

Why is the Gospel for Salvation the only acceptable Message for Salvation?

By Pastor Luther Walker

What makes the Gospel Message so important? Is it not sufficient to simply say that if you accept Jesus you are saved? or Jesus died for you? Does it really matter what you believe or just that you believe? To understand why it is so important to accurately present the gospel for salvation today, which is Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, we are going to look at what God has said throughout the Scripture and the affects on men who either modify God's word, completely ignore it, or followed exactly what He said.

After renovating the earth¹ due to the fall and judgment of Lucifer who once reigned over the entire created universe as God's anointed Cherub², God planted a garden in Eden³ and created Adam to tend to the garden⁴. Prior to God building the woman from Adam, He gave instruction to him on how he was expected to govern his life and the consequences of failing to obey His word. Adam was free to eat from all the trees of the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of what is beneficial and what brings calamity in the midst of the garden⁵. God stated, "But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat from it because in the day you eat from it dying you will die."⁶ Once Eve was made from Adam's side, as the steward of his dispensation he passed on the words from God to her; however, he modified them. During the temptation of Eve by Satan, the snake asks her what God said. She stated what Adam had told her that they may eat from any tree of the garden, but from the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, "Do not eat from it and do not touch it lest you die⁷." God never stated that they could not touch the tree or its fruit. He said they could not eat from the tree. He also stated that two forms of death would come upon them if they did eat. The original Hebrew use of the two forms of the word "die" here hold significance in showing that two things are happening. God began with an infinitive, "to die" and then added to it an imperfect of "dying". The infinitive simply states what will happen, with no direct reference to the subject, where the imperfect is incomplete action associated with the subject; either doing or happening to it. Once Adam ate, from that moment he would die and he would also keep on dying. A good example of the use of an infinitive with an imperfect verb is found in 1 Kings 2:36 with Shimei. King Solomon instructed Shimei that he was to stay in Jerusalem. If he left Jerusalem, in the day in which he leaves dying he will die. Three years later Shimei leaves Jerusalem to retrieve his servants who had run away. Shimei did not physically die on that day when he violated the King's word, but as a result of that day his death was guaranteed. Once the King was made aware of Shimei's violation of his agreement, Shimei was put to death. This death was a direct result of Shimei's

¹ Genesis 1:3-31 God created the universe in Genesis 1:1 and between verses one and two the reign of Lucifer from earth and his fall happen.

² Ezekiel 28:14. Mountain of God is a reference to the governmental structure setup by God.

³ Genesis 2:8 And Jehovah Elohim planted a garden in Eden from the east and set there Adam, which He formed.

⁴ Genesis 2:15 And Jehovah Elohim took Adam and He rested him in the garden of Eden to work and to guard it

⁵ Genesis 2:9 And Jehovah Elohim caused to grow from the earth every desirable tree in appearance and good for food and a tree of lives in the midst of the garden and a tree of the knowledge of good and evil

⁶ Genesis 2:17 And from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat from it because in a day you eat from it dying you will die

⁷ Genesis 3:3 And from fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, Elohim said, "Do not eat from it and do not touch it lest you die."

own actions⁸. In Genesis when they ate from the tree we do not have all the details as to what happened. God has provided us with further revelation in Romans 5:12-21 that in that day Adam died spiritually because of his trespass and became subject to physical death because of his sin, which he then passed on to all mankind⁹. Would the outcome have been different if Adam not only followed God's word, but also accurately gave His instructions to Eve? When Satan tempted Eve, he directly challenged what God said. He disputes what God said to Eve saying, "Dying you will not die¹⁰." Rather, what will happen is your eyes will be opened and you will know good and evil and will be like God¹¹. Satan had thoroughly convinced Eve that she would become wise and be like God by eating from the tree. When she ate, unlike Adam who was not deceived, she broke God's law¹². Adam then partook with his wife when she gave the fruit to him, even though he could see that she was stripped of her garment of light¹³, resulting in an act of sin on his part. Because Adam did not obey what God commanded him to do, he brought both spiritual and physical death into the world and passed it on to all his offspring¹⁴. Now everyone is born separated from God because Adam did not take God at His word. In addition, not only was Adam removed from the garden, separated from God, subject to hard physical labor all the days of his life, and destined to return to the earth upon his physical death, he was also removed from the position of authority as the steward of God's household. The dispensation failed because man did not take God at His Word.

The next time God gives instruction is through Cain, who is chosen by God to be the steward of his dispensation¹⁵. Now that humans have the knowledge of good and evil, they are to do what is good and rule

⁸ 1 Kings 2:41-46 And it was declared to Solomon that Shimei walked from Jerusalem to Gath and returned. And the King send and called to Shimei and said unto him did I not make you swear by Jehovah and testified with you saying in a day you go out and walk here and there knowing you will know that dying you will die, and you said unto me "the word I have heard is good"? And why have you not guarded the oath of Jehovah and the command which I commanded unto you? And the King said unto Shimei you know all the evil which you know from your heart which you did towards David my father, and Jehovah will return you evil with your head. And the King Solomon is blessed and [the] throne of David will be established before Jehovah's face unto an age. And the King commanded Benaiah son of Jehoiada and he went out and he met with him and he died and the kingdom was established by the hand of Solomon.

⁹ Genesis 5:3 and Adam was on hundred and thirty years and he bore in his likeness according to his image and he called his name Seth.

¹⁰ Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, "Dying you will not die".

¹¹ Genesis 3:5 because Elohim knows that in a day you eat from it and and your eyes are open and you become like Elohim knowing good and evil

¹² 1 Timothy 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman after being thoroughly deceived came to be in a transgression.

¹³ Genesis 3:7 And both of their eyes were opened and they knew that they were stripped.... This form of the word translated "naked" means to be stripped. Ezekiel 16:7, 22, 38; 18:7; 16; 23:29 – stripped of a covering

¹⁴ Romans 5:12-21 Because of this, just as through one man the sin entered the world and through the sin the death, also thus unto all men the death passed, on the basis that all sinned. For until law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed, being no law. But the death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those not sinning upon the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of the one about to come. But not as the trespass, thus also is the gracious gift. For since by the trespass of the one [man] the many died, how much more the grace from God and the gift by grace by the one man Jesus Christ abounds unto the many. And the gift is not as through one having sinned. For on the one hand judgment out from one [having sinned] unto condemnation, on the other hand the gracious gift out from many trespasses unto justification. For since by the one [man's] trespass the death reigned through the one [man], how much more the ones having received the abundance of the grace and the gift of righteousness in life will reign through the one Jesus Christ. Therefore then, as through one trespass unto all men into condemnation, thus also through one act of righteousness unto all men into justification of life. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, thus also through the obedience of the one [man], the many are constituted righteous. And law, having entered, in order that the trespass should abound; moreover, where the sin [nature] abounded, the grace super abounded in order that just as the sin [nature] reigned by the death, thus also the grace should reign through righteousness because of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁵ A dispensation is a period in time in which God gives instructions through the one He chooses to all the people He is dealing with – the household. Cain is given specific instructions on how he and others are expected to govern their lives. As the steward of his household (dispensation) Cain was responsible for accurately sharing this information with all of the other people living on the earth at this time.

over their sin nature. God instructs Cain on managing his sin nature after he brings the works of his hands as a peace offering to God rather than obeying God's example of an acceptable sacrifice¹⁶. God does not even look at Cain's sacrifice, which upsets him. Cain is told that he is to rule over his sin nature rather than permitting it to rule him¹⁷. He brought a peace offering from the works of his hands rather than by faith because Satan influenced him, just like he did in the garden with Eve, only this time Cain was not deceived, but chose to obey him instead of God¹⁸. We can see through Abel's offering that God has instructed them on what was an acceptable offering; therefore, Cain was not obeying God's word when he brought his offering. Even after God specifically gave Cain instructions on what he was to do, instead of obeying God and bringing a proper sacrifice out from faith, he takes his brother, who obeyed God and gave a pleasing sacrifice¹⁹, and made a sacrifice of him²⁰ because he saw that his brother pleased Him. Cain's punishment for killing his brother was that the earth would no longer produce its strength for him and he was to be a wanderer, never setting down²¹. Again rather than obeying God, Cain settled down and built a city were the beginning of the first world system began, which was designed by Satan to control the sin nature of man²². The end result of Cain's and those of the household's continued disobedience is brought to a culmination just before God destroys the inhabited world by a flood. Instead of choosing what is good and obeying God, every formation of the thoughts in their minds where evil all day long²³. Along with the rejection of God and following Satan, men are involved with corrupting the seed of mankind by their women laying with fallen angels and producing mutants (Rephaim) that were an abomination to God²⁴. Angels, who are by nature spirit beings, have the ability to take on the form of a man²⁵. Some of the fallen angels (demons) who sought to prevent the judgment coming upon Satan that was announced at the fall of mankind from innocence, forcibly took women, who then gave birth to the mutants²⁶. By the time of Noah almost all flesh upon the earth had been

¹⁶ Genesis 4:3-5 and it came to be from the end of days and Cain brought from fruits of the ground a gift to Jehovah. And Able brought also his from firstborn of his flock and the fat and Jehovah glanced upon Able and unto his gift. And unto Cain and unto his gift He did not glance. And Cain became very angry and his face fell.

¹⁷ If you do good will you not be lifted up? And if you do not do good sin lies at the door, and unto you is its desire, but you are to rule over it, Genesis 4:7

¹⁸ 1 John 3:12 Not just as Cain was out from the malignantly evil one, and slew his brother. And What favor did he slay him? Because his works were malignantly evil but his brother's [were] righteous

¹⁹ A sacrifice out from faith, not works, Hebrews 11:4 By faith, Able offered a better sacrifice than Cain to God through which he was witnessed to be righteous, from God bearing witness upon His gift and through it, being dead, yet he speaks.

²⁰ Genesis 4:8; 1 John 3:12 – specific term used for how a sacrifice is killed

²¹ Genesis 4:2

²² Luke 11:50, 51; Genesis 4:20-24 The beginning of commerce, culture, industry, and a judicial system

²³ Genesis 6:12

²⁴ Many of the modern translations inconsistently translate the Hebrew word "Rephaim" which means, "mutant or giant". Because of this it is difficult to find much about them unless you go to the original Hebrew were we find that even after the flood these abominations existed until Israel is used by God to completely wipe them out. They now reside in Hades were they will be destroyed by being cast into the lake of fire, never seeing resurrection. Genesis 14:5; 15:20; Deuteronomy 2:11, 20 ;3:11, 13; Joshua 12:4 ;13:12 ;15:8 ;17:15 ;18:16; 2 Samuel 5:18, 22 ;23:13 1 Chronicles 11:15 ;14:9 ; 20:4; Job 26:5; Psalms 88:11; Proverbs 2:18 ; 9:18 ;21:16; Isaiah 14:9 ;17:5 ;26:14, 19

²⁵ Genesis 18:2; 19:4, 5

²⁶ Genesis 6:2, 4 (Note: "Children" is not in the original language. These things born to these women were not human); 1 Peter 3:19, 20

corrupted²⁷, by these angels and the willingness of mankind, who thought of nothing more each day than what evil²⁸ could be done. Noah found favor in the eyes of God because he was totally human²⁹. God spoke with Noah and gave him instructions on how to build the ark. Because Noah obeyed God, he and his family were saved³⁰. More could have been saved, but they rejected the message Noah was sent with and chose not to obey God³¹. In this dispensation the result of man not listening to God's Word was catastrophic. Not only did it affect the life of men, but even the animals were corrupted. No one sought after God, no one did good. Therefore, judgment came upon mankind for their sins and the entire earth was flooded for a second time³².

After the flood, God gives Noah specific instruction concerning how man is to govern his life. Mankind is now permitted to eat the animals; however, he is not permitted to eat the flesh with the blood in it³³. Capital punishment is implemented³⁴ and they are to multiply and spread across the earth³⁵. Due to mankind's total rejection of God, this is one of the shortest dispensations on record. It lasts only about 100 years before judgment is again brought upon mankind because of their continued sin and rejection of God. It did not take long for the unrighteousness of the previous world to show back up after the flood. Although when God spoke with Noah, Ham was with him, rather than doing what is good, taking an opportunity when his father was drunk he raped him and was cursed as a result³⁶. This attitude of unrighteousness and acts of sin only continued from there. In the genealogy of Noah and his sons we find that Nimrod began the kingdom of Babel through violence. In Genesis 10:8 Nimrod is referred to as a mighty man upon the earth. This term is used of those who are in authority. Verse 9 informs us that he was a hunter of mighty men, which should have earned him the death penalty as God had instructed Noah and his sons concerning what to do if a man takes the life of another. In chapter 11 of Genesis, mankind is coming together and building a tower with reference to the heavens so that they will not be scattered across the earth and can worship the stars³⁷. Noah and his sons are still alive at this time so the information on the flood and why God destroyed the world

²⁷ And Elohim looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt because all flesh corrupted its way upon the earth, Genesis 6:12

²⁸ The formation of the thoughts in their mind were evil all day long

²⁹ Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was righteous, complete, in his times, Noah walked with God

³⁰ 1 Peter 3:19, 20 in which also He was caused to go to the spirits in prison to herald with authority, who were formally not obeying when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while constructing the Ark, into which a few, that is eight souls were brought to safety through the water,

³¹ 2 Peter 2:5 – Noah, one who proclaimed a message of righteousness, warned the world that was of the coming flood.

³² 2 Peter 3:5 the earth out from water and through water, standing by the Word of God

³³ Genesis 9:3,4 Every crawling thing which itself lives to you is for food, like I gave green herbs to you all. Surely flesh with its life, its blood, you will not eat.

³⁴ Genesis 9:5,6 And surely your blood for your soul I will seek from [the] hand of every living [animal] I will seek it. And from [the] hand of the man, from [the] hand of a highborn man's brother I will seek [the] soul of the man. The one pouring out blood of the man by man his blood will be poured out because in an image of Elohim the man was made.

³⁵ Genesis 9:7 And you be fruitful and multiply, swarming the earth and multiply in her.

³⁶ Genesis 9:22 the term "saw the nakedness" is a sexual term in the Hebrew. It is not a reference to simply seeing someone without clothing on. Ham did something to his father, which upon waking from his drunkenness he knew what his son had done. Leviticus 18:6,7; Ezekiel 23:9, 10

³⁷ Genesis 11:4

before was well known by all³⁸. They knew that anyone doing the sins they were involved in, and even those who agree with the ones doing these things, were to be put to death by God's ordinance³⁹. Rather than obeying what God said, they and their offspring reject Him: capital punishment is not implemented⁴⁰; they refuse to separate and spread across the earth. From their perspective they perceived a way to survive impending judgment because they knew that what they were doing would bring judgment⁴¹ so they came together to build a tower so that some would survive when God again brought a flood upon them to wipe them out, even though God gave Noah and his sons a promise that He would not again flood the earth. They rejected God, began worshipping creation⁴² and perverted the image of God with that of man, beasts and crawling things, engaged in homosexual activity, and became completely unrighteous in what they thought and did⁴³. Judgment indeed came, in the form of dividing up the people by languages and the land from one continent to many so that mankind would be spread across the earth and the sin nature would be inhibited⁴⁴. Noah failed as the steward of this dispensation because he did not take God at His Word. The result of his failure was that in only a few generations mankind goes back to what was happening before the flood. They were even trying to pervert the seed of mankind again⁴⁵. All because they would not listen and obey God. The dividing up of the languages and the earth brought about a very chaotic time while God administered judgment and put measures in place to prevent mankind from again coming together as one. Even during this chaotic time in earth's history God still responded to those who would seek Him. Job is a good example of a

³⁸ Genesis 9:28. Nimrod was the third generation from Ham, Genesis 10:8

³⁹ Romans 1:32 Whoever fully experientially knew the ordinance of God; that the ones practicing such things are worthy of death, not only those who are practicing these things, but also the ones approving towards the ones practicing.

⁴⁰ Genesis 10:9 Nimrod is a hunter of mighty men. He should have been put to death because he was killing men of authority to create his own kingdom – Genesis 10:10

⁴¹ Romans 1:32 Whoever fully experientially knew the ordinance of God; that the ones practicing such things are worthy of death, not only those who are practicing these things, but also the ones approving towards the ones practicing.

⁴² Romans 1:25 whoever exchanged the truth of the God with the lie, and revered for themselves and rendered religious service to the creation rather than the Creator, who is well spoken of into the ages, Amen.

⁴³ Romans 1:18-32 For [a quality of] wrath from God is manifested from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, the ones holding down the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known concerning God is manifested among them, for God manifested it to them. For the invisible things concerning Him from a creation of *the* world to the understanding things made has been caused to be clearly perceived both His everlasting natural ability and Divinity resulting in them being without excuse, because they, knowing the God, did not as God have a proper opinion [of Him] or were thankful, but were rendered worthless in their reasoning and their foolish hearts were caused to be darkened, affirming to be wise, they were cause to be foolish, and exchanged the proper opinion of the incorruptible God with the likeness of *an* image of man and birds and four-footed animals, and crawling things. Wherefore, God handed them over in the desires of their hearts unto uncleanness to dishonor their bodies among themselves, whoever exchanged the truth of the God with the lie, and revered for themselves and rendered religious service to the creation rather than the Creator, who is well spoken of into the ages, Amen. Because of this God handed them over into dishonorable passions, for both the females among them exchanged the natural use unto [that which is] against the nature. Likewise both also the males sent away the natural use of the female, caused to be kindled in their longing into others of the same kind, males among males working out for themselves the disgraceful and receiving the recompense that is necessary concerning their wandering among themselves. And just as they did not consider worthy to have the God in full experiential knowledge, the God gave them over to an unapproved mind to do that which is improper, being filled up where they lack in all unrighteousness: fornication, malignant evil, covetousness, lacking in character, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, bad character, secret slanderers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, arrogant, inventors of that which lacks in character, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, without natural affection, irreconcilable, not merciful. Whoever fully experientially knew the ordinance of God; that the ones practicing such things are worthy of death, not only those who are practicing these things, but also the ones approving towards the ones practicing.

⁴⁴ Genesis 10:25 (The land was divided.) This is now an accepted scientific fact – Plate Tectonics

⁴⁵ Genesis 6:4

man who sought after God and was rewarded greatly⁴⁶. For our sake God permitted Satan to put Job through some difficult testing; although, He did not allow him to take Job's life. Job held to God's Word, even though others around him encouraged him to reject God. True, he had some very difficult times, but in the end, because he would not turn from God he was rewarded greatly⁴⁷.

After judgment and the scattering of mankind across the earth, God selected one man out from those upon the earth to give a promise of land to him and his seed. This promise was not based upon what this man or his descendants would do, but was an unconditional covenant that God made because He was going to separate out a nation unto Himself⁴⁸. By His word, God chose to show favor to Abram and his seed and to make him a father of many nations⁴⁹. Abram lived in a land of idolaters that served many false gods. He was to separate himself from them, including his family members; however, Abram did not obey God at first. He was instructed to leave his country along with his kin and go to a land that God would show him, but chose to move to another location with his father and nephew until his father passed away⁵⁰. It was only then that he followed God's instruction and traveled to what is now known as Israel⁵¹; however, leaving the land he was in and following God was not an act of faith by Abram. It was not until about twenty-five years after Abram obeyed God and left Haran that he actually took God at His Word and believed that God would give him a child and his offspring would be like the stars of the sky. Because of his faith in God's Word he was counted to be righteous by God⁵². This is the first time that Abraham took God at His Word. Prior to this, even though he already had a promise from God that Sarah would bear him a child, Abraham had a child with his wife's handmaiden at her request, whose decedents to this day constantly fight with the sons of promise because he and all his seed were rejected by God⁵³. On a personal basis, God specifically tells Abram that He will protect him⁵⁴. Twice, rather than believing God, he gives up his wife to the kings of the lands so that they will not kill him⁵⁵. God, being faithful to His Word, protected her both times and she was returned unharmed to Abram.

⁴⁶ Job 1:1

⁴⁷ Job 42:10,12

⁴⁸ Romans 9:11 For not yet having been born, nor having performed any good or bad, in order that the purpose according to election of God should remain, not out from works but out from the one calling,

⁴⁹ Genesis 17:4

⁵⁰ Genesis 12:1-3 (11:31)

⁵¹ Genesis 12:4

⁵² Romans 4:3, 19 For what does the Scripture say? Indeed Abraham believed and it was counted to him unto righteousness; And not being weak in the faith, nor observing his own body already being dead, having existed about one hundred years, and the deadness of Sarah's womb,

⁵³ Genesis 16:1-5 (Galatians 4:25- 30); Genesis 16:11, 12 – God's promise to Hagar; Genesis 17:18-21; 21:9.10

⁵⁴ Genesis 12:3

⁵⁵ Genesis 12:11-13; 20:2

Later, after Isaac has grown into a young man, God asks Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice⁵⁶. Abraham obeyed God because He believed in the promise that God had given him. If he sacrificed his child, then God would raise Him from the dead because he knew He would not go against His Word⁵⁷. As a result of his obedience God gave him another covenant. A covenant that guaranteed Christ would come through his lineage. Although Abraham knew nothing of Christ at the time the covenant was made, he did know that God would be true to His word and his seed (singular) would possess the gates of his enemy⁵⁸.

Just as God stated, Abraham's seed became the nation of Israel. Through Jacob (renamed by God to Israel) the twelve tribes of Israel are selected⁵⁹. After going to Egypt where they went from living in the best land⁶⁰ to being slaves, just as God stated would happen in His first Covenant with Abram, God sent for them through Moses to take them to the land and fulfill His promise⁶¹. Through the ten plagues that were brought upon Egypt, by which God decimated it, He showed Israel and the whole world that He is the only One true God⁶². God raised up Pharaoh specifically to make His name known throughout the world⁶³. The gods of the Egyptians were put to shame before Him and He brought Israel out of the land of Egypt with all its spoils. However, even after showing the Israelites that He is by far more powerful than any of the gods of the Egyptians, when they left the land and Pharaoh gathered his army to retrieve them, they did not trust their God⁶⁴. They speak with Moses, asking him if he has brought them out into the wilderness to die. Their fear of death was why they did not want to leave serving the Egyptian⁶⁵. God again shows Israel that He will protect them by totally wiping out the army of Pharaoh⁶⁶. Israel's concern might be comprehensible when we understand that they had forgotten their God while they lived in Egypt. Moses and Israel both had to be reintroduced to Him; however, their disbelief did not end here, as it should have, rather, as they traveled to meet their God, along the way many times they complained and sought to return to Egypt and many were put to death because of their sins.

Upon arrival to Mount Sinai they are instructed by God to guard His covenant. He gave Abraham a promise that He would give to his seed the land He showed him⁶⁷. Now, Israel as a nation was to inherit the land and

⁵⁶ Genesis 22:1-17

⁵⁷ Hebrews 11:17

⁵⁸ Genesis 22:17

⁵⁹ Genesis 32:28

⁶⁰ Genesis 47:6

⁶¹ Genesis 15:13, 14

⁶² Exodus 11:2,3

⁶³ Romans 9:17 (Exodus 9:16) For the Scripture says to Pharaoh that unto this same purpose I have raised you, thus My natural ability to be manifest for itself on you and thus My name should be proclaimed in all the earth.

⁶⁴ Exodus 14:9, 10

⁶⁵ Exodus 14:11-27

⁶⁶ Exodus 14:25-28

⁶⁷ Genesis 15:1-21

become a nation of priests⁶⁸. Unfortunately, rather than obeying God, the people insisted on works so that they could be righteous before Him by their own efforts. God said, guard My Covenant. Their response was to keep on doing all that God had said. They reject promise and request law, so God gives them the Mosaic Law (The law through Moses)⁶⁹. The Mosaic Law, although fully righteous⁷⁰, was very burdensome and if one failed to live by it death came⁷¹. It was not intended as a means by which man can be righteous before God⁷², but to show man that through works, apart from God, it is impossible to be righteous before Him. In addition, the law fully exposed the sin nature that resides in all humans because of Adam's trespass⁷³. We inherited from Adam a nature that is bent and if not properly managed will always lead us away from God into sin⁷⁴. Of course, the only way to properly manage it is to obey God's Word. Due to unbelief Israel would not become a nation of priest, but would now have a priesthood and have to live under law until the Savior came to rescue them⁷⁵. From Mount Sinai God takes Israel to the land so that they can inherit it; however, Israel's disbelief again cost them entry into the land and forty years in the wilderness⁷⁶. Rather than entering the land and possessing it, as they should have, they feared the people and again rejected God⁷⁷. As a result of their disobedience God nearly wiped out the nation and only continued the seed of promise through Moses⁷⁸. Those who did not listen to His Word, even though they saw His glory and He showed them many signs and miracles which He did in both Egypt and in the wilderness, would not be allowed to enter into the land. On the journey from Egypt to the land they have already tempted God ten different times and would not listen to

⁶⁸ Exodus 19:6 and you will become to Me a kingdom of priests and a set apart nation.

⁶⁹ Exodus 19:5-9 The Israelites rejected promise. All that the Lord has said we will continue to do. The word for "do" is an imperfect meaning the action is incomplete or ongoing. God did not instruct Israel to do, rather they were to guard. Israel did not agree to keep God's covenant of promise. They sought to show God how righteous there were through their own actions. This can also be verified in God's reaction. There were no longer going to be a nation of priest; rather, they would have a priesthood and now they would be required to keep the Mosaic Law.

⁷⁰ Romans 7:12 so then indeed the law [is] holy and the commandment is holy and right and good.

⁷¹ Romans 10:5 For Moses writes that the righteousness, the one out from the law, the man doing it will live by it.

⁷² Galatians 3:11

⁷³ Romans 7:7, 8, 13 Therefore, what will we say? Is the law sin? May it never come to be! But the sin [nature] I would not have experientially known except through law, for I would not intuitively known the covetousness⁷³, except the law said, "Do not covet." But the sin [nature] taking the occasion through the commandment, worked out in me all covetousness, for apart from law sin is dead... Therefore, did the good come to be to me death? May it never come to be! But the sin [nature], in order that it should be manifested sin, though the good to me working out death, in order that the sin [nature] should become according to excess of sinfulness, through the commandment.

⁷⁴ Romans 5:12-21 Because of this, just as through one man the sin entered the world and through the sin the death, also thus unto all men the death passed, on the basis that all sinned. For until law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed, being no law. But the death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those not sinning upon the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of the one about to come. But not as the trespass, thus also is the gracious gift. For since by the trespass of the one [man] the many died, how much more the grace from God and the gift by grace by the one man Jesus Christ abounds unto the many. And the gift is not as through one having sinned. For on the one hand judgment out from one [having sinned] unto condemnation, on the other hand the gracious gift out from many trespasses unto justification. For since by the one [man's] trespass the death reigned through the one [man], how much more the ones having received the abundance of the grace and the gift of righteousness in life will reign through the one Jesus Christ. Therefore then, as through one trespass unto all men into condemnation, thus also through one act of righteousness unto all men into justification of life. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, thus also through the obedience of the one [man], the many are constituted righteous. And law, having entered, in order that the trespass should abound; moreover, where the sin [nature] abounded, the grace super abounded in order that just as the sin [nature] reigned by the death, thus also the grace should reign through righteousness because of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁷⁵ Galatians 3:21-23

⁷⁶ Numbers 13:32

⁷⁷ Numbers 14:1-10

⁷⁸ Numbers 14:11-20

His voice⁷⁹. Even after they entered the land they continued to reject God's Word and turn to idols. Because Israel did not take God at His word, to this day they have not fully inherited the land that God has promised them. Not because God has failed to deliver on His promise, but because Israel continues to reject it. After dealing with Israel's disobedience for hundreds of years, God stops speaking to them. The covenant that God made with Abraham concerning his seed and the land that He would give them was not a conditional promise; rather, God swore by an oath that He would give it to them⁸⁰. Although God stopped giving Israel more revelation through the prophets, He did not reject Israel; rather, the next time He spoke to Israel it was not through the prophets, but through His Son⁸¹. Israel did not always forsake the Word of God. There were times in their history when they did follow what God said and as a result dwelt in the land in peace. King David is described as one who was after God's own heart. He hated God's enemies with a justifiable hatred and went after them every opportunity he had. Through David, God told Israel that the Savior was coming, the One that would rule upon the throne of David.

Prior to the Son coming to Israel, John the Baptist came as the forerunner of the King announcing His arrival and instructing Israel to change their mind concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens⁸². Many of the people came out to John, and were even baptized⁸³; however, the leaders of Israel would not accept Jesus as the Messiah⁸⁴. The High Priests and elders of the people knew who Jesus was and that as the Messiah and King He would rule Israel just as God said He would. They did not want this though because it meant they would lose their position of authority since they were very unrighteous. Rather than taking God at His word and living according to the Law in a righteous manner they manipulated the law and through it the people to satisfy their own desires⁸⁵. Law was not out from faith; therefore, no one was justified before God through the law. They had to take God at His word. Even from back when God took Israel out of the land of Egypt, only the one who believed that He was in the cloud, and then in the tabernacle was saved. Due to their unbelief the Glory left the Temple. Now God was returning for them, just as He said He would. When it came to the High Priests and the Elders of the people, they knew what the Scriptures said about the coming Messiah, and they knew that Jesus was in fact the Messiah⁸⁶. Therefore, they had Him put to death. However, God used the unrighteousness of man to show all that He is just in forgiving sins and raised Christ from the dead⁸⁷.

⁷⁹ Exodus 14:10 Fear of Pharaoh's army; Exodus 15:25; 17:3 thirsting for water; Exodus 16:2, 3 Hunger

⁸⁰ Hebrews 6:16,17

⁸¹ Hebrews 1:1,2

⁸² Matthew 3:1, 2 And in those days came alongside John the Baptist proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Change your mind, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is in a state of being near."

⁸³ Matthew 3:5

⁸⁴ Luke 22:2; Matthew 21:23-27, 45,46

⁸⁵ Mark 12:38-40

⁸⁶ Matthew 21:22 they saw with discernment that John the Baptist was the forerunner of the King

⁸⁷ Romans 3:25

After the resurrection of Christ, Israel is again given an opportunity to take God at His word⁸⁸. Now they had to believe that Jesus was God and that faith in Him through His death and resurrection would result in their justification before God⁸⁹. Many believed the message brought to them by Christ's disciples and verified by God with signs and wonders. On the first day of the Church, that new creation of God in which Christ is the head and the assembly is His body⁹⁰, some three thousand devout Jews believed the message⁹¹. However, as a nation Israel rejected what God has said and went their own way. The result of their rejection was the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jewish nation into the Gentile nations.

Through the resurrection of Christ, God brought about a new relationship in which the one who is saved is both righteous before Him and has access to His quality of life. Throughout the previous five dispensations man has failed to follow what God has said. Beginning with Adam who was simply instructed not to eat from one of the trees in the garden, to Israel guarding a promise God gave to their father Abraham. God has made a new covenant with the Church, which is based upon better promises and is a better covenant⁹². The Church is not under any quality of law, rather it is under grace⁹³. Grace is God's attitude whereby He gives a benefit without consideration of merit⁹⁴. Unlike law, which prevented everyone under it from maturing in their relationship with God⁹⁵, through grace God has made it possible for each member of the Church to come to a full experiential knowledge of Christ⁹⁶, His desirous will, and live a life that fully glorifies Him, apart from any quality of works that are not done out from faith. How do we as members of the Church enjoy the benefits of this new covenant? By taking God as His Word.

It has been shown through the history of mankind that every time man rejects God's Word and seeks to go about doing things his own way he fails. The result of man's works apart from God always lead to a catastrophic end and punishment because they are unrighteous. Will the Church be different? Will they listen to God and obey His voice? When Christ gave John the disciple Revelation concerning the future of the Church and the world, revealing a time when He will judge the unrighteousness of mankind and bring the world system to an end, He also gave him revelation about the Church, the majority of which is now history.

⁸⁸ Acts 2:14-38

⁸⁹ Romans 10:9,10 that if perhaps you should agree with your mouth Lord Jesus, and you should believe with your heart that the God has raised Him out from dead, you will be saved. For with *the* heart it [the utterance of faith] is believed because of righteousness, and with *the* mouth it [the utterance of faith] is verbally agreed upon because of salvation.

⁹⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17 So then since someone is in Christ; a new creation, ancient things have passed away, look with discernment, all things have become new.

⁹¹ Acts 2:41

⁹² Hebrews 8:6

⁹³ Romans 6:14 For sin will not rule you, for you are not under law but under grace.

⁹⁴ When the word "grace" is examined we find that it is expressed both to the righteous and the unrighteous. Therefore, to limit the definition to unmerited favor is missing the full meaning. God does not consider one's works of any value in His expression of Grace. Since He does not consider works; grace is then God's attitude whereby He gives a benefit without consideration of merit. Luke 2:40

⁹⁵ Hebrews 7:19

⁹⁶ Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:10; 2 Peter 1:3, 8 according as He has given all things towards life and Godliness to us through His Divine natural ability, through the full experiential knowledge of the one having called you through glory

The Church began strong in Israel on the day of Pentecost⁹⁷; however, the saints living in Jerusalem that came out of Judaism did not spread the message abroad. Yes, there were some situations where they went to the Samaritans and the Gentiles, but it was only a few and just during the times God specifically directed them. God showed Peter that the Gentiles were now being accepted just as the Jews. However, they chose not to spread the Word and ultimately went back to living under law⁹⁸. As a result of their disobedience God permitted persecution and scattered them through the nations⁹⁹. Even though the Christians in Jerusalem did not spread the Word throughout the nations, God still had those who did. After opening Paul's eyes to the truth, he spread the message throughout the known world at that time. During his travels many churches were setup among the Gentiles and the Word of God began to be written down for future generations. As God addresses the assembly in Ephesus we see the beginning period in history of the Church. At this time its biggest issue became its struggle against false apostles¹⁰⁰. They intensely labored for the sake of Christ's name and were patient, not fainting, and did not bear those who lacked in character. However, in this they lost their first love. They stopped seeking the best for the other saints¹⁰¹. Even the Apostle John, late in his life when he was living in Ephesus, kept reminding the Church of the value of love. If someone says they love God, but do not love the brethren, how can they love God whom they have not seen while disobeying His commandment¹⁰²? Unfortunately, the Church as a whole did not listen to God and failed to make a difference. The next Assembly in history is the church at Smyrna. Among this assembly were those claiming to be Jews that were not. The Gentiles did not take the place of Israel, neither physically nor spiritually. God took both Jew and Gentile and made one new man¹⁰³, not replacing the nation of Israel with the Gentiles. This assembly was going to face tribulation from the devil, who would cast them into prison. They are instructed by God to be faithful even to the point of death. As this period of persecution fades in the Church another assembly takes center stage. In Pergamos, that dwells in the place where Satan has setup his throne, they are instructed to keep the faith and hold fast to Christ; however, there were some among them that went after the error of Balaam¹⁰⁴. This was a man who for a high position and money taught a Gentile king how to cause Israel to defile itself¹⁰⁵ so that it would be destroyed. Along with this false teaching was the teaching of the separation between the pastors and deacons from the people¹⁰⁶. Rather than obeying God's Word and

⁹⁷ Acts 2:1-31

⁹⁸ Acts 21:20; Hebrews 5:12-14

⁹⁹ 1 Peter 1:1, 2 Peter, apostle belonging to Jesus Christ to [the] elect strangers of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia according to the foreknowledge of God even [the] Father, by the sanctification of the Spirit because of obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace is to you and may possibly peace be multiplied. Foreknowledge refers to the being dispersed, not election.

¹⁰⁰ Revelation 2:1-3

¹⁰¹ Revelation 2:5

¹⁰² 1 John 4:20

¹⁰³ Ephesians 2:15

¹⁰⁴ Revelation 2:14

¹⁰⁵ Numbers 31:16

¹⁰⁶ Revelation 2:15

caring for the saints they used the saints for gain and put the leaders of the church in a position they did not belong. Heresy that comes from this assembly can still be seen in Catholicism and its offspring. As a result of their disobedience God waged war against them and removed this assembly from its position of prominence in the Church's history. As this assembly fades due to its continued disobedience the assembly of Thyatira takes the focus in expressing the character of the Church. Although they had work and love, they served and had faith and patience, they also harbored the adulterous Jezebel¹⁰⁷. She brought in the worshipping of false gods. Any that lay in her bed of adultery will be cast into great tribulation¹⁰⁸ if they do not change their mind. There were still those among the saints in this assembly that did not follow the teachings of Jezebel and God put nothing more on them. Since this assembly as a whole did not obey God's Word and cast out the harlot and her followers they faced tremendous persecution and just as God said their position of predominance in the history of the Church was removed. As we come into the fifth period in the history of the Church the assembly at Sardis expresses the character of the Church. This assembly's works were not being brought to their full maturity. They were to remember what they were taught and follow through with the works until they reached their intended end. Failure to follow God's Word again resulted in this assembly losing its position in history. As we come to the next assembly we are told of a time within the Church's history when it will be small in number but strong in faith and obedience. For this assembly God has opened a door that no one is allowed to close. Among the seven periods in the Church's history this is the only one where the predominate character of the assembly is to be obedient to God. As a result of their obedience and keeping His word, God was going to protect them from being tempted by a temptation that was about to come upon the whole world to put to test those who dwell upon the earth. It would appear after five failures the Church it is finally being obedient to God's word; however, there are still those who do not live in obedience to God, and it brings in the seventh period in the Church's history. The assembly at Laodicea¹⁰⁹ is unique among all the assemblies. It is the only one in which Christ is on the outside. This is an assembly that is only lukewarm to God. A characteristic that is so offensive to God that He spews them out of His mouth. They have allowed their great wealth to push God out of the Church and as a result God will remove His children from the assembly and the remaining will enter the Great Tribulation and be destroyed¹¹⁰.

Each of these assemblies have been around throughout the history of the Church. Each has taken its place in history as the predominate characteristic of the Church. Those who did not obey God were removed, those who continued in His word were protected. Of these assemblies it is only the one in Philadelphia that predominantly kept God's Word and is therefore still around today. The other assemblies lost their love

¹⁰⁷ Revelation 2:20

¹⁰⁸ This is not a reference to The Great Tribulation. It is a quality of a tribulation period that will be great.

¹⁰⁹ Revelation 3:14-22

¹¹⁰ Revelation 18:2

because of false teachers, allowed false doctrine to enter into the Church and even committed spiritual adultery, worshipped false gods and idols and removed Christ completely from the assembly all because they did not obey God's Word.

God has provided everything a saint needs today to live a godly and that pleases Him, yet, so many assemblies today do not listen to God's Word. They seek physical wealth over spiritual wealth and gauge their success on the number attending, not the level of maturity in the saints. They fill the pews with unbelievers, take from the saints, who are to be cared for and loved by the assembly, and give to unbelievers who care nothing more than about getting something for free. Saints are taught every wind of doctrine by false teachers who have crept into the Church seeking to make merchandise of the assembly. This has become so predominate today that most of the assemblies calling themselves Christians have nothing to do with Christ. Yet there is still one among them that holds to God's word. One that teaches the truth, and although it is small in number it is not weak in the faith. This is the assembly that obey God's word.

In Christ God has taken away the condemnation that all men were under. He has dealt with sin righteously and gives to those in Christ all that is needed to live a godly life¹¹¹. As a result, the Christian life is not about doing, but about being who you are in Christ. God's instruction to the Church are to live by grace through the work that Christ has done. We do not serve God by law, rather, we are to grow in grace¹¹² and mature so that we can discern what is good and evil and fully experientially know the desirous will of God for our lives¹¹³.

Why is believing that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day the only what you can be saved today? Simply stated, because this is what God said. Do we take God at His Word, or make the same mistakes of the past? Eve was saved because she took God at His Word. She did not know that Christ would come to earth, die for her sins, and be resurrected on the third day. What she did know is that her seed would crush Satan. In Genesis 4:1 we see her faith in action when she describes her first son: "I have purchased a high born man from Jehovah". She sees Cain as the answer to what God stated. Although Job knew nothing of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah, Israel did not even exist at this time, he obeyed God and sought and found Him. Abraham was given a promise that related to his descendants and His faith in God's Word was counted to him as righteousness. Although Israel rejected promise and took the law they still had to believe that God was in the temple to be saved. They still had to take God at His Word when it came to health, wealth, and happiness for their nation. When they obeyed

¹¹¹ 2 Peter 1:3-8

¹¹² 2 Peter 3:18

¹¹³ Romans 12:2 And stop being outwardly conformed to this age¹¹³, but to be transformed by your renewed mind, for the purpose to test for approval what is the desirous will of God, the good and well pleasing and mature.

God, He protected them. When they disobeyed, God permitted the affects of their sins to come upon them. Salvation has always been by faith. Faith is taking God at His Word; therefore, the necessity to believe that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day for salvation is the only way to be saved today is because anything else would be rejecting what God has said. We see in Scripture what happens when we modify God's Word. Let us be true to what God has said, and be ones who are found faithful in a perverse and corrupt generation.

For I delivered to you at first that which also I received, **that Christ died on behalf of your sins according to the Scriptures**, and that He was buried, **and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**, and that He appeared to Cephas, then the twelve, then He was seen with discernment by over five hundred brethren at once.

For by grace you are saved through faith. Grace is God's attitude whereby He gives a benefit without consideration of merit; therefore, salvation cannot be earned¹¹⁴. Faith is the substance of that which is hoped for, the evidence of accomplished deeds not seen; therefore, faith is always based upon a promise¹¹⁵.

Take God at His Word and you will be saved!

¹¹⁴ Christ was shown grace; therefore, it cannot be defined as unmerited favor, Luke 2:52

¹¹⁵ Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24, 25