

God's Good News

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INTRODUCTION

In his book, *The Two Gospels*, Lance Latham wrote:

Down through the ages of history, Christianity has been subjected to a multitude of influences. There have been creative ideas, new programs, fascinating personalities, fresh approaches to theology, evangelism, missionary activity, and a myriad of other diverse developments in the ongoing mission of the church. It is probably undeniable that, with true spiritual discernment, these developments should be viewed with guarded favor, and given the opportunity to have their part in the cause of Christ.

However, that special and changeless message called “the gospel of the grace of God” must never be subject to creative ideas or diverse developments. The hope of eternal life, the central message of divine revelation, is based upon the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s cross and the offer of divine mercy which issues therefrom. The death of the Son of the living God in space and time and the meaning of that sacrifice is what constitutes this glorious message called the gospel.

Should that message ever be changed, then the door to life is instantly closed and Christianity becomes a mere humanistic religion, fascinating perhaps, but valueless. The most valuable and sacred commodity, therefore, on the face of the earth is the truth of the gospel. This is a sacred message worth living for, worth sacrificing for, and worth gladly dying for. It is the only real value on earth today; it is the truth of all truths to which the church must be dedicated to propagate and protect.¹

Sadly, many are distorting the message of the gospel today.

The purpose of this paper is to maintain the clarity of the gospel message. To do so we will consider the elements of a clear gospel presentation. We will affirm the only requirement for a lost sinner to be saved. And we will list a number of things that God alone accomplishes decisively, instantly, and permanently in response to faith.

The word “gospel” in the Greek New Testament is εὐαγγέλιον [*euaggelion*]. It simply means “good news.” It proclaims tidings or a message of deliverance. In fact, during warfare the word “gospel” meant “news of victory” after a battle or war was won.

In the “battle of the ages” Christ secured a decisive victory over the enemy of our souls. That victory is good news indeed. God’s good news explains how a lost person can become a child of God. It also explains the position and privileges that the child of God has in the family of God.

GOD’S GOOD NEWS FOR THE UNBELIEVER

The triune God who is love, made man in His image. Man is created by God, for God, to be in a relationship with God. God’s design was for man to glorify God by delighting in a right relationship with Him. Adam’s fall shows us how that intimate, loving relationship was severed and destroyed by sin. Yet God alone pursued the solution. He alone is loving and merciful and desires that all men everywhere be brought into a right relationship with Himself. The gospel, which brings justification and forgiveness, is a means to an end—a loving relationship that glorifies God and is good for all those created in His image.

¹ Lance B. Latham, *The Two Gospels* (AWANA, 1984), p. xv-xvi.

Since Doc Latham graduated to glory, others have taken up his cause as defenders of the gospel of grace. Following in the footsteps of Lance, Dr. J. B. Hixson sounded a similar warning in his book *Getting the Gospel Wrong*. He wrote:

Vince Lombardi is widely recognized as one of the greatest football coaches of all time. Legend has it that on one occasion, after a particularly tough loss for his team, he gathered his players in the locker room for the usual postgame speech. In a short but poignant statement the coach cut right to the heart of the matter. Holding up a football, Lombardi quipped, “Gentlemen, *this* is a football.” His point was not lost on the players: Their performance in the game that just concluded had evidenced an utter lack of competency in the very basic fundamentals of the game.

A survey of the state of American evangelicalism reveals a similar incompetency when it comes to the basics of the Christian faith, namely, the gospel. There is a crisis regarding the nature of the gospel within evangelical theology today and very little is being done to address the issue. While most evangelicals agree that Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith, there is widespread inconsistency regarding the specific content of saving faith. What is it about Jesus Christ that one must believe in order to have eternal life? Are there certain nonnegotiable truths that must be included in a gospel presentation in order for it to be considered the pure gospel? An abandonment of certainty, as well as a general disdain for absolute truth within the postmodern ideological milieu, have created fertile ground for erroneous gospel presentations—each competing for legitimacy within the evangelical church at large....

What is needed today is a Lombardi-style critique in which pastors and evangelical leaders confidently raise their Bibles and remind the church, “This is the gospel!”²

As we consider the clear presentation of the gospel message, we need to ask, “what elements should that message include?”

The Latin phrase, “*sine qua non*” literally means “without which, not.” It is the essential, crucial, or indispensable elements without which something would not exist. In mathematical terms, we might call that the “irreducible minimum.”

We might ask, “what is the irreducible minimum for a clear gospel presentation to the unsaved?” In other words, what are the essential elements or the *sine qua non* of a gospel presentation to the lost?

Paul summarizes the gospel message in his letter to the Corinthians. He wrote:

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. –1 Corinthians 15:3-4

A clear gospel presentation may include other elements than these. Nevertheless, Paul’s “gospel in a nutshell” should help us to flesh out the basic elements contained in a clear presentation of the gospel.

With that in mind, the following is a suggested outline for a clear gospel presentation.

² Hixson, J. B. *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About*. Revised Edition. Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2013. Print.

Mankind's Desperate Need for Justification

What is the greatest need for lost sinners who are under the just condemnation of God? We might answer that they need salvation. While that is true, the term “salvation” is imprecise. It is true that sinners are saved from the penalty of their sins at the very moment that they trust Christ for salvation. It is equally true that those who have trusted in Christ for salvation, are also being saved daily from the power of sin as they walk with Christ and allow Him to conform them to His image. It is also true that believers will be saved from the presence of sin when they meet the Savior face to face and are changed into His likeness. These three aspects of salvation have been called initial justification, progressive sanctification, and final glorification. For more on these aspects, see the “[Three Tenses of Salvation](#)” in the appendix.

This paper deals primarily with the first tense of salvation known as justification.

It has been said that before you can get a person saved you have to first get them lost. In other words, you need to demonstrate their lost condition. When we contrast God's holiness with man's sinfulness, the lostness of mankind comes into focus. That contrast leads us to see that man's sin separates him from God and that the sinner has no ability to save himself.

God's Holiness

God is holy. He is totally separate from sin and perfect. One author put it this way: “God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees.”³

The following verses highlight the holiness of the Almighty One who is uniquely above all and inhabits eternity.

- No one is holy like the LORD, For there is none besides You... –1 Samuel 2:2
- Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. –Isaiah 6:2-4
- For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place...” –Isaiah 57:15
- For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens. –Hebrews 7:26
- ... Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come! –Revelation 4:8

Man's Sinfulness

Man is unholy and completely sinful. He comes short of God's holiness. God's original design was to have a perfect relationship with man. Sin, unfortunately, has severed that relationship and man is unholy and completely sinful.

- For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin. –Ecclesiastes 7:20

³ This quote comes from A. W. Tozer's book, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (p. 113). Tozer would probably not approve of how the good news for the lost is presented in this paper, since he held to Lordship Salvation. For more on that topic read the paper *Lordship Salvation and Free Grace* by the Biblical Resource Group.

- All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. –Isaiah 53:6
- As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one.” –Romans 3:10
- For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. –Romans 3:23

Man’s Separation

Man’s sin is against the glorious Creator-God. His sin dishonors his benevolent Maker and is the cause of the broken relationship with God. As a result of God’s holiness and man’s sinfulness, all of mankind stands guilty and condemned before God. Man’s sin truly offends the holiness of God. Therefore, sin separates man from God.

- For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. –Psalm 5:4
- But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. –Isaiah 59:2
- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. –Romans 1:18
- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. –Romans 6:23

Man’s Inability

The efforts of man cannot save him or make him acceptable to God. This broken relationship cannot be mended by even man’s best and most sincere efforts.

- Law Keeping: Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. –Romans 3:20
- Good Works:
 - But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. –Isaiah 64:6
 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. –Ephesians 2:8-9
- Reform: Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. –Jeremiah 13:23
- Sincerity: For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. –Romans 10:2

God’s Gracious Provision of Justification

Justification was made possible because of who Jesus is and what He did at the cross. Justification guarantees that the broken relationship is made right again.

The Person of Christ

It took a sinless sacrifice to pay for the sins of all mankind. God provided that sacrifice through His only begotten Son born of a virgin. Jesus, the Son of God, added humanity to His deity to

become the God-Man in order to die for the sins of the whole world.

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. –John 1:1
- And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” –John 8:23-24
- I and My Father are one. –John 10:30
- Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” –John 11:25-27
- And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” –John 20:28-29
- But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. –John 20:31
- Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. –Acts 9:20
- Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. –Titus 2:13
- These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. –1 John 5:13

The Work of Christ

Christ bore the punishment for the sins of every person in the world though his death on the cross. In doing so, God bridged the gulf of separation through the work of Christ as the sinless sacrifice on behalf of all mankind.

The noun propitiation occurs four times in the New Testament—Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; and 1 John 2:2; 4:10. Propitiation (from Gk. *hilasmos* and *hilasterion*) means to expiate, to appease, or atone for. It means that Christ fully met and satisfied the demands of a righteous and holy God. Through His shed blood, Christ satisfied the holiness of God and bore the full wrath of God we deserved.

Paul wrote that through the death of Jesus Christ, God can be just and still declare the believer in Christ righteous (Rom. 3:26). The justice of God means that His integrity must be maintained. God does not overlook sin. Nevertheless, the death of Christ was sufficient in providing propitiation for sin so that God’s holiness and justice are fully satisfied. Propitiation is important because it shows how sinful man might be reconciled to a holy God. God did all of this so that He might enjoy a restored relationship with man. And man may also enjoy a restored relationship with God.

- And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. –1 John 2:2

- Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. – Isaiah 53:4-5, 11
- For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. –John 3:16
- But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. –Romans 5:8
- For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. –2 Corinthians 5:21
- For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. –1 Timothy 2:5-6
- Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. –1 Peter 2:24
- For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit. –1 Peter 3:18

God’s Only Requirement for Justification

God has only one requirement for justification. That requirement is to personally believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-bearer and Savior as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

God is not a reluctant or begrudging Savior. He delights to have man’s relationship restored to Himself. In Luke 15 we have the stories of the “lost sheep,” the “lost coin” and the “prodigal son.” When we examine the character that represents God in those stories, we see some shocking phrases describing God’s delight over the lost being found and embraced. The shepherd rejoices over the lost sheep being found and yet in verse 7 it says there is “more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.” When the lost coin is found, the woman rejoices with her friends and neighbors; similarly verse 10 says, “there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”⁴ The prodigal who glaringly dishonored his loving father and was classified as “dead” and “lost,” finally, reluctantly returns home in shame; yet verse 20 says, “while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” His father defends his expression of joy in verse 32 by saying, “It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.” God’s delight in bringing man back into a loving relationship with Himself is clearly demonstrated throughout Scripture.

For further details on God’s only requirement for justification please see appendix entries: [Faith Defined](#) and [Faith Alone](#).

- But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is

⁴ Repent means ‘changing the mind.’

accounted for righteousness. –Romans 4:5

- Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. –John 5:24
- Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” –John 6:28-29
- Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. –John 6:47
- And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” –Acts 16:30-31
- Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. –Romans 3:28
- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. –Ephesians 2:8-9

GOD’S GOOD NEWS FOR THE BELIEVER

God not only has good news for those who are lost and in need of salvation, He also has good news for those who have believed in Christ for salvation. At the moment a new believer trusts the Savior for salvation, God decisively, instantly and permanently accomplishes a number of things on his behalf. At the moment of salvation, these things are given simply by God’s grace. They are not earned by merit. They are possessed instantly at the point of salvation. They are not experiential but rather indicate our positional standing in Christ before God. They are eternal in character and cannot be lost.

Dr. Lewis S. Chafer, in his *Systematic Theology*, listed 33 things that God accomplishes at the moment of salvation. The following are just a sample of those accomplishments.⁵

When the sinner believes, he is instantly justified. The word justify means to declare righteous. Both the Hebrew (*sadaq*) and the Greek (*dikaioo*) words mean to announce a favorable verdict, or to declare righteous. This does not mean to make righteous, but rather to announce righteousness. It is a legal term picturing the scene of a courtroom. To justify is to pronounce a legal verdict of righteousness. At the moment a person trusts Christ for salvation, God declares that new believer righteous. Nothing can ever change that declaration.

- Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. –Romans 3:24
- To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. –Romans 3:26
- Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. –Romans 3:28
- But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. –Romans 4:5

⁵ These accomplishments are not listed in any order of importance.

- Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. –Romans 5:1
- Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. –Romans 5:9
- And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. –Romans 5:16
- Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. –Romans 5:18
- But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. –1 Corinthians 1:30
- And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. –1 Corinthians 6:11
- Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. –Galatians 2:16
- Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. –Galatians 3:24

When the sinner believes, he is instantly forgiven all trespasses. King David spoke of the blessedness of having our sins forgiven (Ps. 32:1-2; Rom. 4:6-8). At the moment of salvation, God forgave us all of our trespasses and He did so out of His grace. When Christ died on the cross, all of our sins were yet future, and He died for all of them. He did not die for only the sins we committed prior to that point in time when we trusted Christ for salvation.

The word “forgiven” (Gk. *charizomai*) means to grant as a favor, to give graciously, or to forgive out of grace. It is closely linked with the word for “grace” (Gk. *charis*), which emphasizes that forgiveness is rooted in God’s grace. There is no human merit involved. Forgiveness also carries the idea of pardon, canceling a debt, or releasing a prisoner. Forgiveness means that God has graciously canceled the debt of sin man could not pay.

When the unbeliever receives Christ as Savior, that forgiveness covers all the guilt of his sins—past, present, and future (Eph. 1:7). That is known as judicial forgiveness which happens at the moment of salvation. There is another aspect of forgiveness which could be described as family forgiveness. For the believer, that forgiveness restores the enjoyment of fellowship in the family of God (1 John 1:9). We could say that judicial forgiveness brings the unbeliever into the family of God, while family forgiveness restores the temporarily broken fellowship within the family.

- Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. –Psalm 32:1-2
- Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute

sin.” –Romans 4:6-8

- And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. –Colossians 2:13
- In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. –Ephesians 1:7

When the sinner believes, he is instantly reconciled. Reconciliation is a permanent change of relationship from alienation to acceptance. Reconciliation brings about peace between two parties. At the moment of salvation, the relationship between the sinner and God is once for all changed from one of hostility to harmony. Although fellowship can be affected by sin, that new relationship can never be severed between the believer and God.

- For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. –Romans 5:10
- Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18
- Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

When the sinner believes, he is instantly accepted by God through Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that “He made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6b).” Too often believers live as though they are on probation rather than appropriate the truth of God’s acceptance.

Miles Stanford wrote: “There are two questions that every believer must settle as soon as possible. The one is, Does God fully accept me? and the second, If so, upon what basis does He do so? This is crucial. What devastation often permeates the life of one, young or old, rich or poor, saved or unsaved, who is not sure of being accepted, even on the human level.”⁶

A. J. Gordon answered the question of acceptance: “So far as the question of the Christian’s acceptance and standing before a righteous law is concerned, God sees nothing from His throne but Christ Jesus alone and altogether. And since the believer is in Him and one with Him, he shares His place in the Father’s heart, and unworthy as he is in himself, yet he may know without a doubt that he is ‘accepted in the Beloved.’”⁷

You cannot be condemned if you are in Christ because Christ, Who is without sin, died in our place taking upon Himself our condemnation and rose from the dead His work completed. For us to be in Christ means to be accepted in the Beloved. Jesus Christ presents us to the Father clothed in His own righteousness.

On what basis are you accepted? By His grace. Not by your attainment, not by your works, not by your striving. Grace is completely contrary to human nature. And this standing was secured for the believer at the very moment he trusted Christ for salvation.

- Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. –Romans 8:1
- Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. –Romans 8:34

⁶ Stanford, Miles J. *Complete Works of Miles J. Stanford*. Galaxie Software, 2002. Print.

⁷ Gordon, Adoniram Judson *In Christ Or, The Believer’s Union with His Lord* (Revell, 1880), p. 119

- ... He made us accepted in the Beloved. –Ephesians 1:6b

When the sinner believes, he is instantly redeemed. Redemption means being set free by the payment of a price. The term was used in relation to first century Roman slave markets. In those markets, a slave was put up for sale and the purchaser paid a price to set the slave free from his/her previous owner. Paul used that term to describe the believer's release from bondage and enslavement to sin. We were redeemed by the payment of Christ's shed blood on the cross of Calvary. His death was necessary to accomplish deliverance from sin. Romans 3:24 emphasizes that Christ's death satisfied and turned aside the wrath of God we deserved, accomplishing our redemption. That passage also links justification with redemption; because redemption was accomplished, man can be declared righteous.

- Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. –Romans 3:24
- But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. –1 Corinthians 1:30
- Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.” –Galatians 3:13
- In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. –Ephesians 1:7
- In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. –Colossians 1:14
- For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. –1 Timothy 2:5-6

When the sinner believes, he is instantly complete in Christ. The moment a person trusts Christ for salvation, he possesses every spiritual blessing and is complete in Christ. The believer has in Christ all that is needed for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

Dr. J. Vernon McGee wrote:

“Complete” is a nautical term, and it could be translated in this very vivid way: You are ready for the voyage of life in Him. Isn't that a wonderful way of saying it? You are ready for the voyage of life in Christ, and whatever you need for the voyage of life you will find in Him. This is where we say that Christ is the answer. What is your question? What is it you need today?⁸

Warren Wiersbe wrote:

Now, the remarkable thing is this: *every believer shares that fullness!* “And you are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10). The tense of the Greek verb indicates that this fullness is a permanent experience. Dr. Kenneth Wuest's very literal *Expanded Translation* reads, “And you are in Him, having been completely filled full with the present result that you are in a state of fullness.”

When a person is born again into the family of God, he is born complete in Christ. His spiritual growth is not by *addition*, but by *nutrition*. He grows from the inside out. Nothing needs to be added to Christ because He already is the very fullness of God. As the believer

⁸ McGee, J. V. *Thru the Bible Commentary*: Thomas Nelson

draws on Christ's fullness, he is "filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). What more does he need?⁹

Since we are complete in our Lord Jesus, we need not, and cannot add anything to that finished work.

- And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. –John 1:16
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ –Ephesians 1:3
- For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. –Colossians 2:9-10
- His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him ... –2 Peter 1:3

When the sinner believes, he is instantly born into the family of God. The moment someone believes in Christ, that person is born into the family of God. The apostle John wrote that receiving Jesus gives people the right to become God's children. Receiving Jesus consists of believing in His name. Believing therefore equals receiving. We are related to God through the new birth. That position as members of His family can never be lost. We can never be disowned. Our fellowship with God the Father can be broken because of sin. However, our permanent relationship as His children can never be in jeopardy.

- But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. –John 1:12
- Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again." –John 3:7
- Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. –1 Peter 1:23

When the sinner believes, he is instantly indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As Jesus explained the new birth to Nicodemus, He indicated that this birth is by the Spirit (Jn. 3:6). Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit's presence with believer's would no longer be temporary as in the Old Testament, but rather His indwelling would be permanent (Jn. 14:16-17). Jesus emphasized that the Holy Spirit would be "in them" (v. 17) and that indwelling would be "forever" (v. 16). All believers in the Church Age have the Holy Spirit indwelling them (cf. Rom. 8:9, Jude 19).

According to Paul, the Holy Spirit is given at the moment of salvation when believers are sealed with the Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:13, Gal. 3:2). The sealing of the Holy Spirit is one of many works God performs on behalf of the believer to secure his salvation (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). God "sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2 Cor. 1:22). In Scripture, a seal was used to authenticate a document or to authenticate a transfer of power from one ruler to another. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer as a seal identifying Him as belonging to God.

Besides indwelling, regenerating, and sealing the believer at the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit also baptizes believers placing them into the body of Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the filling of the Holy Spirit which is conditional, experiential and also

⁹ Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print.

repeated.¹⁰

- And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. —John 14:16-17
- For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. —1 Corinthians 12:13
- And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. —Ephesians 4:30

CONCLUSION

Remember that our goal in presenting the gospel of grace is to help the unsaved see that they are born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. They are separated from the Holy God and helpless to bring about a solution to their dilemma. Sinners deserve death and a sinner unaided will forever be separated from God in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

Because God the Creator is good, He has provided for all of mankind's sin to be paid for. Jesus the spotless Son of God took upon Himself man's sin by dying in his place—"the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18). The guilt and shame of sin has been removed completely.

The only thing that a sinner has to do to have God apply the work of Christ to himself is to trust in what Jesus did for him on the cross. Trust or faith is accepting the fact that when Jesus Christ died, God was satisfied—the sin debt was completely paid. By believing in Christ, a sinner is looking away from anything he can do and trusting only in what Christ has done.

When the sinner believes the gospel, God graciously credits Christ's righteousness to the sinner's account. God who is holy, instantly and permanently justifies the sinner, regenerates him, baptizes him by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, forgives all of his sins and seals him with the Holy Spirit.

Our goal is to keep the message of the gospel clear and free from works.

- Keep the issue clear: The issue is sin, and Who is going to forgive it.
- Keep the direction clear: It is from the Giver to the recipient. The gift of righteousness is given when you believe.
- Keep the requirements clear: It is salvation through FAITH. There is nothing more!

APPENDIX

Assurance of Salvation

When we trust in Jesus Christ, our eternal security in Christ becomes a spiritual reality whether we understand it or believe it. One's belief in security in Christ does not make it true or false. If we have trusted in the person and work of Christ for personal salvation, security is a fact. Assurance is the confident realization that one possesses eternal life as a result of trusting Christ as Savior. This assurance can be realized by the brand-new believer in Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ John Walvoord wrote, "In contrast to the permanence of the new birth and the indwelling Holy Spirit, the filling of the Spirit is a repeated experience." <https://walvoord.com/article/163> (accessed Dec. 9, 2022)

We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior ... wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word.¹¹

One of the significant differences between the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church had to do with assurance of salvation.

At the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church declared:

“If anyone says that a sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification let him be anathema.”

“If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing more than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.”

In contrast, the Reformers taught that believers could have assurance of salvation. Dr. Robert L. Dabney wrote:

[Luther and Calvin] ... asserted that the assurance of hope is of the essence of saving faith. Thus says Calvin in his Commentary on Romans, “My faith is a divine and scriptural belief that God has pardoned me and accepted me.”

Calvin requires everyone to say, in substance, I believe fully that Christ has saved me. Amidst all Calvin’s verbal variations, this is always his meaning....¹²

Does that mean a believer will never have doubts about their salvation? Absolutely not! Does that mean a believer is guaranteed to persevere in their faith to the very end of their life. Not at all. Assurance is simply taking God at His Word and believing that God forgives those who place their faith in the sacrifice of His Son on the cross of Calvary to pay for the penalty of sins.

Scripture References:

John 5:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 6:47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”

2 Timothy 1:12b ... for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

See also: Luke 10:20; 22:32; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6–8.

¹¹ Dallas Theological Seminary Doctrinal Statement Article XI. <https://www.dts.edu/about/what-we-believe/doctrinal-statement/>

¹² Dabney, R. L. *Discussions of Robert L. Dabney, Vol. I*, pp. 215-16. The Banner of Truth Trust. Print.

The Three Tenses of Salvation

The concept of salvation occurs over 600 times in the Bible. In the New Testament, the Greek verb σώζω [sōzō] is usually translated “to save.” It can mean “to make well or get well, to cure or be cured, to preserve or to restore.” The primary meaning is “to save, to keep safe, or to rescue from danger or destruction.”

When the Bible speaks of salvation, it is a good idea to ask, “salvation from what?” The context determines what type of salvation is being referred to in each passage. Recognizing the context of a verse is crucial to its proper interpretation. Depending on the context, salvation may refer to either 1) physical salvation or 2) spiritual salvation. In the Old Testament, salvation primarily refers to deliverance from physical danger. Salvation in the Old Testament rarely, if ever, means spiritual salvation.

In the New Testament, some passages of scripture are debatable as to whether the author is referring to physical salvation or spiritual salvation. But even if we conceded that all of those debatable passages referred to spiritual salvation, at least 55% of the time salvation refers to deliverance from a temporal difficulty such as death, disease, or a meaningless life.¹³

Much confusion can be avoided by determining if the text of scripture is referring to physical salvation or spiritual salvation. It is also helpful to understand that there are three tenses of salvation.

How would you reply to the question, “Are you saved?” Those who have placed their trust in Christ for salvation would undoubtedly answer, “Yes, I am saved.” However, when we understand the three tenses of salvation portrayed in God’s Word, the biblical answer to that question should be: “Yes, I *have been* saved; yes, I *am being* saved; and yes, I *will be* saved.”

It is important to understand that there are three aspects of salvation. Salvation occurs in three tenses. Dr. Ryrie explains:

The inclusive sweep of salvation is underscored by observing the three tenses of salvation. (1) The moment one believed he was saved from the condemnation of sin (Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5). (2) That believer is also being saved from the dominion of sin and is being sanctified and preserved (Heb. 7:25). (3) And he will be saved from the very presence of sin in heaven forever (Rom. 5:9–10).¹⁴

The past tense aspect of salvation is known as justification. Justification takes place at a moment in time when a sinner trusts Christ for salvation. By means of justification, the one who trusts Christ as Savior is saved from the **penalty** of sin which is eternal separation from God. Justification is by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (See Acts 16:31).

The biblical concept of justification is the picture of a courtroom. As Judge, God declares that the sinner is legally acceptable because divine justice has been satisfied by Jesus Christ. This verdict does not *make* the sinner become righteous. God *declares* a sinner righteous in legal standing.

The English word translated *justify* in the New Testament comes from the Greek verb δικαιώω (dikaioō) which means “to declare or pronounce, one to be just or righteous.”

¹³ Chay, Fred; Anderson, David R.; Dillow, Joseph; Wilson, Ken; Tanner, Paul. *A Defense of Free Grace Theology: With Respect to Saving Faith, Perseverance, and Assurance* (p. 110). Grace Theology Press. Kindle Edition.

¹⁴ Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999. Print.

Paul wrote: “For we maintain that a man is **justified** [δικαιόω; dikaioō] by faith apart from works of the Law (Rom. 3:28).”

The present tense aspect of salvation is known as progressive sanctification. This is a process that occurs over a period of time as the believer walks by faith in God’s Word by means of the Holy Spirit. Through progressive sanctification, believers are saved from the **power** of sin in their lives as they rely upon the Spirit and abide in Jesus as the Vine. Progressive sanctification is by God’s grace through daily dependence on the Lord via the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 6:1-14; 8:1-4).

The future tense aspect of salvation is known as glorification. When believers ultimately stand complete in heaven, they will be delivered from the very **presence** of sin (Rom. 13:11; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

Unless people understand these three tenses of salvation, it is easy to complicate the message of the gospel. For example, discipleship (an aspect of the second tense of salvation) is often presented as a requirement for justification (which deals with the first tense of salvation).

Faith Defined

In general terms, faith is the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true. Its primary idea is trust. In the context of justification, faith is exercised when we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.

When the Philippian jailer asked how he could be saved, Paul and Silas replied: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved... (Acts 16:31).” The only requirement to be saved is to believe. Martin Luther and John Calvin called that teaching “sola fide”—faith alone.

What does it mean to believe? Is there a connection between the verb *believe* and the noun *faith*?

In English, it is hard to see the connection between the words *believe* and *faith*. As far as spelling goes, they don’t even look the same. While the connection between *believe* and *faith* is not obvious in English by comparing the spellings, it is unmistakable in New Testament Greek.

The English verb translated *believe* is the Greek word **πιστεύω** (pisteuō). It means to believe, trust or place confidence in.¹⁵

The English noun translated *faith* is the Greek word **πίστις** (pistis). It means faith, belief, or conviction of the truth.¹⁶

The following are examples of how the verb and the noun are used in the New Testament:

- Romans 3:21–22 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through **faith** (πίστις; pistis) in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who **believe** (πιστεύω; pisteuō).
- Romans 4:5 But to him who does not work but **believes** (πιστεύω; pisteuō) on Him who justifies the ungodly, his **faith** (πίστις; pistis) is accounted for righteousness.
- Galatians 2:16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by **faith** (πίστις; pistis) in Jesus Christ, even we have **believed** (πιστεύω; pisteuō) in Christ Jesus...
- Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by **faith** (πίστις; pistis) in Jesus Christ might be given to those who **believe** (πιστεύω; pisteuō).

¹⁵ Thayer, Joseph Henry. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*: Print.

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Hebrews 11:6 But without **faith** (πίστις; pistis) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** (πιστεύω; pisteuō) that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Simply put:

- *Faith* (πίστις; pistis) means to *believe* (πιστεύω; pisteuō).
- *Believe* (πιστεύω; pisteuō) means to have *faith* (πίστις; pistis).

It is not complicated. However, because the words *faith* and *believe* do not appear to be related in English, this can create problems. Art Farstad explains:

Oddly enough, the most important Gospel word-family in the Greek NT is obscured in English. This is because we translate the Greek verb [pisteuō] by the Anglo-Saxon word *believe*, and the related noun [pistis] by the totally unrelated word *faith* (from the Latin *fides*, by way of French).

At least partly due to this lack of similarity, many preachers who are weak on grace are able to maintain that the Greek lying behind one or both of the English words includes a whole possible agenda of works, such as commitment, repentance, perseverance, etc.

Actually, *believe* and *faith*, as the Greek shows, are just the verb and the noun for a concept that is really no different in English than in Greek. That concept is taking people at their word, trusting that what they say is true.¹⁷

The concept of faith does not need to be complicated with excess baggage such as saving faith, spurious faith, genuine faith, false faith, temporal faith, etc. Dave Breese explains:

The adjective “saving” is now used by its proponents to teach that there is some special quality, depth or sincerity of faith which makes it “saving” faith. It is presented as faith that is “genuinely sincere,” “real” and the like. It is frequently defined as being “heart faith” rather than mere “head faith.” The implication is that the first will save and the second will not.

There is no such thing as saving faith.

That is, there is no such thing as a faith that is made salvific, genuine or efficacious by its quality. It is not the quality of faith which makes it real or saving.

Faith is “real” or saving only, yes only, because it has the proper object. A “deep,” “genuine,” “high-quality” faith in a rotting rope ladder is worthless by comparison to a simple faith in a strong, solid staircase. Yes, a flicker of faith (which may not be thought of as faith at all by its possessor) in a marble staircase is infinitely more valuable than a long, strong faith in aged hemp which has been eaten away by time. The “assumption” that the staircase will support your weight is better than the passionate, tear-stained, profound conviction that the rotting rope will hold you.

Faith is given its solidity by the thing in which we have faith. Just so, faith becomes “saving faith” when it is faith in Jesus Christ, the strong Son of God. Specifically, the faith that saves is faith that Jesus Christ is the God-man and that He died for our sins on Calvary’s cross and rose again the third day. When one believes these twin truths—who

¹⁷ Hixson, J. B. *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About*. Revised Edition. Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2013. Print.

Christ is and what He did to save us—he has exercised “saving faith.”¹⁸

We need to keep the message of the gospel clear. We can do that by defining terms in the way they are used in God’s Word.

- Acts 16:31 So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
- Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Faith Alone

There are approximately 160 verses in the New Testament that indicate that salvation is based solely upon a person’s belief in Jesus Christ.¹⁹

- Matthew 18:6
- Mark 9:42
- Luke 7:48–50; 8:12; 18:42
- John 1:7, 12; 2:11, 23; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 4:39; 4:41, 42; 5:24, 38, 45–47; 6:29, 35–36, 40, 47, 64; 7:5, 31, 38, 39; 8:24, 30–31, 45–46; 9:35–38; 10:24–26, 37–38, 42; 11:15, 25–27, 42, 45; 12:11, 36–38, 42, 44, 46–47; 13:19; 14:1–6, 12; 16:9; 17:20, 21; 19:35; 20:29, 31
- Acts 2:44; 3:16; 4:4, 32; 5:14; 8:12–13, 37; 9:42; 10:43, 45; 11:17, 21; 13:12, 39, 48; 14:1, 23, 27; 15:5, 7, 9; 16:1, 31, 34; 17:4, 5, 12, 34; 18:8, 27; 19:4, 18; 20:21; 21:20, 25; 22:19; 24:24; 26:18; 28:24
- Romans 1:16, 17; 3:22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30; 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24; 5:1, 2; 9:30, 32, 33; 10:4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16–17; 11:20, 30–32; 13:11; 15:13
- 1 Corinthians 1:21; 3:5; 7:12–13; 15:2, 11; 6:15
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 22, 24, 26; 5:5
- Ephesians 1:13, 19; 2:8; 3:17
- Philippians 1:29; 3:9
- 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2:10; 4:14
- 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:12, 13; 3:2
- 1 Timothy 1:16; 3:16; 4:3, 10
- 2 Timothy 1:12; 3:15
- Hebrews 11:6, 7, 31
- James 2:23
- 1 Peter 1:21; 2:6, 7
- 1 John 5:1, 4, 5, 10, 13

Repentance Defined

Is repentance a requirement for salvation? God’s Word indicates that it is.

- Acts 17:30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

¹⁸ Excerpts from two unpublished papers by Dave Breese. “The Heresy Is in the Adjectives” and “Saving Faith.”

¹⁹ Hixson, J. B. Getting the Gospel Wrong.

- 2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

John tells us the reason why he wrote his Gospel:

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

John says that he wrote his Gospel so that the reader might believe and have life in His name. John used the term “believe” (πιστεύω, *pisteuō*) approximately 100 times in his Gospel over half of which reference receiving eternal life. But he did not use the terms “repent” or “repentance” even once. Considering this fact, how can repentance be a requirement for salvation?

To answer that question, we need to define repentance. What does it mean to *repent*?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines *repent* as:

To feel remorse, contrition, or self-reproach for what one has done or failed to do. To be contrite. To feel such regret for past conduct as to change one’s mind regarding it. To become a more moral or religious person as a result of remorse or contrition for one’s sins.

The English word translated as *repent* in the New Testament is the Greek word μετανοέω [*metanoēō*]. It means to change one’s mind or perception. It does not mean *to turn* from sin. In fact, Greek has 9 different ways to say “turn” and not one of them is μετανοέω [*metanoēō*].

It seems like there is a major disconnect between how modern English defines the word *repent* and how it was defined in the first century. When the New Testament was written, *repentance* was defined as “changing the mind” and not as “turning from sin.”

Regarding salvation, what is it that people need to change their minds about? People come from divergent backgrounds and have differing understandings of issues that relate to salvation. As a result, there could be many things that they may need to have a change of mind about. Ultimately, people may need to change their minds about three key issues to be saved.

- 1) **Sin**—Sin is truly an offense to God. All have sinned and are separated from God.
- 2) **Salvation**—People cannot save themselves.
- 3) **The Savior**—Only by trusting in Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross are people able to be saved.

Dr. Charles Ryrie wrote:

The only kind of repentance that saves is a change of mind about Jesus Christ. People can weep; people can resolve to turn from their past sins; but those things in themselves cannot save. The only kind of repentance that saves anyone, anywhere, anytime is a change of mind about Jesus Christ. The sense of sin and sorrow because of sin may stir up a person’s mind or conscience so that he or she realizes the need for a Savior, but if there is no change of mind about Jesus Christ there will be no salvation.²⁰

²⁰ Charles Ryrie, *So Great Salvation: What It Means to Believe in Jesus Christ* (Wheaton, Illinois, 1989), pp. 94-95

Dr. Robert Lightner wrote:

The word *repentance* means a change of mind.... There is no question about it: repentance is necessary for salvation. However, Scripture views repentance as included in believing and not as an additional and separate condition to faith. All who have trusted Christ as Savior have changed their minds regarding Him and their sin.²¹

Repentance in Scripture has to do with a change of mind. Evangelicals agree no one can be saved who does not change his mind about himself and his need, his sin which separates him from God, and about Christ as the only Savior.²²

The terms *repent* and *believe* are two sides of the same coin. John does not use the term “repent” in his gospel because the term “believe” carries all the necessary elements of “repentance.”

The Deity of Christ

The presentation of a clear gospel message needs to include both the person and work of Christ. As we consider the person of Christ, we insist that Jesus was born into this world as God-incarnate. He offered Himself as a sinless sacrifice to purchase our redemption. He had to be sinless to qualify as an acceptable sacrifice for sin. Since no human being can claim to be sinless, Jesus had to be God in the flesh.

In presenting the gospel, we want the lost person to understand that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” “There is none righteous.” All mankind is in the same sinking boat.

We also want the lost person to understand that Jesus died on their behalf to pay the penalty of their sins.

He was the only begotten Son of God who was given by the Father in order that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).

As the Son of God, He was uniquely qualified to give His life as a ransom for many to pay the sin debt for the whole world.

An understanding of those elemental truths regarding the person and work of Christ is what that lost person needs to know. That does not mean they will have a complete understanding of Christ’s deity.

Dr. J. B. Hixson explains:

In identifying the content of saving faith, it is best to speak of faith in the person of Jesus Christ—the Jesus of the Bible—and then expand on this idea by addressing those identifying facts about Him that must be included in the kernel of salvific truth. For instance, one must understand that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again. To believe in Him this way is to accept Him as uniquely qualified to impart eternal life (cf. John 11:26–27). It is to understand on some level that He is the Son of God—a title that distinguishes Him from every other person in the history of mankind. To be sure, saving faith does not require the affirmation of a fully developed doctrine of the deity of Christ. Indeed, the term “deity” may not even come up in an evangelistic encounter. Yet saving faith involves recognizing—however rudimentary this recognition may be—that *Jesus is*

²¹ Robert Lightner, *Sin, The Savior, and Salvation: The Theology of Everlasting Life*. (Nashville, Tennessee), p. 167

²² *Ibid.*, p. 212

*God in the flesh.*²³

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

BOOKS:

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- Charles C. Bing, *Simply by Grace: An Introduction to God's Life-Changing Gift*, (Kregel Publications, 2009).
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- David R. Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology—Revised Edition*, (Grace Theological Press, 2012).
- Dennis M. Rokser, *7 Reasons Not to Ask Jesus Into Your Heart*, (Grace Gospel Press, 2007).
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- J. B. Hixson, *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About*, (Xulon Press, 2008).
- Lance B. Latham, *The Two Gospels*, (AWANA Youth Association, 1984).

ARTICLES:

- AWANA, “Scriptural Evaluation of Salvation Invitations”
- Ronald Shea, “The Gospel Booklet”
- Charles C. Bing, “How to Share the Gospel Clearly”

OTHER RESOURCES:

- GoodSeed <https://www.goodseed.com/>
- GraceLife (Dr. Charlie Bing) <https://www.gracelife.org/>
- EVANTELL <https://www.evantell.org/>
- Not By Works Ministries (J. B. Hixson) <https://www.notbyworks.org/>

²³ Hixson, J. B. *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About*. Revised Edition. Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2013. Print.