27:16)
15. *Molis* (adverb, 6): translated "work" once (Acts 27:16)
16. *Sunergeo* (verb, 5): work with, help with, workers together, work together
17. *Sunergos* (adjective, 13): fellowlabourer, helper, fellowhelper, fellowworkers, workfellow, labourer together with, companion in labour
18. *Dunamis* (noun, 120): power, mighty work, strength, miracle, might, virtue, mighty, miscellaneous terms nine times

Whew! How best might one approach the question of works and grace? The task of understanding works appears daunting, with 18 different words translated "works" or something similar. In addition, the words are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Each of these parts of speech is used in a different way to convey the writer's meaning regarding

works. The highlighted words are linked to an on-line English grammar. Should you have any questions regarding these parts of speech, please link to the grammar and review the usage of these words.

I'd like for us to consider the definition of *ergon* before we move on. This noun is used 176 times in the New Testament. It has three principle definitions:

1. business, employment, that which any one is occupied
 - * that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, undertaking
2. any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, or mind
3. an act, deed, thing done: the idea of working is emphasized in opp. to that which is less than work

When one considers the positions of the various religious organizations today, what is a common theme? Works of *any kind* are unnecessary for salvation. Phillip Hopwood comments on Romans 3:20-25 and states, "If Paul hadn't put it so plainly, many of us would have trouble accepting that God reckons us righteous *without any good works*. It is hard to grasp the enormity of God's grace and love. We think we have to contribute something." ("Justification and sanctification-- The role of faith and works in salvation", URL <http://churches.wcg.org/hobart-au/justif.htm>; emphasis mine) In this study on works we will consider the role, if any, works play in salvation. Based on the definition of *ergon* noted above, we will have to show two things to be true before no good work of any kind is required for one to be justified:

1. No physical product or act (that is, physical work such as one might perform with their hands) is required for one to be justified.
2. No mental product or act is required for one to be justified.

Before we address works and salvation, we need to lay much foundation. Please continue with me as we seek to understand works in our relationship with God.

Background

I'd like to begin our study of works by looking at two verses which, I believe, illustrate a source of misunderstanding among religious people today.

1. Romans 3:28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."
2. James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

There are a limited number of possibilities when we encounter writings of two different people that seem to contradict each other:

1. One is right, the other is wrong.
2. Both are wrong.
3. Both are truthful, and our understanding of their message is lacking.

Paul records in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and Jesus in John 17:17 tells us that the word of God is truth. John writes in 1 John 2:21 that no lie is of the truth. We spent quite a bit of time evaluating the scriptures in our study "Why must we use the Bible only?" and have shown that the scriptures

are true. If any passage in the Bible were untrue, then Jesus couldn't claim truth to the entire word of God. Therefore, all scripture must be the word of God and truthful. So Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 appear to contradict each other only because our understanding of their message is incomplete. Let's look in detail at the scriptures recorded by Paul and by James and come to an understanding of the message the Holy Spirit is conveying to us.

Men have gone to great lengths to support their beliefs regarding these two scriptures. Recently I read a book entitled One Book Rightly Divided by a Baptist author, Douglas Stauffer. In his publication he claims that "the book of James does not have direct *doctrinal* application to the Church Age Christian." (p 29, emphasis his). His claim is that the books of Philemon through Revelation apply to a group of people yet to live, the "tribulation saints." (p 28). He bases his entire teaching regarding these books of the New Testament on his belief that the rapture is truly an event to come. I will deal with the rapture in a forthcoming study. But for now, let's consider briefly the contradictions he records within the pages of his book:

1. "The book of Hebrews is written *to the Hebrews* (Jews) covering future events, whereas Paul's epistles are addressed to the Church today." (p 22, emphasis his).
2. "The Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1), made the final atonement (Romans 5:11) and there remains no more necessity to sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:11-12)." (p 21, scriptural quotations his).

Please use your God-given reasoning ability when you encounter any teachings of man

and determine whether they are of the truth or not. The most superficial examination of the two statements from his book quoted above show the fallacy of the doctrine he wishes to promote. It makes you wonder whether he was reading his own writings, or whether he had any type of proofreading to keep him out of trouble! On page 21 he refers to the *present* status of Jesus as *our* High Priest and takes his proof *from the book of Hebrews*. However, **one page later** he tells us that the book of Hebrews is written to a specific group of people **yet to live**, while the writings of Paul are recorded for the Church today! Why does he do this? To support his position that the book of James does not apply to us today (recorded within the same chapter of the book, page 29). Why does he wish to discount the book of James for present-day Christians? Because he cannot continue to preach the impossibility of a child of God falling from grace if the book of James is applicable to us today. James emphasizes the requirement for works before one is justified. He cannot preach his doctrine of justification by grace alone if James is in force today. Therefore he has to devise a way to discount the book of James, and makes the statement noted above regarding the doctrinal applicability of James to present day Christians. John, an inspired writer of several New Testament books, records for us as he closes the book of Revelation (chapter 22, verses 18 and 19): "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." I pray that not one of

my students might be found guilty of adding to or taking away from the word of God as he/she stands before God on the day of judgment. Lets look at Romans 3 and James 2 in detail, to learn the full message of the Holy Spirit to us today.

Justification

Consider again the teachings of Paul and James in the two verses under consideration. Paul states "we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law", while James writes "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." As noted above, both scriptures are true, but our understanding of the message is lacking. What concept is misunderstood, leading to one group teaching that works are unnecessary for salvation, and another that works are necessary? Justification. Once we understand justification, we will understand the message the Holy Spirit is recording for us through the pens of Paul and James.

As you know, in all of my studies I consider the meaning of the Greek words recorded by the writer. Let's do the same for justification. Are these writers using two different words with two different meanings? No. The Greek verb *dikaioo* is used in both verses. As part of our consideration, I'll list the usages of *dikaioo*:

1. To show to be right or righteous.
2. To declare to be righteous; to pronounce righteous:
 - * By man, concerning God
 - * By man, concerning himself
 - * By God, concerning men

Notice the function this word serves in a sentence: it is a verb. A verb expresses "an act, occurrence, or mode of being" of the subject of the sentence (Merriam-Webster's dictionary). Each of these passages agrees as to the subject of the verb: "a man." So, Paul and James are telling us of the act, occurrence, or mode of being of "a man." Let's consider each of these possibilities. Are the writers speaking of an act of the subject ("a man")? That is, does a man justify? No. We read in Romans 3:25-26 "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Here Paul tells us who justifies: it is God, not man. But we learn something else about justification in Romans 3:25-26. Since it is *God* who justifies, the verb *dikaioo* in Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 must reflect a *mode of being* of "a man." A man may either be justified by God, or not be justified by God. If we return to the definition of *dikaioo* noted above we see that the word in each of these passages under consideration deals with God's declaring a man righteous. Since *dikaioo* reflects the mode of being of a man (justified), and God is the one who justifies (declares a man righteous), self-righteousness (to declare ones' own self righteous) is impossible in our relationship with God. Only God can declare a man righteous.

The scriptures list several ways by which man is justified by God. These are:

1. By faith (Romans 5:1)
2. By the blood of Christ (Romans 5:9)

3. By grace (Titus 3:7)

4. By works (James 2:24)

But how do these work together? I think the best example is that of "white light." We all know that light is made up of several different colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). When these 7 colors are combined they produce "white light". If it weren't for these different colors of light we could not experience the different colors we see every day. Your shirt is blue because the pigments in the fabric reflect only the blue portion of light. Your car is red because every other color in the visual spectrum of light is absorbed, reflecting only the red wavelengths. Just as white light is a compilation of 7 different colors, justification is a compilation of several different traits. God is only interested in seeing "white light" (my phrase) being emitted in our lives. Let's assign a color to the various portions of justification: Let's say faith is blue, the blood of Christ is red, grace is green, and works are violet. One person believes we are justified by faith only. When God examines the "light" being emitted by this person, He sees a blue color. This person is not manifesting all the factors necessary for justification and is not declared just by God. His neighbor may believe we are justified by works rather than faith. When God examines him, He sees a violet color. Again, this person is not declared just by God. Only when God sees faith, works, grace, and Jesus' blood all manifest together in one's life will God declare one just. We must not be found guilty of emphasizing one facet of justification at the expense of another. All facets work together to bring one into a right relationship with God.

Since we know that faith and works

complement, not contradict, each other, why do so many people attempt to discount the importance of works? *Because they believe that any works we do in service to God is an attempt to earn salvation.* What does earning something mean? When I typed the phrase "earn salvation" into the Yahoo search window I received a return of "about 28,600" web page matches. Obviously this is a topic of interest among religious web authors. However, as I visited several of these sites I was struck by how they repeatedly denied the possibility of one earning salvation, but failed to truly explain why. The sites I visited used Ephesians 2:8 or Romans 3:28 to prove their point. However, none told me what it means to *earn* something. Let's determine what this phrase means.

Earning

I'm sure most of you have jobs. Each workday you spend a certain amount of time serving your employer. In return for your services, your employer agrees to pay you a certain amount of money or give you a certain quantity of goods (if you work under a barter system). The time you spend working for your employer and the amount he pays you have been agreed upon by both of you. You, as the employee, consider the value of the money you receive to be equal to the value of the work you perform. Your employer also considers the value of your work to be equal to the value of the money he pays you. As a result, you have *earned* the pay you receive for your work. You are entitled to receive the money paid you by your employer. However, should you fail for any reason to give an equal value of work for the money you receive, one of two things has happened:

1. Your employer has given you a gift.
2. You have stolen from your employer.

Oftentimes employers will give employees time off with pay from work. This is a gift given to the employee by the employer. Unfortunately, employees oftentimes fail to give an employer what they pay for. In this circumstance, the employee has stolen whatever money exceeds the value of the work he has rendered.

Please keep this example in mind as we consider whether one may earn salvation. What must be necessary for one to earn salvation? *The value of his service to God must equal the value of the salvation he receives from God.* Is this possible? Please turn to Luke 17:7-10. One of Jesus' apostles made a statement (verse 5), and Jesus responded with a parable. In the parable we read of a master and a servant. The servant has been in the field plowing or feeding cattle (verse 7), in obedience to the commandments of the master (verse 9). When the servant comes in from the field, does the master tell him, "Go and sit down to meat." (verse 7)? No. The master tells the servant to prepare the master's meal, and the servant may eat once the master is finished (verses 8 and 9). He doesn't thank the servant because the servant had done all things he was commanded.

Jesus makes application of this parable in verses 10 and 11. Recall how we spent a good deal of time considering grace as we started this study? Jesus actually uses the noun *charis* in verse 9! Recall how *charis* is translated "grace" 130 times in the New Testament, with 24 of those instances recorded by Paul in the book of Romans (including Romans 4:4, which states "Now

to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."). In Luke 17:9 the NT translators used the word "thank" to translate *charis*. So Jesus tells us that the master doesn't "thank" (which could also be translated "give grace to") the servant simply because he had done everything the master commanded. In His application He tells us the attitude we must have: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (verse 10). Here Jesus shows us the impossibility of our earning our salvation. But why is it impossible? ***Because, even when we have done all that God commands us, our service is still unprofitable to God!*** Since our service will never equal the value of the salvation we receive, it is only because of God's grace and His generous gift that we receive salvation at all. But does this tell us that we are not to work? Absolutely not! On the contrary, Jesus tells us that we are unprofitable servants *even though we have done all those things God commands us!* What attitude should dominate our lives when we consider the gift God is offering us? ***It is our duty to do all He commands us to do!*** Merriam-Webster tells us that duty refers to "obligatory tasks, conduct, service, or functions that arise from one's position." The Greek word translated "duty" is *opheilo* and means "to owe, to be in debt for." So, when we have done all we can do, *we realize we have done it because we owe God, not that He owes us!*

Let's consider verse 9 in light of Jesus' application in verse 10. Jesus tells us that the master doesn't thank the servant because he did all he was commanded. In like manner, when we do all we are commanded, our master (God) doesn't thank

us. Now, let's use "grace" in place of "thank" (which we may accurately do, since the Greek from which each is translated is *charis*). When we exchange "grace" for "thank" we learn that *God doesn't give us grace simply because we have done all we are commanded to do!* But does God withhold grace if we *fail* to do all we are commanded to do?

Does God Withhold Grace?

To answer this question let's consider those to whom God gives grace. In James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 we read that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. The word translated "resist" is *antitassomai* and means, "to range in battle against; to oppose one's self, resist." The word is used in Acts 18:6, where we read of the opposition of the Corinthian Jews to Paul's preaching that Jesus was Christ. A few verses later (verse 12) we read of the ongoing opposition of the Jews to Paul's preaching, to the point they mounted an insurrection against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat! So James and Peter tell us that God is standing in opposition to those *who are proud*. The proverbs writer records for us that "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." (Proverbs 16:5), and "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." (Proverbs 21:4). In 1 John 3:8 we read, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:41 that everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. So the grace we all need to be saved will not be given to those who are proud. Their fate will be everlasting destruction with the devil and his angels.

Since we know grace will be given to those who are humble, has this group of people failed to keep any of God's commandments? If they have, then we know that it is unnecessary to do all we are commanded in order to receive God's saving grace. The Greek word translated "humble" in James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 is *tapeinos*. In addition to "humble" the word is translated "of low degree", "base", "cast down", "of low estate", and "lowly." *Tapeinos* is translated "lowly" in Matthew 11:29, which reads, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." But what does Jesus mean when He says, "and learn of me."? The Greek word *manthano* is translated "learn", and is also used in Ephesians 4:20. To consider the context of this verse, let's consider verses 17-23: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;". Here we see the Gentiles walking in the vanity of their mind, alienated from the life of God. Paul tells the Ephesians, though, that "ye have not so learned Christ". If they have learned Christ, they will have put off corruption according to deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of their minds. What does this tell us about

learning of Jesus? *Those who learn of Him apply what they learn to their lives!*

So in Matthew 11:29, what does Jesus tell us we are to learn of Him? He continues with the phrase, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." Those who learn of Jesus apply his meekness and humility to their lives. Their reward will be to "find rest unto your souls." Here we see the saving grace of God given to those who learn of Jesus and apply His meekness and humility to their lives. Now that we have an example of one who was humble, and whose humility we are to imitate in order to receive the saving grace of God, did this one fail to keep any commandment given Him by God?

Let's turn to John 15:10. Here John records the words of Jesus: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Jesus kept His Father's commandments, and kept *all* of His commandments. But what benefit does one receive by abiding in Jesus' love? Please consider His words as recorded in John 15:13-15: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Consider the significance behind the statements Jesus makes in these 3 verses! First He tells us that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The word "love" in verse 15 is the Greek *agape*, the same word He used in John 15:10. The word translated "friend" is *philos*. Did Jesus lay down His life? Yes! For whom did He lay down His

life? He tells us that there is no greater love (*agape*) than for a man to lay down his life *for his friends*. In verse 14 He tells us who *His* friends are: those who do whatsoever He commands them. ***So Jesus laid down His life for His friends, and His friends are those who do whatsoever He commands them!*** But doesn't Romans 5:8 tell us that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners? It most certainly does! So am I saying that all sinners are Jesus' friends? I am most certainly not! When Jesus died on the cross, what happened? His blood was shed. What does He tell us about His shed blood in Matthew 26:28? "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." So when He died, His blood was shed for the remission of sins. But who receives the remission of sins? In Acts 10:43 we read, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." So whosoever believeth in Jesus shall receive remission of sins. John 16:27 says, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." The Greek word translated "loveth" in this verse is not *agape*, it is *phileo*! So God has a warm emotional attachment (*phileo*) for those who believe that Jesus came from Him. Those who believe in Jesus have remission of sins. *Aphesis*, the word translated "remission" in Acts 10:43, is also translated "forgiveness" elsewhere in the NT. *Aphesis* is derived from *aphiemi*, which is translated "forgive." We read in Matthew 6:15 that it is the Father who forgives sins. Since the Father forgives (remits) the sins of those who believe in Jesus, and He has a warm emotional attachment for those who believe in Jesus, God forgives the sins of those for whom He has a *phileo* type of love. Jesus' blood was shed for those who receive

remission of sins, therefore God has a *phileo* type of love for those for whom Jesus' blood was shed. Jesus' blood was shed at the time of His death, and He died for those whom He calls His friends. Since His friends were the ones for whom He shed His blood, and God has a warm emotional attachment for those for whom Jesus' blood was shed, those who are Jesus' friends are also God's friends. Jesus' friends are those who do whatsoever He has commanded them, and Jesus' friends are also God's friends, therefore *one must do everything commanded them in order to be the friend of Jesus!*

This is of such great importance, I'd like to review the points we made above. Below are those points listed in order, based on the relationship between each we read of in the scriptures:

1. Jesus kept all of His Father's commandments, and abides in His love (*agape*). (John 15:10)
2. Those who keep every commandment of Jesus abide in Jesus' love (*agape*). (John 15:10)
3. Since Jesus abides in the Father's love, and those who keep Jesus' commandments abide in Jesus' love, those who keep Jesus' commandments abide in the Father's love (*agape*).
4. Man has no greater love (*agape*) than to lay down his life for his friends (*philos*). (John 15:13)
5. Jesus laid down His life. (John 10:17-18)
6. Since man has no greater love (*agape*) than to lay down his life for his friends, and Jesus laid down His life, then Jesus laid down His life for His friends.
7. Since Jesus laid down His life for His friends, and man has no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends, then Jesus has no greater love (*agape*) than that He has for His friends (*philos*).
8. Since Jesus' friends (*philos*) abide in His love (*agape*), they also abide in the Father's love.
9. Since those who abide in Jesus' love (*agape*) are those who keep each of His commandments, and Jesus' friends abide in His love (*agape*), Jesus' friends are those who do whatsoever He commands them. (John 15:14)
10. When Jesus laid down His life, His blood was shed.
11. Since Jesus laid down His life for His friends, and His blood was shed when He laid down His life, His blood was shed for His friends.
12. Jesus' blood was shed for the remission (*aphesis*) of sins. (Matthew 26:28)
13. Those who believe in Jesus receive the remission of their sins. (Acts 10:43)
14. Since Jesus' blood was shed for the remission of sins, and those who believe in Jesus receive the remission of sins, Jesus' blood was shed for those who believe in Him.
15. Since Jesus' blood was shed for His friends AND for those who believe in Him, Jesus' friends are those who believe in Him.
16. Since remission of sins is given to those who believe in Jesus, and those who believe in Jesus are His friends, then remission of sins is given to the friends of Jesus.

17. Since the friends of Jesus are those who do whatsoever He commands them, and remission of sins is given to the friends of Jesus, then remission of sins is given to those who do whatsoever Jesus commands them.
18. The Father forgives (*aphiemi*) sins. (Matthew 6:15)
19. Since the Father forgives (*aphiemi*) sins and Jesus' blood was shed for the remission (*aphesis*) of the sins of His friends, the Father forgives the sins of the friends of Jesus.
20. The Father loves (*phileo*) those who believe in Jesus. (John 16:27)
21. Since the Father loves (*phileo*) those who believe in Jesus, and those who believe in Jesus are Jesus' friends, the friends of Jesus are also the friends of the Father.
22. Since Jesus' friends do whatsoever they are commanded, and those who believe in Jesus are His friends, and the friend of Jesus is also a friend of the Father's, then the Father loves (*phileo*) those who do whatsoever they are commanded.
23. Since the Father loves (*phileo*) those who believe in Jesus, and He forgives the sins of those who believe in Jesus, the Father forgives the sins of those whom He loves (*phileo*).
24. Since those who believe in Jesus keep each and every one of His commandments, and the Father forgives those who believe in Jesus, and those who believe in Jesus are loved (*phileo*) by the Father, and the Father forgives those whom He loves, the Father forgives only those who keep each and every commandment of Jesus!

25. Forgiveness of sin is according to the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)
26. Since forgiveness of sin is given by the Father to those who keep each and every commandment of Jesus, and forgiveness of sin is according to God's grace, then grace is given only to those who keep each and every commandment of Jesus!

But what is a commandment of Jesus that we must keep in order to receive the grace of God, which we need for salvation? There are several Greek words translated "commandment". The one used in the verses noted above is *entole*. *Entole* means "an order, command, charge, precept, injunction." The English words are linked to an on-line English dictionary. I'd like for us to consider briefly the definition of "injunction." Merriam-Webster gives this definition: "a writ granted by a court of equity whereby one is required to do or to refrain from doing a specified act." So *entole* carries the idea of something one is *required to do* or to *refrain from doing*. We see the nature of commands as issued by authority in Luke 7:1-10. In this account we read of a centurion whose servant was sick. (verse 2) The servant heard of Jesus and sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Jesus that He would come and heal his servant. (verse 3) The elders did so, and acknowledged the centurion's love for and service to Israel. (verses 4-5) Jesus went with them. As He approached the centurion's house, the man sent friends to Jesus. These friends were to tell Jesus that the centurion was not worthy for Him to enter his house. They were to ask Jesus to "say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." (verses 6-7) Why did he do so? The centurion understood authority. He, too, had soldiers under him who responded to his orders as he gave them. (verse 8) When Jesus heard his

words, He marveled at him and said, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (verse 9) We see in verse 10 that the servant of the centurion was healed as he requested.

The centurion knew that Jesus was given authority. He knew that His orders would be obeyed as He issued them. His faith in Jesus' authority led to the healing of His servant. Jesus tells us today that all power (authority) in heaven and in earth has been given unto Him. (Matthew 28:18). Since He has all authority, he has the power to issue commands and expect them to be obeyed. His servants today, however, have the option to obey or disobey His orders. Those who obey have been promised the gift of God's grace and the forgiveness of sins. Those who disobey have been promised eternal destruction. His commandments are recorded in God's word. His servants are expected to study His word, learn His commandments, and obey them. We have commandments we must follow *prior* to salvation in order to *receive* salvation. These commandments are reviewed in the "first principles" section of my website. Please link to this section should you wish to review these commandments. Since we know we must keep every commandment of Jesus in order to receive the saving grace of God, everything He tells us to do *before* salvation is absolutely essential in order for one to receive salvation. Some will accuse me of "legalism" and attempting to earn salvation by works. If you feel I am teaching that we may earn salvation, please review the study above. We are going to cover "law" in the next section of this study, but at this time consider John's statement in 1 John 3:4. He tells us that "whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Do we sin

today? Most certainly! Romans 3:23 states this fact plainly. Therefore, since we sin today, what must be true? We are under law! What law we are under will be covered in the next section of our study. Please consider the truth to the teachings of the inspired writers and determine to follow each and every commandment of Jesus so that you might receive the saving grace of God.

Applications

From the above evaluation we can learn several important points:

1. Faith without works is dead (James 2:20). Based on the above evaluation the truth in James' writing is easily seen. Since Jesus' friends do all that He commanded, and Jesus' friends are those who believe in Him, then those who believe in Him do all they are commanded to do. Since God's grace is necessary for salvation, and it is by God's grace that we receive forgiveness of sins, and only those who are Jesus' friends are recipients of God's grace, then one must do everything they are commanded to do (i.e. be Jesus' friend) in order to receive forgiveness of sins. One who says they have faith but fail to keep the commandments of Jesus is not His friend, does not believe on Him, is not a friend of God, has not received forgiveness of sins, and is not saved! The "faith" they claim is dead and incapable of accessing the saving grace of God which is necessary for salvation. There is a direct relationship between belief and works.
2. Works without faith are incapable of producing salvation. Hebrews 11:6 states, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God

must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Since those who believe are Jesus' friends, and Jesus' friends are the ones who receive forgiveness of sins from the Father, then those who don't believe are not Jesus' friends and cannot receive forgiveness of sins regardless of how many good works they do.

What else can we learn about works?

In Ephesians 2:8-10 Paul says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Here Paul tells us that salvation is the gift of God and is not of works. But his next statement is that we are created unto good works! This passage in many ways sums up everything we've studied so far. From our study we understand we are saved by grace and not by works, since our works can never equal the value of the salvation we receive from God. We cannot earn salvation, therefore if we receive it we have been given a gift of God. The gift of salvation we receive is found only in Christ Jesus. As Peter told the rulers of Israel in Acts 4:10-12, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Since salvation is found only in Christ Jesus, and the friends of Jesus receive salvation, then the friends of Jesus are in Him. But how

does one get into Christ? Paul tells us in Galatians 3:26-28, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Before baptism one is outside of Christ. It doesn't matter how many good works they've done, how great their "faith" is, or how diligently they've kept themselves from sin. Paul tells us that as many as have been baptized *into* Christ have put Him on! The phrase "into Jesus Christ" is used one other time in the NT: Romans 6:3. Again, Paul directly links one being into Christ with baptism! There is no verse in the NT that teaches any other method by which one enters into Christ other than by baptism! Many verses, however, speak of one being "in Christ." What is the difference between "in" and "into"? The Greek word translated "in" is *en*. *En* is, "a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest. (intermediate between (1519) and (1537))" The "1519" and "1537" mentioned in the above definition refer to the numbers assigned a word by the writers of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. So *en* represents a position intermediate between *eis* (1519) and *ek* (1537). Let's consider these two words as we strive to understand *en*. The writers of the KJV translate *eis* several ways. The dictionary defines *eis* as meaning, "into, unto, to, towards, for, among." *Ek* is defined as, "out of, from, by, away from." So these 3 prepositions tell us the relationship between an object or person and their target (goal) or origin. One who is entering a defined

location is going "into" that location (*eis*). Once they have entered that location, they are included within the limits of that location (*en*). Should they travel outside the limits of the location they are traveling away from it (*ek*). The English dictionary uses the following definition for in: "used as a function word to indicate inclusion, location, or position within limits." Now let's apply our understanding of these words to our relationship with Christ. Until one is included as part of Christ one is not in Christ. Before one may be included as part of Christ one must enter into Christ. The only scriptural method by which one enters into Christ is through baptism. Once one is baptized one is a part of Christ and is now in Christ. One who claims to be in Christ but has not fulfilled the requirements necessary to become part of Him is making a false claim.

I would like to briefly address an unfortunate error contained within the Greek dictionary I reference so often. This error shows us how we must be cautious of any explanation of the scriptures offered by man. Once the definition for *eis* is rendered, you read the following paragraph (pasted in its entirety, no spelling corrections made):

"For" (as used in Acts 2:38 "for the forgiveness...") could have twomeanings. If you saw a poster saying "Jesse James wanted forrobbery", "for" could mean Jesse is wanted so he can commit arobbery, or is wanted because he has committed a robbery. The lattersense is the correct one. So too in this passage, the word "for"signifies an action in the past. Otherwise, it would violate theentire tenor of the NT teaching on salvation by grace and not by works."

Let's turn to Acts 2:38 and see if this verse can be approached the way this uninspired writer suggests. The verse states, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The example the writer used was, "Jesse James wanted for robbery." Let's consider everything mentioned before "for" in these two sentences. In Acts 2:38 we have:

1. Repent
2. And
3. Be baptized
4. Every one of you
5. In the name of Jesus Christ

In the commentators statement we have:

1. Jesse James
2. Wanted

Now we need to consider what follows "for" in each of these statements:

1. Acts 2:38: The remission of sins
2. Commentator: Robbery

In addition to the sentences themselves, we have context. Let's consider the context in which each statement was made:

1. Acts 2:38: On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to a large group of people "from every nation under heaven." (verse 5) Peter preached a scathing sermon, outlining the sins they had committed in crucifying the Son of God. At the conclusion of his sermon they realized their predicament and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we

do?" (verse 37) Peter tells them in verse 38. In verse 41 we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

2. Jesse James: A notorious bank robber, train robber, and murderer who lived in the United States during the mid-1800's. Much effort was expended by law enforcement and the civilian population to stop his criminal activities.

Now let's consider "for" in the light of the phrases which precede this word, follow the word, and the context in which the statements are made. The commentator to the Greek dictionary urges one to apply a past tense meaning to "for". In Acts 2:38, when applying the past tense, "for" would be telling us what the subject of the sentence did in response to something he had already received. In the commentator's statement, "for" tells us why the subject was wanted (i.e. what he had done in the past which resulted in his wanted status). Is it valid to apply the past tense to both statements? I believe we would all agree that the word "for" in the commentator's statement is telling us that Jesse James was wanted for robberies committed in the past. Common sense and context make this clear. However, what necessary conclusions must we draw should we apply the past tense to Acts 2:38?

1. Repentance is unnecessary for the remission of sins.
2. Baptism is unnecessary for the remission of sins.
3. Everyone who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost had his or her sins remitted.

4. The concept behind the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ" carries no meaning when considered along with the remission of sins.

"But why do you say repentance is unnecessary?" some might ask. Because we have that ever-present coordinating conjunction "and", rendering repentance and baptism of equal importance. If baptism is unnecessary before remission is granted, then repentance is unnecessary as well! Just think! If "for" in Acts 2:38 reflects an action of one who has received remission of their sins, they have no need to repent of the sins they've had forgiven. They are free to do what Paul condemns in Romans 6:1-2. Can we support this conclusion by study of other scriptures? Please consider Simon the sorcerer, recorded in Acts 8. Simon witnessed Peter and John granting the ability to perform miracles through the laying on of their hands. Simon wished to have this ability, too. He offered the apostles money if they would give him this ability. Peter soundly rebuked him for this thought. In verse 22 Peter tells him to, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." If our commentator heard Peter's statement he may well say, "But Peter, God doesn't require repentance before granting forgiveness. His grace and goodness are all I require, and He freely gives them to me despite my rebellion against His authority and will." In the account of Simon the sorcerer we see that God DOES NOT grant forgiveness of sins to those who are unrepentant! Since God requires repentance prior to forgiveness, Acts 2:38 can mean nothing other than repentance and baptism are *required* before one can receive remission of sins. Our commentator goes

on to state, "Otherwise, it would violate the entire tenor of the NT teaching on salvation by grace and not by works." After completing this study I pray that you will not succumb to the error contained within this statement. We have shown how one can never earn salvation, but this does not eliminate the need for works in order to be saved.

One final thought as I finish my discussion regarding this false teaching of man. We've already determined that both repentance and baptism must be unnecessary for forgiveness if the commentator's position is correct. What else must be unnecessary? *Belief!* Belief and baptism are given *equal grammatical rank* by Jesus when he uses "and" in Mark 16:16. Hear His words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now, if Peter in Acts 2:38 teaches that repentance and baptism are acts of those who have already had their sins remitted, therefore making them unnecessary in order for one to be forgiven, then Jesus teaches us that belief is just as unnecessary! Imagine such a situation! God had might as well open the gates of heaven to all of mankind. If our commentator is teaching the truth, God has lost all control over who is given eternal salvation. Mankind has absolutely no reason to believe. He is assured salvation! God has forgiven him, even though He has absolutely no faith in Him or His Son. What a ridiculous concept! But it must be true, if Acts 2:38 means what our commentator says it does. If one only applies their God-given reasoning ability and a little logic to the false teachings of man, one will almost certainly be surprised, if not repulsed, by the necessary conclusions that must be drawn.

Summary of Works

The study of works and salvation is an exceedingly important one. In this study my goal was to evaluate works and determine whether they are in any way necessary for salvation. We considered the Greek words translated "work", and looked at *ergon* in detail. We determined that, before no work of any kind would be required for salvation we would have to show We studied Romans 3:28 and James 2:24, taking a complementary rather than contradictory approach to our study. Since justification is the point of misunderstanding among many religious people considering these two verses today, we took a detailed look at justification. We learned from the scriptures how it is God who justifies, and not man. Justification, therefore, is the state of being of a man. Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 tell us what God must see in a man before He will declare him righteous. Many people consider works of any kind being required for salvation renders our salvation earned. We considered the word "earning", and showed how it is impossible for us to earn our salvation since the value of our works will never equal the value of the salvation we receive. One who truly considers and understands the value of salvation will understand it is their duty to do all they are commanded to do, since they owe God an unrepayable debt. He doesn't owe us anything. Once understanding that God does not give grace to those who fail to keep His commandments, we considered the question, "Does God withhold grace." Through an in-depth study of the scriptures we learned that God does withhold grace from those who are disobedient. Since forgiveness of sin is given by the Father to those who keep each and every commandment of Jesus, and forgiveness of sin is according to God's grace, then grace is given only to those who

keep each and every commandment of Jesus! We learned the Greek word *entole* (translated "commandment") carries the idea of something one is *required to do* or to *refrain from doing*. Again we saw the work involved in keeping the commandments of Jesus. Through our evaluation of works we understand that without works faith is dead (James 2:20), and that works without belief will never lead to salvation. We learned that one must be in Christ to receive the gift of salvation, but one can get into Christ only through baptism. So without baptism one has not entered into Christ, and since salvation is found only in Christ then baptism is absolutely essential for salvation. Finally we considered the false teaching so prevalent in the religious world today regarding the preposition *eis*. If *eis* (translated "for") in Acts 2:38 reflects the actions of one who has already received remission of sins then repentance, baptism, and belief are all unnecessary for salvation. "For" in this verse can only refer to something that is required of one before they receive the gift of salvation.

I pray this study on works has been beneficial to you. The word of God contains the answers to every false teaching of man. If we take the time to consider its teachings we will be able always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (1 Peter 3:15).

Law

As we continue our study of the child of God and grace, we must understand the concept of law as taught in the New Testament. Again, this is a source of much confusion in the religious world today. Some turn to Romans 6:14 ("For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are

not under the law, but under grace.") and justify their position that we are not under *any* religious law today. But Paul also states "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:25) So within a matter of a few verses Paul states that we are not under law but under grace, but that he served the law of God with his mind. So, are we under no law whatsoever today, or are we under a different law than the one the nation of Israel received? Let's look to the scriptures and determine the answer.

Definitions

1. *Nomos*: A noun; translated "law" 197 times in the New Testament
2. *Agoraios*: An adjective; translated "law" once in the NT.
3. *Douleuo*: A verb; translated "serve", "be in bondage", "do service"
4. *Doulos*: A noun; translated "servant", "bond", "bondman"
5. *Latreuo*: A verb; translated "serve", "worship", "do the service", "worshipper"
6. *Diakoneo*: A verb; translated "minister unto", "serve", "minister", and 5 other miscellaneous terms.
7. *Hupereteo*: A verb; translated "serve", "minister unto", "minister"
8. *Parabasis*: A noun; translated "transgression", "breaking"
9. *Parabaino*: A verb; translated "transgression", "fall by transgression"
10. *Parabates*: A noun; translated "transgressor", "breaker", "transgress"

11. *Parerchomai*: A verb; translated "transgress" once in the NT (Luke 15:29)
12. *Anomia*: A noun; translated "iniquity", "unrighteousness", "transgression of the law"
13. *Anomos*: An adjective; translated "without law", "transgressor", "wicked", "lawless", "unlawful"

One can see that the concept of "law" and obedience to law is complex. Before we proceed I'd like to list the definition given for *nomos* and the usages behind it:

1. Anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command
 - * of any law whatsoever
 - ◆ a law or rule producing a state approved of God
 - ◆ by the observance of which is approved of God
 - a precept or injunction
 - the rule of action prescribed by reason
 - * of the Mosaic law, and referring, acc. to the context. either to the volume of the law or to its contents
 - * the Christian religion: the law demanding faith, the moral instruction given by Christ, esp. the precept concerning love
 - * the name of the more important part (the Pentateuch), is put for the entire collection of the sacred books of the OT

So what must be true for us to be under no religious law of any kind today?

1. God must have established nothing for us to obey, *and*
2. We must have received no example, custom, or law to obey, *and*
3. God must have given us no commandment with an actual or implied requirement for obedience.

If we can show each of these to be true, then the statement that we are under no religious law of any kind today will be proven true. However, if we can find a commandment, custom, law, or example with an implied or actual requirement for obedience, then we are (by definition) under religious law today.

Law of..

Everyone is familiar with the law of Moses. We've studied the group of people to whom this law was given, and understand this group to be the nation of Israel. We also understand that this law ceased being a valid covenant between God and man at the death of Jesus. Should you wish to review this topic please link to my study on the Old and New Covenants. However, is the law of Moses the only law we find recorded in the scriptures? Let's see if there are any other scriptures which record a "law of.." someone/something other than Moses.

Since we understand the purpose of the OT today is for our learning and not for religious authority I'm going to limit this discussion to the NT. However, there are several scriptures recording a "law of.." in the OT. For example, Leviticus 7:37 records 6 laws: "This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings;". These were all part of the law given to Moses on Sinai, and therefore

were a part of the law of Moses. Each of them was a commandment unto itself, and would have to have been obeyed before an Israelite could be considered faithful to the entire law of Moses. James tells us of the need to keep each part of the law of Moses to be considered faithful in chapter 2, verses 10 and 11 of his letter: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

Now lets turn to the New Testament. In the covenant under which we live today we read of the following laws:

1. The law of Moses (Luke 2:22 among others)
2. The law of the Lord (Luke 2:23, among others)
3. The law of the fathers (Acts 22:3)
4. The law of the Jews (Acts 25:8)
5. The law of works (Romans 3:27)
6. The law of faith (Romans 3:27)
7. The law of a woman's husband (Romans 7:2)
8. The law of God (Romans 7:22)
9. The law of the mind (Romans 7:23)
10. The law of sin (Romans 7:23)
11. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2)
12. The law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
13. The law of righteousness (Romans 9:31)

14. The law of Christ

1	Y
2	Y,N
3	Y
4	Y
5	Y,N
6	Y,N
7	Y,N
8	Y,N
9	Y,N
10	Y,N
11	N
12	Y,N
13	Y,N
14	N
15	Y
16	Y,N
17	Y,N

(Galatians 6:2)

15. The law of a carnal commandment (Hebrews 7:16)

16. The perfect law of liberty (James 1:25)

17. The royal law (James 2:8)

Wow! 17 different laws spoken of in the NT! Recall how Leviticus 7:37 recorded 6 different laws, each of which was a part of the law of Moses? Our next task is to determine whether each of these 17 represent a part of the law of Moses, or are they something different. If they are part of the law of Moses, they don't apply to us today. If they are not, then we must determine their applicability to us today.

I have listed each of the above laws in the table below. In the second column you will find a "Y" or "N". The passages that refer to the law of Moses will have a "Y" in the second column. If a passage does not refer to this covenant, there will be an "N". Some laws may have been part of the law of Moses and have been brought forward to us today by Christ or one of the apostles or prophets who recorded the words of God through the Holy Spirit. If we find such a law, it will have a "Y" and "N" listed after it. Rather than re-type the name of each law, I'll refer to it by its number in the above list:

Passages 1, 3, 4, and 15 refer to the law of Moses and do not apply to us today. Passages 2 and 8 refer to the law of the Lord and of God respectively. Should we find any law to which we are subject today such law is of the Lord, so these two passages are straightforward in their meaning. Passage 7 refers to the relationship between a woman and her husband. Paul shows how this principle was part of the law of Moses when he acknowledges his readers as knowing the law of Moses (Romans 7:1). Jesus applies this teaching to us today when He states in Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." He closes His instructions to His apostles prior to ascending to heaven with the words, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:" (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, each and every commandment He issued during His life on earth applies to us today. Therefore, a woman who marries another while still married to her husband commits adultery (and vice-versa). The meaning of passage 17 is revealed in James 2:8, which says, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:" Jesus commands the same in Matthew 19:19: "Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." So, this passage applies to us today as well.

We need to look at a few of the other passages in more detail, but before we do, what have we learned to this point? ***We are under religious law today!*** Recall what we had to prove before we could claim that we are under no law today: God must have established nothing for us to obey, we must have received no example, custom, or law to obey, and God must have given us no commandment with an actual or implied requirement for obedience. We've already seen how we are commanded not to put away our spouse for any reason other than fornication and how we are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves. The fact we've shown two commandments to be valid for us today means we will be *unable* to show the absence of commandments we must obey. Therefore, we are under a law of God today just as the Jews were prior to the death of Christ.

What was the purpose of the law? In Romans 7:7-12 Paul writes, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." In these verses we learn that the law was not sinful, it was holy. The law made sin known to us ("Nay, I had not know sin, but by the law"). But we learn much about sin in these few verses. Paul tells us that without the law sin was dead! The word

"dead" is *nekros* and means "destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative". Sin was devoid of power without the law. However, once the commandment came, sin revived. ("Revived, Greek *anazao*, "to revive, regain strength and vigour") What did sin do with the power it gained? It took "occasion" by the commandment and "wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." The word translated "occasion" is *aphorme* and means "a place from which a movement or attack is made, a base of operations." Vine's tells us that *aphorme* "was used to denote "a base of operations in war." When the commandment came, sin set up a base of operations in its war against my soul. In a war, armies use various means to attack the enemy. What means does sin use in its war against the soul? Paul states that it "wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." *Katergazomai* is translated "wrought" and means "to perform, accomplish, achieve." *Epithumia* is translated "concupiscence" and means "desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust." So we learn that sin gained its power through the commandment, set up a base of operations in its war against my soul, and attacked me through every type of evil desire and lust. But this sounds like sin came *before* lust! Didn't James say that sin comes *after* lust? Let's read James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." So James tells us that God doesn't tempt me, my lust does. When my lust has "conceived" sin is born, which brings forth death when it is finished. We understand the concept of

physical conception. A sperm and egg join to produce a new life. When my lust and my will join, I conceive sin. This sin brings forth death if unforgiven. But Paul tells us that sin is the *source* of lust. How does something not yet born produce that which is required for its birth? It cannot! Therefore, the sin that produces lust *must* be different than the sin that is conceived after lust has joined with ones will. But what is the difference? The sin mentioned by Paul in Romans 7:8 is a *force* used by Satan in his battle for my soul. This force is lifeless until one is capable of understanding the commandments God has given us. At that point in time, the force of sin gains power and begins its attack against me. The weapons it uses are the lusts that entice me. When my will succumbs to these enticements the *act* of sin has been conceived and I die spiritually ("For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Romans 7:9). But we've already learned that God has given us commandments to obey, and these commandments came before my physical birth. Doesn't this mean that I was born with sin, since Paul states that "when the commandment came...I died.", and the commandment came before my birth? No! Many people misunderstand the difference between the *force* of sin and the *act* of sin. We know that the force of sin is alive, because of the lusts we all experience. Paul tells us that this force is the source of lust. These lusts are the source of the temptations that entice me to sin.

Now, let's turn to Hebrews 4:14-15. Here we read, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not

an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." What do we learn about Jesus in these verses? He was tempted. But where does temptation come from? One's lust. Where does lust come from? The force of sin. So what does this mean about Jesus? *The force of sin was active in His life, just as it is in ours!* Not only did He experience enticements to sin just as we, He experienced them to a much greater degree! The Hebrews writer states that He was tempted in all points as we are! "All" and "we" are plural words! "All" tells us that every temptation man can experience was experienced by Jesus. "We" tells us that each of us experience our own set of temptations, but nobody experiences every temptation known to man. There are things that will tempt me but won't tempt you, and vice versa. Jesus experienced them all! Satan was working "overtime" in his efforts to entice Jesus to sin, but failed in his efforts. Jesus lived under the law of Moses, which was given centuries before His birth. However, he didn't sin. He had the force of sin working "overtime" to entice Him to sin, but he didn't allow His will to join with His lust to produce sin (the act). Today, one must be able to understand the commandment before one can willfully disobey it. Prior to the age of accountability the force of sin is powerless. Once one is able to understand the commandment the force of sin revives, attacks through lust, and we die when our will succumbs to the enticement. Infants are sinless (in both senses of the word)!

Let's return to our study of law today. Paul mentions 7 different laws in the book of Romans (other than the ones we've reviewed in the above paragraph). We need to understand what he means by the laws of

works, faith, the mind, the flesh, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, of sin and death, and of righteousness. These laws are widely misunderstood in the religious world today. This fact doesn't mean they are beyond our understanding, however.

Let's begin with Romans 3:23-27 (numbers 5 and 6 in our list). Here Paul says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Paul asks a question about two different laws: one of works, another of faith. He asks, "Where is boasting then?" ("boasting", Greek *kauchesis*, "the act of glorying") He tells us the answer: it is excluded. ("excluded", Greek *ekkleio*, "to shut out") So boasting is shut out, but why? *Because it is God who justifies, and He only justifies those who believe in Jesus!* (verse 26) I cannot do anything of sufficient good to justify myself. This is the law of works spoken of by Paul. If works were able to justify, then boasting would not be shut out. The law of faith eliminates my glorying in good works. But does the fact that I cannot justify myself before God through the works I do eliminate the need for works? **No!!** Recall our study of justification. We must manifest faith, works, the grace of God, and the blood of Christ to be declared just by God. To fail to manifest the good works we are commanded to perform renders one unjust

before God. So what does this tell us about works? *We must have the right attitude about them!* They are necessary, but we cannot boast because of them. I cannot proudly proclaim to God, "Look at all the good I've done!" I can only approach Him with the attitude of the unprofitable servant spoken of by Jesus in Luke 17:10. So we now understand that we are not to live by the law of works (that is, to have the attitude regarding works that I can be made just before God solely because of the good I do), but by the law of faith (that is, having faith in the Son of God, which leads me to obedience by which I come into contact with His blood, receive the grace of God, and manifest works with the proper attitude of my unworthiness).

Next, let's consider Romans 7:23 (numbers 9 and 10). Here Paul records, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Our members and our mind are at war with one another, each abiding by a different law. Our members (our flesh, verse 25) are subject to the law of sin, but the mind is to be subject to the law of God (Romans 7:25). ("mind", Greek *nous*, "the intellectual faculty, the understanding"; flesh, Greek *sarx*, "the animal nature with cravings which incite to sin") The mind is part of the fleshly being, and is held captive by it. However, the mind does not have to be controlled by the flesh. Remember, the mind and the flesh are at war. In this war the flesh has captured the mind. The mind, however, is still capable of resisting the flesh. Think of a prisoner of war today. The army of country A captures a soldier of country B. His physical body is in the control of the enemy. He can do one of two things: He can resist the attempts of the enemy to bring

his mind under their control, or he can submit his mind to their influence. *No matter what the enemy does to him, he still has control of his mind!* This is true of us in our war with Satan. Satan controls the flesh, but not the mind. The only way Satan gains control of my mind is through my submission to the law of sin, to which my fleshly members are subject. Since the submission of my mind to sin is a voluntary act, I fully deserve the punishment God has in store for me should I so succumb to my fleshly desires. We oftentimes (I would say we nearly always) fail to appreciate the power of the mind. Yes, the battle with sin is furious. But my mind is fully capable of serving the law of God. Not to do so is a willful act and will be grievously punished. So in Romans 7:23 we learn that our flesh is subject to the law of sin, but the mind is to resist our fleshly lusts and serve the law of God.

But is the ability of the mind to serve the law of God something it is capable of doing alone? No! Recall Paul's words in Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Romans 6:23 tells us the fate each one of us deserves: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." So each one who has reached the "age of accountability" (the age at which point one understands the difference between right and wrong) has chosen to do wrong. This choice makes one's mind more than a prisoner--it has ceased serving God and is now a servant of Satan. But how does one free one's mind from Satan's service and return to serving the law of God? Paul tells us in the first few verses of Romans 8. Listen to his words in verses 1 and 2: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which 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 hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The Greek word *katakrima* is translated "condemnation" and means "damnatory sentence." In the English language today when we speak of a "condemned man" we understand him to be one who has received the death sentence for a certain crime. We occasionally hear of a condemned man having his sentence commuted. But Paul tells us that the sentence of death for those in Christ Jesus has gone far beyond commutation: The one condemned no longer has any penalty at all to pay! There is *no condemnation* for such a one. His penalty has been paid for him! Paul tells us in Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Greek word *lutroo* is translated redeem and means, "to redeem, liberate by payment of ransom." So one who is in Christ Jesus and walks after the Spirit has had his ransom paid by Jesus and is no longer under condemnation. Here we see two different laws in effect, one leading to death and the other resulting in payment of one's ransom. Those who have never entered into Christ Jesus, or who have entered into Him and have returned to walking after the flesh, are servants of Satan and subject to the law of sin and death. However, those who have entered into Christ Jesus and walk after the Spirit have had their ransom paid and have been freed from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

What has happened to the mind of one who has been freed from the law of sin and death? It has been renewed! In chapter 12 of Romans Paul tells us much more about this renewed mind. Verses 1 and 2

say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The renewed mind controls the flesh (the body), which is to be presented a living sacrifice to God. One who continues to satisfy the lusts of the flesh is conformed to the world. However, we are not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Greek word *metamorphoo* is translated "transformed." The English word "metamorphosis" is derived from *metamorphoo*. Recall what happens to a caterpillar as it undergoes metamorphosis: It becomes something entirely different than it was. In like fashion one who has been transformed by the renewing of the mind becomes something entirely different than they were. Paul gives us examples of this transformation in the following several verses of Romans 12:

1. One with a renewed mind does not think of himself more highly than he ought, but thinks soberly. (Soberly, Greek *sophroneo*, "to put a moderate estimate upon one's self") (verses 3-8)
2. One with a renewed mind manifests sincere, unpretentious love. (Dissimulation, Greek *anupokritos*, "unfeigned, undisguised, sincere") (verse 9)
3. Abhors that which is evil. (Abhor, Greek *apostugeo*, "to dislike, abhor, have a horror of") (verse 9)
4. Cleaves to that which is good. (Cleave, Greek *kollao*, "to glue, to glue together, cement, fasten together") (verse 9)
5. Is kindly affectioned to others. (Kindly affectioned, Greek *philostorgos*, "loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly") (verse 10)
6. Prefers others in honour. (Preferring, Greek *proegeomai*, "to go before and show the way, to go before and lead, to go before as a leader"; Honour, Greek *time*, "deference, reverence") (verse 10) Paul tells us in this verse that the one with a renewed mind is a leader in showing deference to others. He doesn't wait for another to show honour to him before showing honour to another.
7. Isn't sluggish in accomplishing anything ("Not slothful in business"). (Slothful, Greek *okneros*, "sluggish, slothful, backward"; business, Greek *spoude*, "earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything") (verse 11)
8. Is boiling hot in spirit. (Fervent, Greek *zeo*, "to boil with heat, be hot") (verse 11)
9. Is a slave to the Lord. (Serving, Greek *douleuo*, "to be a slave, serve, do service") (verse 11)
10. Rejoices in his hope of eternal salvation. (Rejoicing, Greek *chairo*, "to rejoice, be glad"; hope, Greek *elpis*, "joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation") (verse 12)
11. Does not lose his faith in the Lord despite tribulation ("Patient in tribulation"). (Patient, Greek *hupomeno*, "to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ"; tribulation, Greek

thlipsis, "oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits") (verse 12)

12. Is devoted to prayer ("Continuing instant in prayer"). (Continue instant, Greek *proskartereo*, "to adhere to one, be his adherent, to be devoted or constant to one") (verse 12)
13. Considers himself a partner in the needs of the saints ("Distributing to the necessity of saints"). (Distributing, Greek *koinoneo*, "to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer, be made a partner") (verse 13)
14. Seeks for the opportunity to be friendly to strangers ("Given to hospitality"). (Given, Greek *dioko*, "to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavour to acquire"; hospitality, Greek *philoxenia*, "love to strangers, hospitality") (verse 13)
15. Asks God to bless those who seek to harass, trouble, or molest him ("Bless them which persecute you"). (Bless, Greek *eulogeo*, "to ask God's blessing on a thing"; persecute, Greek *dioko*, "in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one") (verse 14)
16. Rejoices with those who rejoice. (verse 15)
17. Mourns with those who mourn ("Weep with them that weep"). (Weep, Greek *klaio*, "to mourn, weep, lament") (verse 15)
18. Is willing to do the menial tasks which need accomplished; is willing to associate with the humble ("But condescend to men of low estate", transliterated "But to the humble things being willing to go"). (Condescend,

Greek *sunapago*, "to yield or submit one's self to lowly things, conditions, employments: not to evade their power"; Of low estate, Greek *tapeinos*, "as a condition, lowly, of low degree") (verse 16) The word "men" is not found in the original Greek text. *Sunapago* can mean yielding to things or duties. To me, this verse reflects an attitude of humility that permeates every aspect of one's life, both towards their fellow man and duties that need completed. (my commentary on this verse. Please link to the Greek words for further study)

19. Does not requite evil for evil ("Recompense to no man evil for evil"). (Recompense, Greek *apodidomi*, "to requite, recompense in a good or a bad sense") (verse 17)
20. Thinks beforehand for good things in the presence of all men ("Provide things honest in the sight of all men"). (Provide, Greek *pronoeo*, "to provide, think of beforehand"; honest, Greek *kalos*, "good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends"; sight, Greek *enopion*, "in the presence of, before") (verse 17)
21. Avenges not himself. (Avenge, Greek *ekdikeo*, "to vindicate one's right, do one justice") (verse 19)
22. Feeds his hungry enemy, gives his thirsty enemy drink. (verse 20)
23. Gains the victory over evil with good, rather than being defeated by evil. (Overcome, Greek *nikao*, "to carry off the victory, come off victorious") (verse 21)

The one who has been transformed by the renewing of their mind is nothing like they

were before. In addition, they are nothing like those who are conformed to the world. Rather than thinking of himself first, he has a humble attitude. He looks for opportunities to be friendly to strangers. He has horror for that which is evil, and is cemented to that which is good. He accomplishes his tasks with speed. The love he manifests is sincere, not pretentious. He leads others in bestowing honour upon his fellow man. He is boiling hot in spirit and in service to the Lord. When one seeks to do him harm, he repays them with good and asks God to bless them in his prayers. When a fellow Christian is in need, he considers himself a partner in that need and does all he can to provide for the resolution of the need. He is victorious over evil by the good he does. These are not characteristics of one who is a servant of Satan.

Another law recorded by Paul in the book of Romans is the law of righteousness. We read of this law in Romans 9:31 (verses 30-33 for context). Verse 31 says, "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." What law was the nation of Israel given to follow? The law of Moses. *Dikaiousune* is translated "righteousness" in verse 31 and refers to "the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God." Paul compares the state of the Jews with that of the Gentiles in these few verses. We read in verse 30 that the Gentiles attained to righteousness (again, the word is *dikaiousune*), while the Jews failed to do so. What was different between the two peoples? *The Gentiles attained to righteousness by faith, but the Jews failed to do so because they sought it through the works of the law of Moses!* But didn't Paul

go on to say in Romans 10:5 that the works of the law were necessary ("For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.")? Yes, he did. Don't these two verses contradict each other? Absolutely not! Again, if they don't contradict, they must complement. So what do we learn about the law of Moses in these two verses? ***There were works that must be done, but they must be done in faith!*** The Jews sought to attain a right relationship with God through works alone. They were unsuccessful. The Gentiles, on the other hand, didn't have the law of Moses to follow. However, many of them by nature kept the works of the law (Romans 2:12-15), and were "a law unto themselves." When the law of Moses was fulfilled and ceased serving as a valid covenant between God and man, many of the Jews refused to seek a right relationship with God through faith and continued to seek such a relationship by works. However, even when the law of Moses was valid the Jews who sought such a relationship with God by works failed to attain righteousness! So the law of righteousness was valid during the time of the law of Moses, and is valid today. God will consider one righteous when they manifest the requirements necessary for Him to declare them just (faith, works, grace, the blood of Christ).

We see that the law of righteousness is a common theme throughout the history of man's relationship with God. During the patriarchal period of time, God revealed his word directly to the patriarchs living at the time (e.g. the commandment given to Cain and Abel regarding the type of sacrifice which would please God). During the Mosaic period of time the Jews had the law of Moses rather than direct revelation to the

patriarchs. As we've seen, it wasn't enough for the Jews to keep the works but not have faith. Now that the law of Moses has been fulfilled, are we under any law other than the law of righteousness? Yes! We are under the law of Christ. Today, we are not to hear the words of Moses but those of Christ. Jesus teaches us this truth in John 10:1-16 when He reveals that He is the door, and that none will find salvation except through Him. In John 9 we have recorded one of Jesus' miracles. He healed a man who was blind from birth. This man told others how he was healed, but they refused to listen. The Pharisees told him, "Thou art His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples." (John 9:28) Jesus then tells them that the words of Moses will not bring one to the Father. In John 14:6 Jesus tells us that nobody can come to the Father but by Him. In John 10:5 Jesus says that His sheep will hear no voice other than His. Therefore, those who are truly Jesus' disciples will hear no other voice and will follow only Him. What does He say about those who came before Him? *They are thieves and robbers, and His sheep do not hear them!* (verse 8) When did Moses live in relation to Jesus? He was before Him! What does one who attempts to live by the law of Moses (either the Jews in the first century or anyone today) make Moses? *A thief and a robber!* We all know what a thief and a robber is: One who takes something away from another. Any doctrine that steals men away from Jesus is doing exactly what a thief does. Did Moses lead the nation of Israel astray? No! The truths he taught were valid for many years. However, once Jesus fulfilled the law of Moses it ceased serving as a valid covenant between God and man. Therefore, anyone who would listen to Moses' words and not those of Jesus make Moses a "thief and a robber." (In actuality Moses wrote of

Jesus. John records Jesus' words in John 5:45 and 46: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." So, anyone who claims to follow Moses rather than Jesus doesn't actually follow Moses! If they did, they would be disciples of Jesus. Since they were in actuality not following Moses, in many ways they didn't make Moses a "thief and a robber." However, their claim to follow Moses blames Moses for their lack of faith in Jesus.) Moses wasn't guilty of leading the Jews astray. It was their own determination to follow what they wanted to believe that led to their rejection of the Messiah. Today, any doctrine that draws men away from the pure teachings of Jesus is guilty of stealing that soul away from Him.

What more can we learn about the law of Christ, under which we live today. Recall from the beginning of our study of law the definition given for *nomos*: Anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command. Therefore, since we are under the law of Christ, any commandment He issued is part of that law. Let's consider a few of these commandments:

1. Love. In John 13:34-35 we read, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Here Jesus includes love for one another as a part of His law.
2. Teaching the lost about Jesus. Our Lord instructs his apostles to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matthew 28:19). Each one who is a disciple of Jesus is commanded to teach others about Him. This is a part of His law.

3. Baptism. Jesus tells us who shall be saved in Mark 16:16, which says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In Matthew 28:19 we hear Jesus commanding His apostles to baptize those they taught. Those who teach are commanded to baptize those who believe what they are taught. Upon believing the teaching and submitting to baptism, they receive salvation. Here Jesus establishes baptism as a requirement for salvation. Since baptism is something established by Jesus, it is part of His law. ***Baptism for any reason other than salvation (remission of sins) is not part of the law of Christ!***
4. A n a l l - e n c o m p a s s i n g commandment. The final words of Jesus recorded by Matthew are these: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:20) Some may say that "Teaching others doesn't apply to me, since Jesus was speaking to His apostles." Jesus won't allow us to use this excuse before Him. Notice what He instructs His apostles to do: Teach those who are baptized to observe every commandment He taught the apostles! What commandment did He give the apostles in Matthew 28:19: To teach others! Therefore, what must we do to obey this commandment of Jesus: Teach others! But this statement

of Jesus doesn't include teaching only. ***It establishes every commandment He gave to his apostles as part of His law, which we are to obey today.***

I would like to close our study of law with a consideration of 1 John 3:4. Here John writes, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." *Anomia* is translated transgresseth and means, "contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness." Many writers of the New Testament tell us that we sin today. Paul, in Romans 3:23, writes, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and John records "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10) Therefore, since sin is transgression of law and we have all sinned, we have all transgressed law. How can we have transgressed law if we are not subject to law today? We couldn't have! Recall in an earlier study how we stated that taking the teachings of man to their logical conclusion reveals the fallacy of their positions? Again we see this principle in effect. *One who teaches that we are not under law today **MUST** be teaching that we are all sinless!* But what did John say we were guilty of doing should we claim sinlessness? Lying! But our lie goes beyond ourselves. *We make **God** a liar when we claim sinlessness!* (1 John 1:10) Can you imagine the degree of God's displeasure with one whose claim (if true) makes Him guilty of doing the very thing He hates?! Let's take a step further the necessary conclusions we must make if we

are to believe we are not under law.

1. If absence of law today is truth, then we are not under law and cannot sin. If we cannot sin, then God is a liar. If God is a liar, we can believe none of His promises. If we can believe none of God's promises, we have nothing upon which to build faith. Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). If the word of God is not trustworthy, we cannot have faith in it.
2. If God is a liar, one of two things must be true:
 - * He is in heaven, which makes sinfulness an acceptable state of existence in heaven. If one can enter heaven with sin, man needn't have his sins remitted for salvation. Since Jesus died for the remission of sins, and man's sins need not be remitted for salvation, then *Jesus died in vain. His death was entirely unnecessary!*
 - * Revelation 21:8 is true, which states, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." If this verse is true, and God is a liar, *our Heavenly Father is condemned to an eternity in hell!*

Need I go any further? Are you thoroughly repulsed yet? The teaching that we are not under law today renders everything in Christianity of no meaning whatsoever! Of whom is this doctrine born? Satan!

What verses do people use to

support their position that we are under no religious law today? Lets consider a few, and see if they support such a position.

1. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14) Paul begins chapter 6 with the question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (verse 1) He condemns such a position with the statement "God forbid." He then asks another question, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (verse 2) How does one die to sin? *Through baptism!* Just as Christ died and was buried, we are buried with Him by baptism into death. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (verses 3-4) We must consider ourselves indeed dead to sin, and not let it reign in our bodies to obey sin in the lusts of our flesh. (verses 11-12) Paul then makes the statement that they are not under the law but under grace. (verse 14) What does he mean when he says that "sin shall not have dominion over you"? *Kurieuo* is translated "dominion" and means, "to be lord of, to rule, have dominion over." Paul uses a conjunction ("for") to connect this phrase to the next in verse 14. The reason sin shall not have dominion is because we are under grace, not the law. But when did grace come? Please turn to John 1:17. Here we read, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Romans 5:21 says, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." *So grace came by Jesus Christ!* Sin ruled until grace came by

Jesus Christ. At that time, the law of Moses ceased serving as a valid covenant between God and man. The law under which we live today is the law of Christ. Under the law of Christ, sin does not rule. Those who are obedient to the commandments of Jesus have their sins *forgiven*, something which never happened under the law of Moses! (Hebrews 10:3-4; 11-18) Under the law of Moses, sin truly ruled, since it was impossible to dethrone it in forgiveness. However, under the law of Christ, sin has been defeated. Through obedience our sins are forgiven by the grace of God. Therefore, those who teach that Romans 6:14 indicates we are under no law today are mistaken. We are not under the law of Moses, but are under the law of Christ.

2. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:4) The Galatians were having trouble with "Judaizing teachers", people leading Christians astray by claiming that the benefits of the Gospel could only be realized by meeting the requirements of Judaism. Again, in this verse Paul is emphasizing the law they are NOT subject to, rather than they law to which they are subject. Those who would seek to gain the benefits of Christianity by attempting to keep the works of the law of Moses has Christ "become of no effect" to them. One cannot take this verse and claim that, because these people attempted to be justified by the law, should we do the same we also will be cut off from grace.

I pray that this study of law has helped you to understand the nature of the

commandments we are to obey today. We are not under the law of Moses, of that fact there is no doubt. We've already considered how the law of Moses was given only to the Jews, and therefore the Gentiles were never subject to it. For the Jews, the law of Moses ceased as a valid covenant upon the death of Jesus. However, simply because we are not under the law of Moses does not mean we are not under any law whatsoever! Today, we are under the law of Christ and expected to obey His commandments. Have you done so? If so, I pray you will remain faithful to His commandments so that you may spend eternity with Him in heaven. However, if you have not yet been obedient to His commandments I plead with you to consider the seriousness of your state and determine to obey Him before it is eternally too late.

Additional Scriptures

So far in our study we have considered numerous scriptures that teach that a child of God most certainly can fall from grace and be lost. Before we conclude our study, I'd like for us to consider a few more passages from the Bible.

John 15:1-6

This is Jesus' powerful parable of the vine and the branches. Jesus tells us in verse 1 that He is the vine, and his Father is the husbandman (Greek *georgos*, "a husbandman, tiller of the soil, a vine dresser"). The vine has two types of branches as part of it: Those that bear fruit, and those that do not bear fruit (verse 2). The Father plays an active role in the fates of these two types of branches. Those which do not bear fruit are taken away (take away, Greek *airo*, "to move from its place;

to take off or away what is attached to anything; to remove"), and those that bear fruit He purgeth (Greek *kathairo*, "to cleanse, of filth impurity, etc"). Jesus tells us how we are made clean: Through the word that He has spoken (verse 3). Just as the branches of a vine cannot bear fruit of themselves, the fruitful branches in Jesus bear fruit because they abide in Him (verses 4-5). If a branch (a man) does not abide in Jesus, he is cast off and is withered. Their fate will be to be gathered together and burned, just as unfruitful branches of a vine are cast off, gathered together, and burned (verse 6).

In this passage we learn that it is entirely possible for one who is a child of God to be eternally lost. Jesus isn't speaking of some branches that are in Him and others which are not. All of the branches in this parable are part of the vine, and Jesus is that vine! Those who have never been obedient to His commandments are not in Him and therefore are not part of the vine. However, those who have been obedient are not necessarily fruitful. Many branches are unfruitful. These unfruitful branches are not retained as part of the vine. The husbandman (God, the Father in this parable) cuts them off from the vine. When they are cut off, they become withered and will be gathered together and burned. The Father cleanses those that are fruitful, so that they may bear more fruit. Jesus tells us how the fruitful branches are cleansed: By His word! The fruitful branches remain true to the word of Jesus, are cleansed by the Father, and produce even more fruit.

In this parable we see with absolute certainty the possibility that one who was obedient to Jesus' commandments can fall away and be lost! Each one must determine whether they have been obedient to the

word of Jesus, by which they enter into Him, become part of the vine, and through it bear fruit. Once becoming a fruitful branch we must then remain faithful to Jesus' word, by which we are cleansed and able to bear even more fruit for Him.

Galatians 5:4

This is a passage that should cause much trouble for anyone teaching the impossibility of a child of God falling from grace. Listen to Paul's words: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." In my studies the two explanations most frequently used by those teaching the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" are these:

1. Grace in this verse refers to a "present experience" of grace, and not the saving grace taught by Paul in Ephesians 2:8. In other words, one might experience present-day consequences as a result of sin while alive on this earth, but will not suffer any eternal consequences.
2. The falling from grace is limited to those who attempt to be justified by law, but no other circumstance will lead to such a consequence. This usually goes hand-in-hand with teaching that we are not subject to any law whatsoever today.

I'm sure there are additional explanations used by people who wish to continue teaching "once saved, always saved" that are unknown to me. However, the difficulty persists for anyone teaching such doctrine: Paul clearly states that one who is a child of God may lose the grace they need to be saved. As we learned in our study of grace, Paul is not speaking of a present-day experience of grace. He is speaking of the

grace we need to be saved. Since we may fall from grace, children of God must be vigilant to maintain their standing in the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 9:27

Here Paul says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." *Hupopiazō* is translated "keep under", and means "to beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid spots; a. like a boxer one buffets his body, handle it roughly, discipline by hardships." *Doulagogeo* is translated "subjection" and means "to make a slave and to treat as a slave i.e. with severity, subject to stern and rigid discipline." The word translated "castaway" is *adokimos* and means "not standing the test, not approved." Paul uses *adokimos* in Titus 1:16 (translated "reprobate"; verse 15 included for context): "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he beats his body until it is black and blue (metaphorically, of course), makes it a slave to his will and treats it with severity (subjecting it to stern and rigid discipline), because he may well fail to stand approved before God should he allow his flesh to escape from the enslavement of his will and indulge in the lusts which dwell within it. *This is the apostle Paul speaking!!* If he was concerned about standing before God a reprobate, who today should not also

tremble with fear at the possibility of falling from God's grace and spending eternity in torment? Each and every child of God *must* be constantly on guard against the temptations sent our way by the force of sin, whose master is Satan. If we allow our lusts to conceive and bring forth the act of sin, we will stand before God as reprobates and will suffer the full severity of His wrath should we die in such a state!

Paul uses *adokimos* 3 times in the 13th chapter of 2 Corinthians. Please consider verses 5-7: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates." Paul asks them the question, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Paul uses the same Greek word to describe their state should they examine themselves and find that Jesus Christ is not in them as he does to describe his state should he fail to keep his body under subjection! Now, how many religious people today claim that one can be saved without having Christ dwell in them? None that I know of. The "sinner's prayer" so often uttered makes a request of God that Jesus would "come into" the heart of the one praying and grant them salvation (or some similar petition). But Paul teaches that his condition should he allow his physical lust to escape from its servitude is no different than that of one who doesn't have Christ in them! Therefore, one who continues to conform to his former lusts does not have Christ in them and therefore cannot be saved! Such a one was saved in

the past, but is no longer saved. What does this tell us? They've fallen from grace and will be lost for eternity should they refuse to repent!

These are only a few of the many passages in the New Testament warning us of the possibility of falling from grace and being eternally lost. I've only included these 3 at this time, since all we need is a single verse showing us that we can fall from grace to confirm the truth of this doctrine. I plan to add others as I continue to work on this study. Please look for the "new" flag posted next to this study on my website.

Summary

I pray this study has been of benefit to you in your desire to learn of God and His will for your life. In this study we've considered His love for us, and how that love is not the warm emotion most religious people today claim it to be. His love led Him to do what we could not do for ourselves, but what was absolutely essential for our salvation. We've studied His grace, and learned that it is through faith that we gain access to His grace, which is essential for our salvation. We've examined works and the role they play in our salvation. We understand that we can never earn salvation, because the value of the work we do will never equal the value of the salvation we receive from God. This nullifies the false teaching many proclaim today that works are not necessary for salvation, since they show our attempt to earn salvation. Our understanding that we owe God, not that He owes us, leads us to work with fervent zeal in His kingdom. Our study of law taught us that we are not under the law of Moses today, but are under the law of Christ. As

does every law, the law of Christ contains commandments we must obey. When we obey every commandment Jesus gives us, we are His friend and gain the benefits of his death (remission of sins). Every human being alive today has the option to choose to be obedient to Jesus' commandments, or to be disobedient. His blood is available to wash away the sins of everyone who chooses obedience. However, should one choose disobedience, their sins are not remitted and they will suffer eternal damnation as a consequence.

Throughout this study we have proven the fact that a child of God can fall from grace and be eternally lost. We closed our study with a consideration of 3 verses from the New Testament, each of which proves the fallacy of the doctrine commonly referred to as "once saved, always saved." We saw how the vine (Jesus) feeds branches (individual Christians) attached to Him. These branches may either be fruitful, or unfruitful. If they are the former, God cleanses them through His word so that they may be even more fruitful. However, those unfruitful branches are cut off from the vine, gathered together, and burned! One cannot be a part of the vine if they have not been obedient to Jesus' commandments! Therefore, since those who are cut off from the vine for being unfruitful at one time were obedient to His commandments, a child of God *absolutely* may fall from grace should they return to their former life of sin! Paul emphasizes this fact again when he tells the Galatian Christians that those who seek to be justified by the law of Moses have fallen from grace. The fact these Christians could fall from grace for such behavior tells us that simply being a Christian does not guarantee salvation. If it did, then it would have been impossible for the Galatian