

SECTION 1

OUR POSITION

Among those who know the Lord Jesus Christ are men gifted by God to preach and teach the wonderful truths contained in the Holy Bible. In His wisdom, the Lord did not make any of these men alike. Their personalities, abilities, and thought processes are all unique. This allows the body of Christ to benefit more fully from its ministers, as each one will see some aspect of truth more clearly than the others, or will have an insight into a particular matter that is fresh and blessed.

As these men walk humbly before the Lord they are not only enabled to reveal and teach truth to others but are able to be taught. How grand to know that God has not given all truth to one man, but some truth to all men. Thus, we realize the need to be instructed by others and corrected by others.

Happy is the man who sees himself as capable of error. Happy is the man who recognizes his need to learn from others. Happy is the fellowship between men who possess this understanding. They may disagree, be the iron that sharpens iron, exchange differing views, and remain fast friends as they work together for the cause of Jesus Christ.

Some of my brethren, my friends, have grown increasingly frustrated with the lukewarm blindness of this Laodicean age. All attempts to stir their churches seem to have failed. As a last resort, some have begun to read into the New Testament a threat of punishment upon the Lord's redeemed.

I first heard this idea in the mid 1980's when a group of preachers in Michigan were setting forth the notion that there would be a place of outer darkness in the Millennial age where Christians who had not done enough good works would weep

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and gnash their teeth, while those who had done enough good works enjoyed the marriage supper of the Lamb.

A decade later I would occasionally come across someone who suggested a punishment of shorter duration, some sort of humiliation or beating just after the judgment seat of Christ. The nature and severity of this chastisement would vary depending on who was doing the teaching.

In both cases the intent was to frighten saved people who did not love the Lord enough to serve Him into serving Him out of love for their own flesh. If you don't want to be beaten you better get busy, was the theme.

What bothered me about both notions was the fact that while I was dealing with Armenians of every brand who were teaching that if a saved man did not do enough good works he would lose his salvation I was beginning to hear the same verses and the same lack of logic from those who held to the doctrine of eternal security. The only real difference was that the latter lessened the degree of the punishment and the former had a lot more verses to misinterpret in support of their view.

Recently, a friend of mine devoted an entire issue of his magazine to espousing the notion that a born again Christian who does not do enough good works after he is saved will be made to burn in hell during the thousand year reign of Christ on earth. I asked this brother not to publish the article, fearing the backlash, division and loss of support for his good ministry that would follow. He published.

I was asked to prepare a response to his theory and, with much reservation, I have done so. The reservation is not because I have any doubt about the place of the blood washed saint in the kingdom age, but because I do not want to be drawn into the spirit of debate and schism that has already done so much harm to the cause of Christ.

Here is our position.

First: The Lord Jesus Christ made a full payment for all sin and sins when He died upon the cross. His sacrifice was accepted by God the Father.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:4-12).

Second: The moment one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ he receives God's righteousness. This righteousness is imputed to the believer. At that moment he is fully, completely and totally

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justified. This justification and imputed righteousness is never removed.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3:24-28).

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4:1-8).

If you have believed on Jesus

1. Your iniquities are forgiven
2. Your sins are covered, and
3. The Lord will not impute sin.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:10, 14).

My initial sanctification is guaranteed to last for all of eternity. This is the teaching of Philippians 1:6 and 1 Corinthians 1:6, 8. *Being confident of this very thing, that he*

which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Third: All warning of punishment must be restricted to the affliction of the flesh in time, not to the soul following death or the rapture for two reasons. One, the new man, the inner man cannot sin, thus, would never have any reason to be punished. ***Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*** (1 John 3:9). Two, the body of sin and death that is guilty of transgression (Romans 7:17) has been left behind, and the believer stands at the judgment seat glorified (Philippians 3:21) free from the body of this death (Romans 7:24) and is presented to the Father by Jesus without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27). The one who sinned is gone. The one who could not sin stands before his redeemer in a glorified body.

Fourth: We see no ground upon which God could punish someone who stands before Him

- Justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ
- Sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ
- And spotless through the love of Jesus Christ.

Fifth: This is why the passages on the judgment seat clearly tell of its purpose – to determine the extent of our reward, never to determine the nature or extent of our punishment.

Sixth: The conclusion of the grand exposition on New Testament salvation (Romans 3-8) states the following:

8:29 I am predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

8:30 My justification guarantees my glorification.

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- 8:30 In fact, the glorification is spoken of as already having been accomplished.
- 8:32 The requirement for being given all things is receipt of the death of the Son of God.
- 8:32 All things are given FREELY.
- 8:33 A man who is justified cannot have anything laid to his charge.
- 8:34 The intercession of the risen Christ assures that I will never know any condemnation.
- 8:35-39 And nothing shall separate me from the love of God, not for a moment or 1,000 years.

Threaten me all you want. You cannot strike fear into one standing on such grand promises.

SECTION 2

IS THE BELIEVER'S PLACE IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM SECURE?

The Bible says in Luke 1:30-33, *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* In Luke 1:26-27 we read, *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.* In his announcement Gabriel said: *He shall be great* (Luke 1:32). We can say that about salvation, about His death on the cross, or about His resurrection. Jesus Christ is great for a number of reasons, but notice what is in view here. *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest...* That is the claim to His deity. *...and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David...*

We know that David's throne sat on earth. David's throne sat on Mount Zion, in the city of Jerusalem, in what is known as the Holy Land, or the Promised Land. That is the only throne of David. In fact, in Acts chapter two, Peter declared: *We know that David is dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.* So we learn that the throne of David is not something he acquired once he got to heaven. His throne can only be a reference to one thing, and that is the place where he sat as the King of the Jews in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. The angel announced to Mary, before Jesus was born, that the baby to

whom she would give birth would inherit the throne of His father, David at Jerusalem.

The people of Israel were looking for a Messiah who would set up a kingdom, not die on a cross? Why, the very announcement of the angel that predated His birth had to do with the re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom.

Look at verse thirty-three. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* So if the Bible is true as it is written, then Jesus Christ must return to this earth. He never sat on David's throne. He never ruled and reigned at Jerusalem. He never sat as the King of the Jews in a kingdom without end. Either the Bible is false, or Jesus Christ is coming again. Those are the only two options you have. If Jesus Christ is coming again, and if the Bible is true, when He gets back, the kingdom that He establishes will never end. It will last forever and forever.

Look in Acts chapter two again. *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself,*

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool (Acts 2:25-35).

This is what David prophesied. Jesus Christ came into this world and died on the cross. His body was buried in a tomb. His soul went down to hell. He walked out of the grave three days and three nights later. After rising from the dead He ascended up into heaven and sat on the right hand of the Father. All of that has taken place. But He still has not sat upon David's throne. So you and I are living in the age of *Until*. We are somewhere between the ascension of Jesus Christ to His Father's right hand and His return to sit on the throne of His father, David.

How long is it until the second coming? We don't know. How long is it until the church is caught away? No one knows. How long is it until the kingdom is established? None can tell. All we know is that for nearly two thousand years we have been living in the time of "until." But the very fact that God put that word in Acts chapter two, "until," is the Lord encouraging us to believe what is written in the Bible. The prophecy of Luke 1 did not fail. The angel did not make a mistake. Did the angel say a virgin would have a child? Did a virgin have a child? Did the angel say they would name Him Jesus? Did they name Him Jesus? Did the angel say He would be called great? Was He called great? Did the angel say He would be called the Son of the Highest? Was He called the Son of the Highest? Well then, why doubt the rest of the prophecy just because there is an "until" in between?

Just as sure as He died, just as sure as He was buried, just as sure that He rose again, just as sure that He ascended up to the right hand of the Father, He is coming back, and He will set up His kingdom.

Now look in your Bible in Micah chapter five and the Psalm chapter two. These are great passages of Scripture, because they link the first coming with the second coming. Micah 5:2 says, ***But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah...*** (our Bible is so exact and perfect, because there was more than one Bethlehem, the Lord

narrowed it down and told you exactly which Bethlehem He was talking about.) ***...though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.***

This text says that someone is going to be born at Bethlehem. If you could go back from the time of His birth, as far back as you went into everlasting you would find Him there. If you went back a thousand years, you would find Him telling Samuel to anoint Saul. If you went back fifteen hundred years, you would see Him instructing Moses on the mountain about the law and the ten commandments. If you went back four thousand years, you would find Him giving instruction to Adam and his wife in the garden about what to eat and what not to eat. If you could go back a billion years, you would find Him in His glory with His Father. The one who came ***from everlasting*** stopped at Bethlehem along the way.

As touching His future, the Bible says He ***is to be ruler in Israel***. You only have two choices. Either Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth to set up a kingdom, or the Bible is a lie.

You may say, "I believe the gospel. I believe John 3:16. I believe that stuff about salvation, but I don't believe in the second coming of Jesus to the earth." How can you believe those things if the book is a lie? If one part of the book is not true, how can you believe any part of the book? The very people who will sit in church and say, "I can't believe the President because if he lied about one thing, he will lie about something else," will pick and choose parts of the Bible to believe and parts to ignore. Be consistent. Either Jesus Christ is coming back, or let's not waste any more time reading a book of religion and fairy tales.

I believe the one who came ***from everlasting*** stopped at Bethlehem, stopped at Mount Calvary and then went back into ***everlasting***. I believe He is coming again to rule over Israel because He did not do that when He came the first time.

So you may say, "You know, some of these disciples represent Israel." No, the nation of Israel stood at Pilate's

judgment hall and said ***We will not have this man to reign over us.*** You can't possibly call that ruling over Israel. His band of disciples forsook Him and fled." So He is coming back. He has to take care of some unfinished business.

Look at Psalm 2:1-3. ***Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*** That is true. Do you know what took place in Soviet Russia, from 1917 to the 1950s? From one end of that Asiatic Continent to the other, a communist regime tried their best to slaughter and exterminate everyone who claimed the name of Jesus Christ or Jehovah God. Why? Were they crooks? Were they thieves? Were they perverts? Were they bad citizens? Were they evil parents? No, the rulers just hated Jesus Christ.

Why did the Chinese communists in the 1940s begin a war of extermination against their own flesh and blood, to try and rid their nation of those who claimed the name of Jesus Christ? Why? What evil had they done? What was their crime? ***Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal.*** Love one another as I have loved you. Lay down your life for your friends. Do good. Bless and curse not. Why would you want to get rid of that code of conduct? They can't explain it.

Move down through Viet Nam and Cambodia, through Laos and Thailand. They were just killing people who believed in God. In Angola, in the Sudan, in Zaire, in Rwanda dictators and puppets are waging wars of persecution, trying to burst the bands asunder. The heathen are in a rage.

Oh, but in America, we have cultured, sophisticated educated heathen, who stand before Supreme Court Judges and say "We want the Bible out of our schools. We don't want our children hearing the Bible. We want God out of our schools. We want prayer out of our schools." Oh they are enlightened heathen. And the judges hammer with their anvils and say, "As you will. Get God out." Why? It is so you can have kids

shooting kids instead of kids chewing gum in class. So you can have metal detectors and sheriffs in the schools, instead of school patrols with orange belts on to police their fellow students when they were running in the hall. I used to get a spanking in the principal's office for running in the hallway, and skipping steps on the stairs. Now they are giving drug tests and building housing for illegitimate babies. Why? What was so bad about God? What was so bad about Jesus Christ? What was so bad about clean living and righteousness? The heathen don't know, they just want to get rid of it.

The second Psalm goes on to say: ***He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: He is not laughing right now, but He shall. ...the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*** What is He going to say? ***Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*** When all the dust settles at the close of the great tribulation, when the battle of Armageddon is complete, do you know what God the Father is going to do? He is going to look round about Him at the nations of the world, and their armies lying in ruin, and he is going to say, "HA! HA! HA! You were wrong. Son, here is David's throne."

So you can worry all you want about governments, and armies, and political powers, and underworld plots, and manipulation of currency. You are wasting your time. If the Bible is true, and it is, there is nothing that the banding together of every living soul from pole to pole can do to prevent Jesus Christ from taking over.

Why do Christians fear what God laughs at? Do you think you are going to stop the terrors prophesied in Revelation? It is God's work, not that of the devil. The great I AM is in control.

All those who have been born again have eternal life. We will be caught up to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive rewards (1 Corinthians 3:10-14), and then we will return to this earth to rule and reign with Jesus Christ (Malachi 4, Revelation 19, John 14:1-4).

Turn next to Revelation chapter twenty. We are going to look at some New Testament verses that have to do with those of us who are saved, and the promises God has given to us with regard to his coming kingdom. Revelation 20:4 says, ***And I saw thrones***, plural. Now Jesus is on the throne of His father, David. But here are some other thrones. ***And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:*** In addition to those, ***...and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God...*** there is another group. ***...and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;*** yet another company ***and they...*** that is all those listed ***...lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***

So we have a company of martyrs, a company who has come out of the tribulation and did not receive the mark of the beast, then you have a group who sit on thrones and receive judgment from the Lord. The Bible goes on to say in verse five and six, ***But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.***

As mentioned in the introduction to this booklet, there are good, sincere fundamental preachers and teachers who are now setting forth a strange doctrine. Their notion is that if you are born again and washed in the precious blood of Jesus you have eternal life and will spend forever with the Lord in heaven. BUT if you do not do enough good works, or if you do too many bad works you will not participate in the millennial reign of Christ. You will either go to hell, outer darkness or a place yet to be determined – the place of detention and the extent of the punishment will vary depending on who is issuing the threat.

I want you to look very carefully at Revelation 20:6. ***Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection...*** Who are we talking about? We are talking about everyone who has part in the first resurrection. Number two, ***on such the***

second death hath no power... Who are we talking about? We are talking about everyone who cannot be touched by the second death. They are saved people. *...but they shall be priests of God...* Who? Everyone who has part in the first resurrection and cannot be touched with the second death, *they shall be priests of God and of Christ, AND SHALL...* Who? Everyone in the first resurrection. Who? Every one who can't be touched by the second death, *...shall reign with him a thousand years.* To me, that is clear. You might have some problem understanding *they shall reign with him a thousand years.* I do not have any trouble understanding that.

The verse tells you who the *they* are. Have you been born again? Well then, can you die the second death? If you cannot die the second death, then you will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. So hallelujah! I am not saved by works, I am not kept by works, I do not get into the kingdom by works. It is all by grace.

There are measures and degrees of reward given to the saints at the judgment seat. There are measures and degrees of service in the kingdom for which one qualifies by service in this life. But no one is going to be left out.

The only way to properly address the problem is to consider the verses used by the authors of this new notion to support their theory that some members of Christ's body will be temporarily amputated and made to suffer a second time for their sins.

Galatians 5:18-21 says, But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Before we go on the reader must remember that heaven is not God and God is not heaven. Thus, the terms kingdom of

heaven and kingdom of God do not denote the same thing. Just as heaven is material, so the kingdom of heaven always speaks of the visible, physical throne and government of the Lord upon this earth. As God is a spirit (John 4:24, 1 Timothy 1:17) so the kingdom of God is the spiritual kingdom that cannot be seen or observed for it is not outward but inward (Luke 17:20-21). One can only enter this kingdom by means of a spiritual birth (John 3:3-7).

So when we take the Bible definition of the kingdom of God we understand that the sins in the above list keep one from being born again. The fact that Laodicean preachers want decisions and results more than they want to be true to the Lord does not change the Biblical truth that repentance is required (Acts 20:21, Luke 13:3-5). Those who have been guilty of the sins listed above can surely be saved, but not until they come to the Lord for salvation from their sins.

Let's read on. ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another*** (Galatians 5:22-26).

Notice what the Lord says in verse twenty-four, ***they that are Christ's***. If you are saved, you belong to Jesus Christ. ***And they that are Christ's have...*** He did not say *some* have. He did not say some are striving to. He did not say the good ones are working at it and the bad ones are not trying. He said every one that is Christ's has experienced a crucifixion. They are not only sanctified but their one, initial sanctification lasts forever (Hebrews 10:10-14) because their sanctification is not their good works but their savior, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Now let me ask you something. If I have in my life committed adultery, if I crucified myself, would it pay for that adultery? What if Jesus Christ was crucified in my place? Would that take care of that adultery? If in my life I had ever

known hatred, if I crucified myself, would that pay the penalty for that act of hatred? If Jesus Christ was crucified for me, would that act of hatred be paid for? Either Jesus Christ died for all my sins, or what Jesus Christ did on the cross was not sufficient and I have to figure out some way to pay for the ones for which He did not pay.

Look at the context of verse twenty-five, *If we live in the Spirit...* Do you? Have we all been baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Romans 8:9)? Yes. Are you sealed in Christ by the Holy Ghost until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)? Yes.

So why are Charisma-tics and Baptists both teaching people that being in the Spirit is some sort of temporary condition granted by God to those who are performing certain good works? I got in the Spirit the moment I was saved, and I can never get out of the Spirit. Thank God for that!

Galatians 5:25 states, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* If you are in the Spirit, live like it. That is a good admonition. A careful reading of the passage shows that there is no threat directed to the one who is in the Spirit, but to those who have not been born into the kingdom of God.

A similar passage is Ephesians 5:3-6. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

After carelessly reading the passage those teaching a non-purgating purgatory say, "See there? Do you do those things? You get the wrath of God because you are a disobedient child.

But let us examine the context of these verses, then the verses themselves. Go to Ephesians 2:1-7. Let us let the Bible interpret the Bible. *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked*

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Look at all the things that are rendered in the past tense.

- Hath quickened
- Were dead
- In time past ye walked
- Had our conversation
- WERE children of wrath

Look at the things that are rendered in the present tense.

- The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

Those who have been born again are no longer children of wrath but by grace have become partakers of the very life of Christ and in Him they are raised up and seated in heavenly places. Now watch carefully: *...That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

I was a child of wrath because I was disobedient. But God saved me by His grace. In the ages to come God is going to use me, and all those who have been saved by His grace, as a display of His great mercy and love.

Is the millennial age to come? Then I am not going to be part of that kingdom strutting about because I did more than someone else and earned a spot. I am going to be there so God can show how kind He was to someone who did not deserve to be saved or to rule with Christ. I am going to be there so God can show how gracious He was.

Will I be there so men can come up and say, “Boy, what did you do? You must have really lived it.” I wish I had. The truth of the matter is, God is just gracious. The truth of the matter is, God is just merciful. That is why I am here. God gets all the glory. If people were there because they had earned a place in the kingdom, and other people were not there because they had not earned a place in the kingdom, the people in the kingdom would get some of the glory. Do you think Jesus Christ is going to share His glory?

Ephesians 2:1-10 states in no uncertain terms that everyone saved by the grace of God will be manifest as a recipient of His grace in the AGES (all of them, no distinction is made) to come.

Turn back to Ephesians 5:1-2, ***Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us. Why am I trying to do right? ...Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.***

The motive is not a forward look with hopes of making the millennium, it is a backward look of gratitude. There are two kinds of people serving God today. Both are doing something for the Lord, and both on the same side, and I am glad for anyone doing anything for God. But there are two ways of going about it. There are those who are serving God because they are afraid not to. Every time they look back they are hoping an angry God is not going to catch them coming short of the mark. They are waiting to be crushed and punished each time they fail.

There is another group who look back and see Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. They say, “For Him I will do anything. For Him I will go anywhere. For Him I will talk to anyone.”

I am not serving God to get into the kingdom. I am serving God because I am in that kingdom. That is a big difference.

Every parent longs for the day when their children begin to move out of the realm of doing right because they have to and into the realm of doing right because they want to. Every decent parent longs for the day when their child does what mom and dad want them to do because they love, trust and respect their

parents. Maturity is achieved when obedience is not rendered involuntarily because of a threat, but voluntarily because of a good heart.

God is our heavenly Father. He looks down at every church, where the preacher has the Bible whipped out and he is driving, threatening and beating the sheep, and desires so much more. You have to learn those lessons. You have to get the rules down. You have to obey the commandments, I understand that, but oh, God is waiting for the day when you are keeping His precepts because you want to, and not because you have to.

God does not want us to serve Him because we are scared of what happens if we do not. He wants us to serve Him because we have concluded He is so right, He is so good, He loves us so much, we could not do anything better than to serve Him.

One day a child sits up in bed and says, "You know something? Every time I do things dad's way, things just go better around the house." It takes a lot of time for that to sink in, doesn't it? And there comes a time in a Christian's life when he begins to think, "You know, every time I do things the Bible way, life is just better." It has nothing to do with someone telling me I have to. It has nothing to do with someone calling me up and reminding me. It is just the best way to go. Once you start getting into that stride, it is a whole different life.

Look at Colossians 3:22-25. ***Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.***

Why is there a period after verse twenty-four? Because verse 25 is a different sentence. A failure to stop where God said stop (the period) results in false doctrine. Right now in a pulpit, home or Bible study someone is preaching, "Bless God, I know you are saved, and if you do right God will reward you in the

kingdom. But if you do wrong...” And then down comes the hammer of verse 25.

I want to ask you something. What did Jesus mean when He cried *it is finished*? Did He mean it is started? Did He mean it is finished for now but may become unfinished? Did He mean my part is finished now you do your part? Did He mean the sins men commit before they get saved are paid for but the rest will require some other form of payment?

Either Jesus has already received full punishment for my transgression or He has not. When Jesus died every one of my sins was in the future. Now either He paid for the wrong I have done or I have to pay for the wrong I have done. If Jesus Christ paid the penalty for my sins, transgressions, iniquities and errors on the cross then I am not serving Him out of fear of punishment. I am serving Him because I owe my all to the Savior who suffered to give me everlasting life. Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. My sins are paid for.

Someone sneers, “Well then, why don’t you just go out and live any way you want to?” I am trying to. I want to live for Him. I want to live right. When a man says, “If I had no fear of future punishment I would sin in such and such a manner” he is simply testifying to the evil desires of his wicked heart.

When I was a young man, I was invited to preach in a church on a Sunday morning and Sunday night. That Sunday morning, they had a pretty good crowd, and I preached on this subject. Jesus paid for all our sins. If you are saved you can not go to hell. If you are saved you can not miss the kingdom. You ought to serve the Lord because you are thankful and because you appreciate Him. You do not have to serve God. You do not have to do anything you don’t want to do.

A man was waiting outside the door and said, “You mean to tell me, if I wanted to go out and commit adultery, kill someone and get drunk...” I said, “Hey, you are scaring me. The Bible says *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* (Matthew 12:34). Is that what you want to do? Why are you talking about it?”

I have lived long enough to know that people do what they want to do anyway. If what they want to do is sinful they justify it or say a prayer and say they are sorry afterward.

If you want to read your Bible, you will read your Bible. If you don't read the Bible, it is because you don't want to. If you want to witness you will witness, and if you don't witness, it is because you don't want to. If you want to pray, you will pray. If you don't, it is because you don't want to. Let's be honest about it. People do what they want to do.

No one puts a gun to people's heads and makes them go into a bar. No one makes a wife stubborn, a child rebellious, a man a lazy loafer. We do what we want to do. Romans 6 says the choice is ours.

Well, I got back to that church for services Sunday night and the man in charge of unlocking the door to let the people in was the only person who came back for the evening service, and he only came because he had to.

I said, "Well, do you want to hear me preach?" and he said, "Not really." So we shook hands, he went home and I went home.

Think with me for a minute. Here were people who claimed to believe that if you did not live up to a certain standard you would lose your salvation or your place in the kingdom. When their pastor preached on faithful church attendance they would nod or say amen. But that night they skipped church and watched television.

I preached what I believed and they preached what they believed. They believed if you did not do right, you would not get in the kingdom and then went out and did not do right. That is weird, isn't it? Do you know why they did not come back that night? They did not want to.

Do you think any of them thought they lost their salvation or millennial inheritance that night by skipping church? Are you kidding.

Here is a great rule for studying the scriptures: never override a clear passage with a difficult passage. Never override

a simple statement of truth with a confusing and complicated statement of truth.

We have established that every one who is free of the second death will reign with Christ in His kingdom. We have established that every one who has had his sins paid for at the cross will be in the kingdom, that God might show off His grace and His kindness.

Now, Revelation 5:9-10 says, ***And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.***

Look carefully at verse nine. The people that are speaking have been redeemed to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. Of those who have been redeemed unto God by the blood of Jesus Christ, verse ten says, ***and we shall reign on the earth.***

NOTHING COULD BE CLEARER. Do you know how I get to heaven? It is through the blood. Do you know how I escaped eternal damnation? It is through the blood. Do you know how I get to be part of the millennial kingdom? It is through the blood. So every one in the kingdom will be bragging on the Savior who died and shed His blood, not on himself.

Look at Revelation 1:5-6. ***And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*** If Jesus loves you and has washed you in His blood, He has made you a king and a priest unto God.

Why would anyone deny these wonderful truths? Pride. Nothing more! Men want so desperately to feel as though they are deserving, as though they have earned something, as though they have outdone their fellows or out performed their rivals. Nonsense! To God be all the glory.

When He comes back, the Lord Jesus is wearing a garment with an odd inscription. ***And he hath on his vesture and on his***

thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

At Armageddon Jesus is going to destroy the kings of the earth. Then how can He be King of kings? Who are the other kings? They are the saved, born again believers. He is the King of kings.

Let us consider two more verses used to threaten blood washed kings and priests with outer darkness, hell or punishment. Second Timothy 2:11-13 says, *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

What if no one in the world believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? He would still come back, set up His kingdom, rule and reign. He is not going to deny His word just because people fail to believe. That is obvious. But is this passage a threat to the believer, or a comfort to his soul?

Verse twelve says, *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...* but you can't divorce that from the eleventh verse, *For if we be dead with him... If we suffer...* Verse eleven, *we shall also live with him...* Verse twelve, *we shall also reign with him...* I want you to look at the verse and what it says; not how it is interpreted. Verse twelve did not say if we go to a foreign mission field, get our fingers and toes chopped off for the gospel, or give out two tracts in our life time and get laughed at. It simply says if we suffer. Do you ever suffer?

Someone says, "Well it means if we suffer by living for Jesus and get persecuted..." Where does it say that? You just assumed that because you were trying to find verses to support your theory.

The death of verse 11 is past. It is the death of Jesus. I am forever united to that death by virtue of my new birth (Romans 6-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 5). What if I suffer? I am told not to be swayed by man or devil should he suggest my suffering is a foretaste of punishment to come. Nay, I am told in verse 12

not to let the fact of suffering shake my confidence in the fact that I shall reign. How sad that a portion of scripture given to comfort has been wrested into a threat.

The Lord is not putting a condition on a believer's reigning with Him. The Lord is saying that if you are His, there is no condition. You can die, but you are still going to live. You can suffer, but you are still going to reign.

He is not extending a threat; He is sending an encouragement. Your back may hurt every day for the rest of your life, but don't let the devil deceive you, you are going to be in the kingdom. That little boy or girl that you buried out there, you may grieve for them every day for the rest of your life, but that does not change the fact that you are going to be in the kingdom.

John the Baptist preached that the kingdom was coming. A death sentence passed on John. He sent word to Jesus and said, "Would you ask Him if He is really the one? Would you ask Him if I messed up somewhere along the way?" His faith was failing. He was suffering and the suffering was such that he may well have been tempted to deny what he had preached.

Do you know what the Lord sent back to John? We suffer, but we shall also reign. John, don't let the persecution fool you. John, don't let the dungeon fool you. Don't let that executioner's blade fool you. If I said you are going to reign, you are going to reign. If they cut your head off, you are going to find out I told you the truth. You are going to live with me."

These verses aren't a threat. They are a promise. Suffering cannot keep you out of the kingdom. Some of our brethren have made the verse teach that a lack of suffering would keep you out of the kingdom. That is not what it says.

What about the poor souls who have been pulled into the charismatic trap and have been taught that if Jesus loves them and they are right with Jesus, everything is going to go their way? Many of them sitting around tonight in despair and misery and anguish of heart, thinking that God hates them, because if He loved them, surely He would have healed their body or gotten

them out of that wheel-chair? What a dirty lie they have been told!

The Bible offers a better and more realistic hope. If you suffer and you die, that will not change the promise of God.

What if we deny Him? He refuses to honor that denial. I don't want to be saved any more. Denied. I don't want eternal life after all. Denied. I would rather get out of the ark and drown in the flood. Denied. You are sealed to the day of redemption. Like it or not. Your denial will be denied.

What if I reach a place of unbelief? Oh my friend, do you not see the unfathomable depths of our hope and security found in this passage in Timothy?! Our eternal life and all its blessings are not conditioned upon our faithfulness but upon HIS FAITHFULNESS. **YET HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL.** Hallelujah!!!!!!

In Romans 8 the supposed threat shows up again. Look at the end of verse seventeen ***...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*** Here is the threat. If you do not suffer with the Lord, you will not be glorified with Him.

Let us suppose for a minute that is what the passage means. How much would you have to suffer? Would you have to get cussed out one time and get your feelings hurt? Okay, you are in. Would you have to suffer to a certain degree or for a certain length of time or for a specific reason? Please, tell us.

Fundamental preachers make fun of Catholics in Mexico who crawl on their knees to a statue, trying to appease God to get something from Him. These same preachers then stand in the pulpit and preach the very same thing. Bleed a little and get the kingdom.

Let us look at the context of the verse at hand. Verse fifteen says, ***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear...*** Thank God and the Lord deliver us from those who would try and make us afraid of hell, stripes, beatings, outer darkness and such like. ***...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness***

with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...

Do you know what the condition is of inheriting everything Christ inherits? It is being God's child: not a good child, not a bad child, not a hard working child or a lazy child. If you are His child, you get everything He gets. Hallelujah! That is what the Bible SAYS.

...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. It is funny how men will believe things in one context and not believe them in another. Let me show you something. I am preaching the Gospel to lost people, and I say, "I want you to look there on Calvary. I want you to see that Jesus Christ is dying there in your place. And if you trust Him, His death will be your death. His crucifixion for sin will be your crucifixion. His suffering will rescue you from suffering in hell. And if you trust Him, His stripes will heal you, His sacrifice pays for your sins." And everyone says, "Hallelujah!" How then can I come back on Sunday night and try and tell saved people that I misled the lost people on Sunday morning because all sin really wasn't paid for and all punishment really wasn't borne. Nonsense.

Do you know why I'm going to reign with Jesus Christ? It is because I died with Him (Ephesians 2:6-7). I suffered with Him, I was crucified with Him, I was buried with Him, I am risen with Him and I will spend forever with Him. And it will not be because I am worthy. It will be because of His grace and because of His kindness.

Let us not try to live for God because we are afraid not to. Let us not try to live for God out of fear for what He might do to us if we do not. Let us live for the Lord because He loves us, for someone who gave us His all.

SECTION 3

THREE PICTURES OF THE CHURCH

There are three pictures used by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament epistles to help us understand the relationship of Jesus Christ to His church and the relationship the members of that church have one to another.

The first illustration is that of a body (1 Corinthians 12-14). Each individual member and part is being perfected so that one day they will not be a collection of parts but a unified whole. The body needs the foot, and the hand, and the ear, and the eye (12:15-17). Even the most feeble member of the body is necessary (12:22). God's work is to temper the body TOGETHER (12:24). The work of the Spirit is to eliminate any schism (1 Corinthians 12:25) from the body. There is no way to inflict judgment or punishment upon one member of the body and not thereby cause the whole to suffer (12:26).

It is madness to suggest that the Lord Jesus will violate all these truths and be the ultimate schismatic by amputating members of His body at the judgment seat of Christ.

This same picture is used in Ephesians 4. In verse 13 His promise is: *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Who is going to measure up? We all!

The purpose of the Holy Spirit's work, according to verse 16 is to keep *the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love* (Ephesians 4:16).

Some have begun to teach that the Godhead will fail in this endeavor. I am not one of them. I am certain THE WHOLE,

FITLY JOINED, TOGETHER, COMPACTED, EFFECTUAL WORKING IN EVERY PART are literal promises that will not fail.

Second, we have a building. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:19-22). Every born again believer is part of the material being used of Christ to build this great house. It is called an holy temple in the Lord. His work in and through the redeemed is that they may be fitly framed together. This is His work in ALL the building. It is ludicrous to suggest that the Lord Jesus will then dismantle this building and scatter pieces of it into the darkness and into the fire at the judgment seat of Christ.

Third, we have the example of a bridegroom and a bride. The blood-washed saints are said to be more than members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Ephesians 5:30). He is working moment by moment and day by day to wash His bride, and rid her of all spot and wrinkle and anything that would cause her to be blemished on her wedding day (5:27). His pledge is to present her a glorious church (5:27).

It is peculiar at best to hear some say that after nourishing, cherishing, cleansing, protecting and purifying His bride, Jesus Christ will take out a big stick at the marriage altar and pummel His beloved wife for displeasing Him during their engagement. It is shocking that some are suggesting that Jesus will chop his bride in pieces and send portions of His beloved wife into the fires of hell while what is left of her dismembered body enjoys the millennial celebration with Him.

WILL SOME CHRISTIANS MISS THE KINGDOM? / 29

Only in a day when saved people know so very, very little about the word of God can such weak and beggarly doctrines affect them.

May God have mercy on His poor church.

SECTION 4

RESPONSE TO AN ESSAY THREATENING BELIEVERS WITH PUNISHMENT AFTER THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What follows is an essay written by a saved man, who has long been true to the fundamentals of the faith and a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. He devoted an entire issue of a magazine he publishes to the essay. In that publication he asked those who had a different view of the matter to comment. I contacted him and asked if he truly desired such feedback and he assured me that he did. Below you will find his paper and my response. I have made no changes to his article as touching spelling, grammar, or content.

I have no personal quarrel with the man, and thank the Lord for all he is doing to reach, and to encourage others to reach the lost for the Lord Jesus Christ. Please do not take the following remarks to be an assault upon his character or walk with the Lord.

The purpose of the article “IF” was to warn saved, born again Christians that if they do not do enough good works they will spend 1,000 years burning in hell, while the rest of the saved, born again Christians reign with Christ on earth. After this time the bad Christians will be loosed from hell to enjoy eternal life. We are assured this is nothing like purgatory because the purpose of the 1,000 years in hell is not to purge away sins because Jesus paid for them, but to punish the sinner for not serving the Lord more faithfully.

Besides the glaring contradiction in that premise, the author makes three crucial errors that result in his misinterpreting almost every passage he refers to in his article.

1. He fails to understand the Biblical distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. By lumping the two together he leaves himself incapable of understanding the kingdom passages.
2. He continually revises, amends and rewrites the text of the Authorized Version and then bases his Bible teaching on words not found in the Bible.
3. He denies that the Lord Jesus Christ bore all sins at Calvary, thereby making a full payment to the Father for every transgression of man.

There is no way to cover each of these matters thoroughly in a brief response to the article, but I will try to point out the errors of the burning bad believer theory by commenting on the article in a number of specific places. The article is reprinted below with my remarks interspersed in italic type.

ARTICLE BEGINS

Introducing - the word IF. We can draw great lessons from Kipling's IF, and we can discover eternal truths by examining the "Ifs" of Scripture. Webster provides a definition of "if." We are told it means "in the event that, allowing that, on condition that" and includes the presence of stipulation, which signifies that there is a requirement.

From the outset it must be made clear that there is never a possibility of the loss of eternal life. When people use the "Kingdom of God/Heaven" as a synonym for Heaven, let it be known that this eternal state of Heavenly bliss is not being called into question. When, as we believe is consistent with biblical content, the "Kingdom of God/Heaven" is used as a future reign of Christ,

So the foundation for the study is cracked. The kingdom of God is never used to describe the future reign of Christ. It is clearly set forth as the spiritual union of God with the believer. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21). Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). One can enter the kingdom of heaven by living through the tribulation. Once can only enter the kingdom of God by being born again.

it is reigning in this Kingdom that can be forfeited. This, as we are taught to pray in Matthew 6:10, is God's Will for which His justified saints are being trained.

There are no justified saints in Matthew 6. In order to be justified one must receive the finished payment for his sins made by the Lord Jesus at Calvary. No one in Matthew 6 can be a justified saint because the payment has not been made. Without that payment one may be forgiven but not cleared (Exodus 34:6-7). If these were JUSTIFIED saints they would not need to fear any future punishment for justification is God's declaration of a man's righteousness on the basis of the finished work of Christ, not his subsequent work for Christ.

We are concerned lest any flunk the course. There is no thought of a second chance or of a Roman Catholic Purgatory. Both are unscriptural concepts which we have disproved in a number of articles and tracts we have written.

True, the theory is not a second chance for the lost but a second punishment for the justified. Jesus paid it all now you pay it again because you were a bad boy.

Of course all these technicalities can be more easily understood when we consider the everyday use of the word "if." If you are good -If you do this - If you don't do this - ad infinitum. But notice that the ordinary use of the word "if" is always attached to the "if not." This is always opposite, and in our use of the word "if" we include the possibility and reality of "if not." God has used the word "if" many times in the Bible. In many cases, He could have used the word "when." He could have said, "When you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive your sins." This would have omitted the understanding that there is a real loss for the Christian who doesn't confess his sins as he should.

Obviously, there are no Christians in Matthew 6 for the reasons stated above. And the point is moot, because all my sins have already been forgiven. Every sin I would ever commit was in the future when Jesus went to the cross. On that cross He paid the full penalty for every sin I would ever commit. Almost 2,000 years later when I trusted Him as my personal Savior He did not forgive the sins I had committed UP TO THAT POINT. He forgave them ALL. My faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:5) Jesus Christ is my righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30) and not only do I have the imputed righteousness of Christ (Romans 4:6) but unto me THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE SIN (Romans 4:8). Imagine trying to threaten saved people with hell by going to Matthew 6 when you could thrill people into serving the Lord with Romans 4!!!!

As there are over 1000 uses of this word in the Bible, it would not be practical to try to study each one within the scope of this article. I will be selective in our looking at uses of this word and its importance, but I will not eliminate "ifs" merely because they seem to contradict the truth of accountability I am attempting to establish.

MATTHEW God Incarnate came to dwell with men, for the purpose of revealing God to man, going to the cross of Calvary to suffer a substitutionary death and then being raised to God's right hand to make intercession for those whom He has redeemed.

Did He accomplish this? Yes. Is He at God's right hand making intercession? Yes. Will He fail in His duty as advocate for His erring redeemed ones (1 John 2:1-2)? No. Will He complete the work He began in us (Philippians 1:6)? Yes

He instructed His disciples to spread His teaching throughout the world, yet many who have responded to the glorious Gospel invitation that was a part of that same commission, have been robbed of the power of the most gracious words that ever fell from the lips of Man. We have been told by many of our teachers that the Sermon on the Mount is "pure law." Strange that it didn't come from Moses, for the scripture testifies that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Perhaps the reason for assigning the words of Jesus Christ to a future kingdom age is that His words are difficult for the average 21st century Christian to assimilate. They are teachings we would rather hold in abeyance for a future age. But in that future Millennial age, He will see a prayer fulfilled. We were taught by our Savior to pray Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

If that is so then why do we have a half dozen detailed prayers of the apostle Paul recorded in the epistles to the churches and not one word in them resembles anything found in "the Lord's prayer." Did Paul fail to get the message or was he too busy preaching the gospel and urging people to be born into the kingdom of God to worry about a future kingdom of heaven? He was not the least bit concerned with "thy kingdom come" but with preparing men for the catching away of the church.

The Church is central in God's plans for His reign on earth, as in heaven, during the Millennium. It is only a heavenly people that will be able to reign responsibly with Christ. An immediate problem comes to some people when they think of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-13. We can all live with that prayer; but the problem is that Jesus didn't stop when some of us thought He should. He went too far. After the prayer, He continued, in verses 14 to say, For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: The use of the word "if" can be a problem.

But rather than leave it in question, the Lord Jesus plainly says, in verse 15, But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

But He already has forgiven them. Look at the clear and striking difference between instructions to unsaved Jews in Matthew and those given to saved Christians in Ephesians 4:31-32. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake HATH FORGIVEN you. These bitter, wrathful, angry, clamouring people were told to stop acting that way because God had already forgiven them. They weren't threatened with hell if they didn't straighten up, they were urged to consider what Jesus had done for them.

We must pause to ask the question, "Are you obedient to the Commission of Christ? Do you tell Christians (for it is Christ's disciples to whom this was addressed) that God will not forgive them if they don't forgive others?"

God forbid I should ever tell a Christian something that so denies the finished blood atonement of Jesus.

Dispensationalists have invented two ways to get out of this. They may say that the Great Commission is for the Jews to obey during the Tribulation period.

What does this have to do with the topic at hand?

This is not possible, for the Commission plainly states "all nations." There are nations who are no longer around. The Huns were a nation to whom the Gospel needed to be preached in the 4th to 6th century, but the Tribulation evangelists will have a hard time finding them! "All the world" and "every nation" sure sounds like a universal commission.

Then no one today could possibly fulfill the great commission. Since we cannot go to all nations and Jesus commanded us to go to all nations will every saved person living now have to burn in hell for 1,000 years because he disobeyed the great commission? This whole notion is silly.

Others take the Scofield position. He says in his notes on what is normally called the Lord's prayer, "This is legal ground. Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven." Scofield neglects to cite an O. T. passage to prove his theory, and a study of O. T. passages on forgiveness fail to corroborate his view. Forgiveness was always by means of sacrifice in the Mosaic Law or just God's mercy.

The old straw dummy method. Scofield said, and he was wrong, so I'm right. This means nothing.

All sins that would eternally condemn us are forgiven because of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice.

This is nothing more than the Roman Catholic doctrine of dividing sins into classes. The big ones get you punished forever,

the little ones just get you roasted for a while. Come, come now. To offend in ONE point is to be guilty of all (James 2:10-11). Did Jesus pay for them all or didn't He? The author here states that Jesus work on the cross only paid the penalty for the sins he considers real bad but the ones he doesn't consider to be so serious we will have to pay for ourselves. What a tragic denial of Jesus' atonement.

Scofield ignores the Biblical truth that in the Christian walk, lack of forgiveness on our part causes the absence of Divine forgiveness. A Christian with unforgiven sin in his life will go to Heaven, but the presence of unforgiven sin will result in a Christian walk that produces only wood, hay and stubble. Yes, God is still faithful and just, but He has laid down laws of forgiveness to which He Himself will always be true. We have a more startling instance of a servant of God being punished for sins which could have been removed had he exercised true forgiveness to another. Matthew 18:23-35 tells of the unforgiving servant who, although forgiven by His Master (and thus eternally secure), would not forgive a fellow servant. His lord says, "I forgave thee," but still "delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due him." What was due him? Certainly not the initial debt, for that was forgiven. Verse 35 makes it clear that his trespass was that he had not "from his heart forgiven."

*Well, you still have not frightened me into serving my Savior. Praise His holy name His perfect love has cast out all fear (1 John 4:18). I know who the servant is because God told me in His word (Isaiah 41:8-9, etc.). I know that I am not a servant but a friend and a son. Galatians 4:7 says, **Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** My inheritance is not based on my servitude but on my sonship. And I am a son. Thus, to try and threaten me with hell by using a servant passage is a waste of time. I am serving voluntarily though I am free to live as I*

choose(1 Corinthians 6:12). I am not serving to stay out of hellatory but because I love the one who forgave all my sins.

We might have a hard time with the phrase "delivered to the tormentors." Matthew 18:34 sounds frightening as indeed it should be. But, as we go through scripture and see real punishment for real Christians who commit real sins against God, this will seem like a mild punishment.

Notice, the intent of the theory is to scare saved people who don't love Jesus into serving Him against their will in order to save their own hide from torment. Such service is a sin as the motive is not faith and love and so the carnal service rendered to escape this threat would not result in the desired escape.

To try to assign this to an unbeliever ignores the context. This man was forgiven, and the punishment for a Christian life of wood, hay and stubble is no light matter.

If the context, as the Bible defines it, is Israel not a Christian there is no contradiction.

Bringing forth fruit can only come from a life abiding in Christ, as we will see in John 15:4, and to remain unforgiven by God certainly reduces one to that sad state. Scofield almost gets it right in his note on Matthew 26:28. He is correct in stating that Old Testament forgiveness, or remission of sin, follows the execution of the penalty (the sacrifice offered by the priest).

Never! Abel was accepted first, then his sacrifice (Genesis 4, Hebrews 11). Noah found grace before the flood and offered sacrifice afterward (Genesis 6-9). The blood of bulls and goats could NEVER take away sin (Hebrews 10) and David found forgiveness without any sacrifice (Psalms 51).

In the New Testament, the same is true that the only ground for Divine forgiveness is the sacrifice of Christ, but God Himself

has authorized His forgiveness for the Christian only when he shows a forgiving spirit. Otherwise, while the position of the believer in Christ is not altered, the Divine fellowship and resulting usefulness enjoyed by the believer is marred.

This is such a blatant contradiction that it is embarrassing. Something cannot be the ONLY ground if there is other ground upon which it is conditioned. Please see Romans 11:6, which should have ended all these discussions twenty centuries ago.

John 15 has our Master teaching us that a believer, called here a branch, may be cut off and "cast into the fire."

Alright class, here is your assignment. Instead of jumping to conclusions and wresting the scriptures to support your preconceived notion, search your Bible and find out who God identifies as the vine. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant (Isaiah 5:1-7). Nothing could be any clearer. So the threat of John 15 is not directed at a blood-washed, born again, child of God in the body of Christ, but at a nation that is on the brink of crucifying their Messiah.

Is there some similarity between being "delivered to the tormentors" and being "cast into fire?"

Yes, both are dire warnings to the nation of Israel.

It may be that we will see a continuum being established here that will emphasize that "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

But the righteous are saved, scarcely or not, they are saved.

Is this what we read of in 1 Corinthians 3, saved, yet so as by fire.

Of course not!!!! In 1 Corinthians 3 the believer's WORKS are burned, not the believer. Did you even bother to

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read the passage? There is not one word there to suggest that the believer is being tried. His works are being tried. He gains what abides the fire. He suffers the loss of that which does not abide the fire. He is never in danger of being placed in the fire or of suffering in any other way. Nothing in the passage suggests punishment.

If anyone tries to inject the Roman Catholic Purgatory here, we can easily refute that. Purgatory is a place of cleansing; the very word testifies to that. Judicial acceptance by God has already been granted on the basis of Christ's merit, so there is no transferral of merit to the Christian who has ill used his life.

This doesn't even make sense. Purgatory is for cleansing so I'm not teaching purgatory. Jesus made you clean so you don't have to go to purgatory. BUT if you are not clean you will have to go to hell. To say "there is no transferal of merit to the Christian who has ill used his life" shows a horrible misunderstanding of salvation. The merit of Jesus Christ was transferred to me the moment I trusted Him as my Savior. What I do with my life thereafter cannot disannul that fact. I have already been MADE a partaker of HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (2 Corinthians 5:21) as a free gift (Romans 5:10-21) and this gift will not be taken back (Romans 11:29).

Another solemn passage comes when we turn to Matthew 16. Starting in verse 24, Jesus tells His disciples, IF any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

It's getting worse.

1. *Show me one place after the resurrection where taking up a cross and following Jesus is a requirement for saving one's own soul.*
2. *The return in view here is the Son of Man (not the Savior) in glory (not the rapture) with his angels (not for His church).*
3. *Every man is promised reward according to his works. No one is threatened with punishment.*

The root problem with every heresy and false doctrine is an inability to read. When a man comes to the Bible to prove a point the words on the page get fuzzy and he sees what he wants to see not what is written.

Before we look more carefully at this, we must be reminded of an important truth shared by my good friend Ken Lansing, "Your works determine the degree of your reward or punishment, not your destiny."

Not one passage pertaining to the judgment of born again Christians makes mention of punishment.

The destiny of every born again child of God is already established through the merits of the work of Christ on the Cross being imputed to his account.

Ah, but this assumes his destiny is a place. Never is this stated. The destiny is conformity to the image of the Son (Romans 8:26ff, 1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Ephesians 5:21-33, etc.). I will be like Jesus Christ when He presents me to the Father. That is HIS work in me and He will not fail.

The Greek word used for reward (apodidom)

Here we go. For the rest of the article we will watch the author repeatedly abandon the word of God and wander into the

never-never land of "the Greek". If you have to go outside the Bible to prove your point, your point is not a Bible point.

is not the same as your employer's rewarding you with a gold watch after 50 years of service. Since God will reward every man according to his works, positive works (gold, silver and precious stones) will be given positive rewards. There is absolutely no guarantee that the wood, hay and stubble Christian will receive anything positive; comparison of scripture with scripture classifies him as more likely to be given to his tormentors or cast into the fire.

WHERE IS THAT IN 1 CORINTHIANS 3??? You cannot have a cross-reference if the places, people and words are different. Jewish servants being tormented and members of Jesus' body losing rewards are not a match.

While the explicit nature of the punishment uses various descriptive terms, we can be assured that it will be no Sunday School picnic. There is a "terror of the Lord" in Second Corinthians 5:11. We must warn Christians of how much they can lose at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men – not ourselves.

We see that the starting point of this judgment is "if" - If a man denies himself, etc. We probably live in an age when self-denial is at an extremely low ebb on the Christian scene. The "ifs" of Matthew 18:8,9 carry with them the scary proposition of being cast into everlasting fire and hell fire. Is this the same fire as John 15:6? Is it a figurative attempt by Christ to demonstrate how real this punishment is if you do not discipline the body into submission?

Here we must ask the same questions we ask the poor Church of God minister who threatens us with losing our salvation.

1. *Do I lose my place in the kingdom the first time I do not deny myself? the second? after a while? how long a while?*
2. *Who defines this self-denial? If I own a home and have more than one change of clothes have I denied myself? If I have money in my pocket have I denied myself?*
3. *Does a man who preaches to the lost but has long hair lose it? What about a woman with short hair or a man who is overweight? How many pounds overweight? He has not denied himself or he would not be overweight? Oh, you mean those other sins. So we are back to the Catholic position again. You see, a man who thinks you can lose your salvation or place in the kingdom if you sin always means sins he is not committing.*

If a man could lose what was freely given, God would have stated explicitly in His word what one would have to do to lose it. He told us in no uncertain terms how we were lost. He told us in no uncertain terms how to be saved. Where are the verses telling me what I have to do to lose my salvation or place in the kingdom? There are none!

We can deal with such a scripture in two ways. First, we can say that Christ was not speaking of, or to, believers. But the text shows it was plainly a discourse to His disciples.

None of whom were born again. Thus, none of whom had been given eternal life or had been sealed with the Holy Spirit or promised that Jesus would abide with them forever.

So the context would militate against such an interpretation. Or we can look carefully at the word "everlasting." We have to

admit, first of all, that because of the infinite salvation in Christ, no Christian can suffer (as a result of his destiny's being settled through the work of Christ),

Remember, the destiny is not heaven, but Christ-likeness (Romans 8:29)

forever and ever, through the endless ages of Eternity. We know that, after his judgment and loss, God will wipe away his tears (Revelation 21:4).

You see, the author is warning you that you will not go to the lake of fire, but you will go to hell to pay again for sins that Jesus paid for. In this theory God was not satisfied with the offering of Jesus. Isaiah 53:11 says He was!

Joey Faust, in Will God Spare the Rod? makes an interesting observation on page 216. While Deuteronomy had spoken of the ancient mountains and lasting hills, Genesis 49:26 speaks of the everlasting hills. Brother Faust writes, "Clearly, the word 'everlasting' in Genesis 49:26 does not teach that the hills endure for endless eternity. 'Everlasting' simply means lasting."

If everlasting doesn't mean everlasting how do you know that mountains mean mountains or hills mean hills? Who decides one word in a verse is not literal while another is literal. When my body is resurrected and changed from vile to glorious is it still my body? Of course it is. When the hills of Judea are dissolved and remade are they not still the hills of Judea? God said they are. Why call Him a liar to support your theory?

Although the Levitical priesthood and yearly atonement have ceased, God speaks in Exodus 40:15 of an everlasting priesthood, and yearly atonement as an everlasting statute in Leviticus 16:34.

Better read Ezekiel 40-48 and then remove this paragraph before someone finds out you didn't run all the references.

Jude 1:6 speaks of everlasting chains, but we know this means they cannot escape, for they are not now enduring final judgment. The "everlasting" chains will bind them until the day of God's final judgment.

Give me one verse of scripture that says those chains will ever be removed. No, I don't want what you think or reason, I want a verse.

There is no reason for the believer to worry that he will suffer punishment forever and ever, but there is reason for the Christian to heed Hebrews 4:1 to "fear . . . lest any come short of (His promise)." [We will deal with the epistle to the Hebrews in later chapters.] "Hell (Gehenna) fire" seems more difficult to deal with. Many have taught that Gehenna is equivalent to the Lake of Fire, and distinction has always been made between hades (sheol) and Gehenna. However, there is no direct biblical evidence that this is so; it is just one of the items we have gleaned from Christian teachers.

Last time I heard this song and dance there were two Jehovah's witnesses at my door trying to sell me a Watchtower. I can't seem to find gehenna, sheol or hades anywhere in my Bible. Somebody must be fooling around with a New World Translation. Anybody who took time to study their Bible would know that death and hell are the temporary places of punishment and the lake of fire is the permanent one (Revelation 20:14). Things are getting worse by the minute here.

The references to Gehenna

Not one reference in the whole Bible.

(Greek for Hinnon) point to the city garbage dump outside Jerusalem where fire consumed the refuse.

Did somebody just slip me a copy of Awake? I thought Rutherford was dead.

It was likely to this concept that the Apostle Paul made illusion, when he displayed a Godly fear at being a castaway. He, of course, knew the "terror of the Lord," and felt himself still on a quest to apprehend that for which he was apprehended. Christians were justified so that they could have a real part in fulfilling the prayer of our Lord, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Millennial reign with Christ is that to which all Christians have been called, but some, alas many, will find themselves disqualified and will spend the Millennial period languishing on the garbage dump with unbelievers.

Can he be serious? Stop right now and read Isaiah 53:4-6, Romans 5:8-10, and Romans 8:32-39. I said, stop and read those passages.

After those grand truths are considered how can this man be threatening me with hell?!?!? In Jesus Christ I was

- *made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light*
- *delivered from the power of darkness*
- *translated into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1).*

The difference between them, of course, is that the unbelievers will be resurrected to face the Lake of Fire, while the believers will stand before God and rejoice as He wipes away their very real tears.

No sir, the difference between us is Jesus Christ. By GRACE my every sin was fully paid for on the cross. Jesus suffered the

penalty for my every transgression. He took the complete bruising for my iniquity.

Our last "if" in Matthew comes in chapter 24, verse 48, where Christ contrasts a faithful and wise servant with an evil servant. Both are servants, but one is good and one is evil (Greek: worthless).

Another slap at the words of God in your KJV. But nobody in Matthew 24 is a SON. And every born again believer is seven years gone when Matthew 24 unfolds.

The worthless servant, who produced wood, hay, stubble, will have his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. What company to spend the Millennium with, but it is still a consolation that weeping shall endure for a (long) night, but joy comes in the morning. And in the second resurrection, God will know those that are His, for it is only those whose names are not written in the Book of Life that are cast into the Lake of Fire.

This is the most pathetic jumbling of scripture I have ever seen in one paragraph. There is nothing in the literature of Mormonism or Kenneth Hagin this tangled.

MARK We call them synoptic Gospels because of their similarity. Many Bible teachers treat Matthew as if were Old Testament; others don't really think we have serious New Testament teaching until we get to John's Gospel. Was God interested in having a Bible of a certain thickness so He "threw in" two extra Gospels? Or did God have a reason for three almost identical accounts of the life of His Son? We must either conclude that (1) God didn't have control over who should write Gospel accounts or (2) there is a real reason for three almost identical writings. We do have the four-faced cherub of Ezekiel (man, lion, ox and eagle). These faces can be compared with the

four Gospels - Luke, Matthew, Mark and John, respectively. It is not hard to come up with Matthew's Lion Gospel portraying the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and written to show Christ as King of the Jews. Luke portrayed Him as Son of man, Mark as the suffering servant (ox). John rises to the heights as he proclaims Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Having said all this, perhaps the real reason is that God knows, as does any father, that a more lasting impression is made if something is said three times. While some of the use of the word "if" in Mark is practically a repetition of Matthew, if God saw fit to say some things more than once, who are we to regard this as an unimportant repetition? Mark 6:35 contains an important foundational truth of Kingdom life. Jesus said, If a man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. Self promotion is almost as instinctive as self protection. That is probably why it is so important to stress, in a Kingdom where every rule is in opposition to the rule of earthly living, the very basic contrasts be insisted upon. To keep oneself from self promotion demands effort. "Labor to enter into His rest" and be willing to "work against an instinctive reaction to promote yourself" become synonymous. The words of Christ can be taken either way. If one wants to be first in earthly acclaim, he will end up being last, but if a person is willing not to be first, and becomes the servant of all, he truly will be promoted in the Kingdom.

Another truth it sets before us is that there will be differing glories among those who enter into the Glory of His Kingdom. When one considers the glory of the Lord, Exodus 39 and 40 come to mind. In these chapters, we are told 14 times that Moses did "as the Lord commanded." Then, in verse 34, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

In Matthew 18, Jesus had spoken of being cast "into everlasting fire" and "into hell" to His disciples in the context of becoming like little children to even enter the Kingdom. The former climaxes of life appear to be in contrast to entering the Kingdom. Now, in the context of forbidding unnecessary separation, and in extended reply to a question asked by His

beloved disciple John, Jesus warns three times about going to hell. This should cause us not to lightly conclude that this is only for unbelievers. The content seems to suggest it is a highly probably, albeit temporary, destination for some of His servants who never really became His disciples.

Immediately we are faced with a scripture that some take to mean one can lose his salvation. The hell of which Jesus spoke is Gehenna,

Who keeps letting the JW's in here? Does anyone actually believe that the worms of unsaved people are writhing in the perpetual fire of a garbage dump outside Jerusalem? I was there in 1998. I didn't see any unquenchable fire pit with maggots in it.

Now, for those of you who believe the Bible, Mark 9:42-48 is about HELL, that is what Jesus said. He was addressing a company of men who were following Him, working for Him and preaching His gospel – none of whom were born again. Of course an unsaved man could end up in hell. John and the rest were not saved at this time, nor could they be for Jesus had not yet paid for their sins.

and we have already seen the possibility of a Christian's being cast away on the garbage heap because he had not fulfilled that which Jesus required for entrance into His Millennial kingdom.

No, we didn't see that anywhere.

Salvation and the assurance of eternal security are not the points under discussion; it is Kingdom reign with Christ during the Millennium. We recognize that the general term "Kingdom of God/Heaven" is also used to denote salvation (as in John 3:3,5).

See the problem. It is an inability to read. There is no kingdom of heaven in John 3:3-5 and the term used to denote salvation is not the kingdom but BORN AGAIN and the result of

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being born again is seeing the kingdom – not doing good works after you are born again.

In Mark 9:50 we have salt losing its saltiness, just as in Matthew 5:13 it lost its savour. Both words mean to become insipid. (Webster defines this as lacking in qualities that interest, stimulate or challenge). Whether or not you want to equate this to many American Christians is your prerogative. Jesus said the saltless (or savorless) salt is good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men.

Okay boys and girls, this is why you have to learn to diagram sentences, so you won't grow up and get saved and teach false doctrine. Matthew 5:13: Ye are the salt of THE EARTH: but if the salt (ye) have lost his savor, wherewith shall it (the earth) be salted? (you don't salt, salt) it (the earth) is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Less toying with Greek and more attention to English would help tremendously.

An archaic meaning of the word "hell" is a place where a tailor threw scraps of material which he did not use; also meaning "sheol", or the grave - which can be a hollow underneath the surface of the earth so that man's feet tread upon it.

All along the watchtower!!!!

We keep coming up with suggestions of a future punishment that is not reserved for the unconverted - in so many passages, Jesus gives these warnings directly to His disciples.

WHO WERE NOT CONVERTED! The very night before Jesus went to the cross He said to Simon Peter, But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22:32).

We could say that the disciples were not really converted yet;

We don't have to say it, Jesus did.

if their heart-allegiance to Christ was not equal to evangelical conversion, when did it happen? Later in His ministry, Jesus proclaimed that "they were all clean." We cannot get away from the fact that personal trust in the Person of Jesus (whether when He was in the flesh or now through the Holy Spirit) brings about a conversion

This is a flat-out denial of what Jesus said.

They were not fused into one Body until Pentecost, but they were certainly saved men (with the exception of Judas).

Nonsense. What was said to the eleven was said to Judas. He had exactly what they had. If they were saved Judas lost his salvation. If Judas was not saved, none of them were saved.

In a different context, Christ, in Mark 11:25,26 gives exactly the same conclusion that He gave at the close of what we call the "Lord's Prayer." Was He talking to believers? Can non-believers say to this mountain, "Be removed" and have it cast into the sea? Could Jesus have given the prayer carte blanche of Mark 11:34 to unsaved men?

Judas cast out devils. The beast will work miracles (Revelation 13) the antichrist will perform signs (2 Thessalonians 2). This proves nothing.

He goes on in the next two verses to repeat the conditions for forgiveness. It is not necessary to build again the unwavering evidence of eternal security, so we understand He was not saying men will go to Heaven because they forgave their fellow man.

What He is saying is that a hard, unforgiving heart will be a heart that, not being forgiven by God, will be barren in His service. He is cast out if you will, like unsalty salt. He is cast out even though he may have preached to others. He is found unprofitable and therefore still saved, but with the works produced by barrenness judged in that day to be wood, hay and stubble.

LUKE Luke 9:23-26 is part of a teaching Jesus gave to His disciples. It followed Peter's confession of faith and preceded the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Nowhere in the Bible are these stimulations given to one coming to Christ for eternal salvation. The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). The Apostle Paul could tell the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

This brings us to the conclusion that Jesus is not talking about merely escaping eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. He is laying down conditions for true discipleship. In the world today we have a popular past time among mature Christians, which is to disciple younger Christians. This discipline usually means being grounded in theological truth, which is good. But Jesus' definition of discipleship was based on self denial. If Christians work on preserving their life (and life-style), Jesus says they will lose it, but whoever is willing to lose his life for Christ's sake shall find it.

That's what I've been trying to tell you. By the way, this lifestyle, is that the clean comfortable air-conditioned restaurant lifestyle of an American or the impoverished life style of a Lithuanian? If I travel in an automobile to preach in a carpeted church building and a brother in the Philippines has to walk to preach in a ramshackle building have I denied myself? Tell me exactly what I have to do to be punished by the One who bore ALL my punishment.

His coming in glory as mentioned in verse 26 is certainly to set up His Kingdom here on the earth in the Millennium. It is too plain that those who are ashamed of Him before men will not be called to be a part of that glorious Kingdom, but will lose Millennial blessing.

But the verse doesn't say that. You made it up. It says the Lord will be ashamed of him. That's all it says. Anything else is as false as Tobit, Judith or Bel and the Dragon.

"If thy whole body be therefore full of light" (Luke 11:36) is contrasted with the possible negative found in verse 35, and when Jesus says "Take heed" we have to believe there is a real possibility of our light becoming darkness (or, as He said in another place, our salt losing its saltiness.) As our lives should be lighthouses pointing men to Christ, if this light is put under a bushel it will not fulfill its purpose.

Luke 12:42-48 answers the question of who is a wise steward and the blessedness of such a one. Verse 45 begins, "but and if that servant" showing us he is still talking about a saved man. The rest of the verses in this section are cause for alarm, or, as Jesus would say, "Take heed." Judgment Seat of Christ is not a Sunday School picnic. It is no light thing to amass a life's work consisting of wood, hay and stubble. Verse 46 is specific. The Master will cut that unprofitable servant asunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. Can that mean that, instead of reigning with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom, he spends 1000 years with unbelievers in outer darkness?

Remember, if you are born again you are not a servant but a son. I have no fear of being beaten with stripes (v. 47-48) because Jesus took my punishment by HIS stripes (Isaiah 53). Will I be cut in sunder (v. 46)? I am a member of His body (1 Corinthians 12:12ff) and bone of His bones (Ephesians 5:22ff). I have no fear of the Lord dismembering Himself and sending part of His own body to hell for 1,000 years. This passage says

nothing about a man being cast into outer darkness but being chopped in pieces.

If that servant doesn't take heed but, thinking the Master will not come right away, does wickedly, he will be harshly dealt with. We must constantly remind ourselves of the Bema.

The what? Can't find this in my Bible.

If the servant was not a believer, why would Jesus have specifically mentioned the company he will be forced to keep as a result of his unfaithfulness. And Jesus commanded his followers to teach these truths to all the world. How our teachers have failed!

Yes, they have obviously failed. On this we can agree.

Perhaps understanding that this would happen, Jesus explains the degree of punishment as being the degree of enlightenment. But all of us have a Bible, so being ignorant of these truths is no excuse. The punishments are here referred to as "many stripes" or "few stripes." This indicates to us that whatever punishment is handed out to wood, hay and stubble Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ, there will be degrees of punishment. But be assured there will be punishment!

I urge you to read Romans 4-5 and be assured there will not be punishment.

Luke 13:9 tells of the unfruitful fig tree. Unlike the fig tree that was cursed and became eternally unfruitful, this fig tree is given a second chance. That is entirely up to the Master of the Vineyard. But the Master plainly says that if, after the dresser of the vineyard does all in his power to revive the fig tree, it doesn't bear fruit, it shall be cut down.

*I feel so bad to have to keep doing this. Before setting forth some new "doctrine" one should always run the references. Who is the servant? Who is the vine? Who is the fig tree? You mean the Bible tells us? Of course. God calls Israel **MY FIG TREE** in Joel 1:7. So why would anybody teach the fig tree of Luke 13:9 was an individual member of the body of Christ? Simple, to try and scare church members who don't love Jesus into serving Him.*

Jesus outlines the prerogatives for discipleship clearly in Luke 14:26. It is very clear that those who consider human relationships more important than following Him will be excluded. Jesus promised in John 12:26 that "where I am, there shall my servant be." All Christians will be with Him in the Eternal Age in Heaven; the profitable servants will also reign with Him in the Millennial Kingdom while the others wait for the second resurrection.

*So then He lied to them because they are not where He is. It's bad enough to slaughter every text you try and exposit but to call Jesus Christ a liar is going too far. **Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee (HEBREWS 13:5).** So is Jesus going to hell during the millennium? Then I'm not either. **I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).** We're all in the kingdom with Jesus or we're all in hell with Jesus. Or He is a liar.*

Luke 14:34 gives interesting insight to the salt that has lost its savour or saltiness. "It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out," His closing words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" is another way of assaying "Take heed." It will be costly for you to ignore these warnings.

Luke 16:11,12 could very well be taken as a contrast between "unrighteous mammon" being the things that pertain to

this life, when we might not be faithful in that which is another man's (ye are not your own, for you are bought with a price).

It could be taken to mean a Desoto is harder to find than a Ford, but it does not. All mammon pertains to this life.

Unfaithfulness in this life will result in the loss of true riches. The Millennial reign, for which you were justified and to which you have a claim only because you were justified in Christ will not be given to you, just as the rightful blessing was withheld from Esau, not because of Jacob's deception, but because Isaac, by faith, gave Jacob the blessing.

The last paragraph made so little sense it cannot be commented upon.

JOHN Much of John's Gospel centers around Jesus' claim to Deity and His confrontations with the Jews. One important "if" is found in John 8:51, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never see death." The word "keep" Greek: tereo,

With apologies to all of you who believe the AV to be the word of God.

has a military connotation, and means to guard. Real effort is involved, so that it could not mean a mere mental assent to His sayings, but something which takes some hard work. The opposite is that if a man (it doesn't designate whether believer or unbeliever) does not "keep" the sayings of Christ, he will see death. At the very least, that should encourage Christians to hold fast to the truth of the Word of God.

The author here drops the first hint of what will be fully revealed later – that he believes life is conditional and is the reward for good works.

John 10:9 gives us another glorious truth of eternal security. While John 11:40 is spoken directly to Martha, it does spell out a principle that will always be a part of God's workings - if thou wouldest believe, thou shalt see the glory of God. Faith is the key.

Yes, believe, not work, just believe.

In John 12:24, another principle of the Kingdom is spoken by the Lord. In order for a corn of wheat to bring forth fruit, it must die. Dying is not normally the chief desire of humans, but Paul reminds us, in Philippians 2, that the mind of Christ, which always brought Him a step lower to eventual death, must be our mind. In John 12:26, we are again promised to be with Christ if we truly serve Him.

Wrong again on all counts. There is no mention of the kingdom anywhere in the passage. The promise of v. 26 is not a PLACE in glory but HONOUR from the father. Why even read a verse if you are not going to pay attention to what it says?

John 14:23 draws a line between "easy believism" and the imputing of righteousness and implanting of a Christ-likeness in the individual. The Father and the Son will make their abode with all who truly love Jesus Christ.

He is in me. He lives in me. He moved in to stay forever the moment I called upon Him for the salvation of my soul.

One of the most comforting thoughts expressed by Christ also carries with it a fearful realization. The Vine and the branches – what a joy to abide in Him. The entire context of John 15:1-14 clearly indicates that Christ is speaking to His disciples, and hence, to us. The realization that He has made us clean and we can abide in Him and bring forth fruit is glorious. The fact that there will be some branches who do not continue to

abide and therefore are withered. Not only withered, but, Jesus Himself said it, men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

It takes a lot of manipulation to try to assert He is talking of the unsaved, just as it is foolishness to think that anyone, once a branch of the Vine, could lose the eternal security purchased with so great a price. The only logical conclusion is to understand that there are some branches rejected (castaways) and consigned to the fire (wood, hay and stubble burns so much better than gold, silver and precious stones;) but even these latter will still be tried by fire. Even those who are judged unworthy will be eventually delivered from the fire into the courts of Heaven, where God will get out His handkerchief and wipe all their tears away.

It takes even more manipulation to make this the church after Isaiah 5 told you it was Israel.

John 15:14 encourages us to do whatever He commands us, and we remember with joy that it was while we were yet sinners that He died for us.

ACTS Being a transitional narrative, not a theological study, there is no use of the word "if" that fits in with this study. We have looked at a large number of words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, proving that He knew there was an "if" attached to the greatest promises of God. We will proceed into the epistles written to actual early churches, all of which will give us further understanding of the fact that God is promising Kingdom rewards "if" and loss of them "if not."

ROMANS An interesting statement in Romans 2:25, "if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Now we know that, speaking biologically, circumcision can never be undone, therefore we must believe that God was telling us that law-breakers lose the blessing of circumcision. Salvation can never be undone, but we have already seen that God has set before the believer certain rules which, if broken, cannot undo

salvation but can render void all the possibilities that come with salvation. Man was justified that he might be a part of God's great program in extending His rule over the earth in the Millennial period. By neglecting the rules, man can forfeit that.

Romans 1-2 is a national passage explaining why those with knowledge of the law and those without knowledge of the law are justly condemned though they may lack the full light of the gospel. That is why comparison is made between the condition of the circumcision and the uncircumcision. All these matters are past for the born again believer (Ephesians 2:11-13). We are no longer classified with either group but are the household of God (Ephesians 2:19); not known by our old designations, but as new creatures (Galatians 6:15).

In Paul's great discourse on imputation, we read of the one necessity in having Christ's righteousness imputed to us. It is "if we believe" - Romans 4:24. Nothing else is demanded for salvation, but so much more is demanded for full reward. In Romans 5:10 we have an example of God's use of dual salvation—we were reconciled to God and we shall be saved by his life. This concept is important to grasp, because God doesn't play around with words or waste them. We can clearly see this same idea when we turn back to a much-memorized text in John 11. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live . . ." This tells of basic faith in Christ that brings everlasting life. The question is, Who is it that will never die? Jesus said, "He who lives and believes in me shall never die." "Never die" is a second phase of salvation, and it, too, comes to those, already alive, who exercise faith. Remember it is through faith and patience that we receive the blessing - a super abundant salvation for believing Christians. We cannot only ask, "Did you believe in Christ?" but "Are you still exercising your faith in Him?"

Come on brother. All THREE phases of salvation are GUARANTEED in this passage. WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM (v. 9). WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE (v. 10). Why must you insist on limiting the extent of justification. My sins and my salvation, past, present and future, have been taken care of by Jesus Christ.

A further example is in 1 John 5:11-13. God plainly tells of the record, which is eternal life for those who have the Son. Verse 13 is a favorite verse for assurance, "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God that ye might know that ye have eternal life . . ." Now, those who already have everlasting life are encouraged to believe on Him. For salvation? - hardly, this is a belief that is exercised after the original belief has secured, eternally, God's gift of eternal life. Romans 5:17 talks about those who receive abundant grace and will reign with Christ, but receiving is always prefaced by believing. Jesus said, "Believe and ye shall receive." Being in the likeness of His resurrection depends, according to Romans 6:5, having been planted together (Greek: closely united to)

What Greek? Tell us which of the 100 Greek texts are you referring to? How many of the extant manuscripts did you examine?

Romans 5:17 makes the only condition for reigning HIS GRACE. Romans 6:5 makes the only condition for bearing His likeness in the resurrection being BURIED WITH HIM. Why not teach these TRUTHS and allow those who believe them to serve the Lord with thanksgiving?!!!

His death. This sounds like Philippians 2:5-8. The whole argument of Romans 6 concerning deliverance from the power of indwelling sin depends on our reckoning ourselves dead unto sin (this demands belief). Salvation comes initially by grace through faith. And our growing up fully in Him demands exactly the same. In Romans 8:9, being in the Spirit is conditioned on the Spirit of God's dwelling in you. The word dwelling has a far

greater meaning than just acquaintance. There are those who have the Spirit of Christ and are saved, have been baptized in the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ but have no regular communion with Him and are living in the flesh. These cannot please God, and entering into the joy of your Lord demands that He be able to say "Well done." He is not going to tell a lie. This dwelling is further mentioned in verse 11; if the Spirit of God has His abiding place in you (rather than coming as an invited Guest every Sunday for church), He will bring your mortal being to life as you live for Him.

This is so bizarre. How can I be saved and have eternal life and belong to Christ but not have life or be the dwelling place of the Spirit? The only way one can be without the indwelling Spirit is to be NONE OF HIS (Romans 8:9). He brought my mortal being to life the day I was born.

We all use Romans 6:23 as a salvation text for sinners, but don't you find it hard to look at the context of that statement and not believe that some Christians will taste of death because of their sin?

Death, not hell, and we all die.

That is what God is saying in Romans 8:13 (was Romans 8 written to unbelievers?). Romans 8:17 continues the theme - If we suffer with him, we will be glorified with Him. Jesus' mission, according to Hebrews is to "bring many sons to Glory." They become His sons by virtue of His atoning sacrifice; they are glorified when they, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. Patience is again enjoined in Romans.

Why didn't you keep reading verse 18? For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time (you tried to make this some special suffering for preaching the gospel but God did not say that, He just said suffering and everybody suffers {Job 14:1;

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5:11) are not worthy to be compared with the glory WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US. See, everybody in verse 16-17 is promised glory in verse 18.

The last "if" of Romans 8 brings us great consolation. Although the enemy of our souls will unite with circumstances to defeat us, if God be for us, who can be against us. The Olive Tree of Romans 11 is the Kingdom.

It certainly is not.

Some of the natural branches were cut off (see Matthew 8:11), and saved people were grafted in.

No, the Gentiles were.

But since God didn't spare the natural branches, we are warned, "take heed lest he spare not thee." For God's allowing Gentiles to be a part of His earthly Kingdom (although, as the Church, they will reign on earth as heavenly people), shows His goodness to them. But it is conditioned on the Gentile believer's continuing in His goodness; otherwise they also shall be cut off.

How can someone study Roman Catholicism for so long and end up confounding the church and the kingdom? What a great mystery.

"Cut off" is the same word as "hewn down" in Luke 3:9.

It certainly is not in my Bible. C-U-T is not H-E-W-N and kingdom of God is not kingdom of heaven and Gentiles are not the church and the Greek is not the Bible and hell is not gehenna and eternal life is not 1,000 years in hell.

Trees that are hewn down are cast into the fire.

Do not let a man who does not know the difference between cutting of branches and hewing down a tree work in your garden.

Sin is defined for the Christian in Romans 14:23 - whatsoever is not of faith is sin. This agrees with other scriptures that insist on the necessity of faith, both when coming to Christ for salvation and looking to Him for future Glory.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 1 Corinthians 3:12 is the first of five "ifs" in the following verses which are among the most important in the Word of God. Verse 12 gives us a choice of building materials for our Christian lives. We must point out that all those spoken of in these verses are Christians, and all will have an eternal life in Heaven. Between now and then is what these verses are all about. It is apparent that those who, because of ignorance or carelessness, decide to build with wood, hay and stubble will suffer loss. There is nothing to suggest, however, that anyone will build of pure gold without any stubble.

So do some go to hell for only 500 years or ten years or does everyone who comes short of pure gold have to burn the full 1,000?

Whatever our choices of materials, one day our building will be tried by fire. When God's fire tests man's material, it may abide or it may be burned. If any combustible materials are used, they will be burned and the man will suffer loss.

BUT NOT PUNISHMENT!

We know that the Judge of all the earth will do right. He knows not only your deeds, but the thought from the deepest recess of your heart. God Himself will determine the severity of the loss, and He will do so by assessing rewards, not applying grace. The Grace that saved you will never fail, and the most fruitless Christian will still be saved because God has respect to

the work of Christ on the cross and the fact that this, and this alone, satisfies Him. The context links verse 15, which tells of man's loss, with verse 17 with the fearful penalty, "Him will God destroy." The Greek word for destroy has the concept of shriveling or withering. We know it will

I didn't see this many Greeks when I was in Athens.

not be the same as God's destroying the Wicked (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

So he tells us that destroy does not mean destroy. It's getting worse by the minute.

This speaks of abolishing, or doing away with. The Judgment of God will be severe but will never be so fierce as to overcome the gracious work of our Savior on Calvary. The final word from this passage - Don't fool yourself. If you think you have a lot of worldly wisdom, become a fool that you can have true wisdom. The world heralds success as the hallmark of ones life; God has no place for success - His own Son, according to any worldly standard, was a failure. God is only concerned with faithfulness – that is true gold, silver and precious stones.

WHAT IF YOU ARE FAITHFULLY WRONG! Mormon missionaries are faithful. Buddhist monks are faithful. John Paul II is faithful. God is concerned with TRUTH.

1 Corinthians 15:1,2 is very interesting. Paul writes, the gospel that I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, IF ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

I preached – past tense.

have received – past tense.

have preached – past tense.

have believed – dare we say this is present tense. No. If your belief was vain you were not saved. This has nothing to do with the state of the believer after true faith is placed in the gospel.

From the construction of the Greek words,

Give it a rest. Why this constant undermining of the Bible?

it is apparent that it was real salvation that these Corinthians had received. We know that God's salvation is eternal, and, while we are not told exactly what would be forfeited by not holding fast, that it some will lose some sort of deliverance or protection. We will have to try to understand this passage in the light of all the others.

GALATIANS Galatians 1:10 says, "for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." The Greek word for servant, *doulos*, means

Ditto.

slave. The Bible has much to say about servants, both good and bad. While we know there are Christians who are more concerned at pleasing men than thy are of pleasing God, it seems Paul is saying that the normal Christian life is one lived as a bond servant to Christ, where the plaudits of men are not important. We cannot say that those who please men are not truly Christians, but we know they lack the closeness to Christ experience by the Apostle Paul in his daily walk with God.

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall; reap, if we faint not. This is in the context of Christians sowing to his flesh and reaping corruption or sowing to the Spirit and reaping life everlasting.

But I ALREADY HAVE life everlasting (John 3:16, John 3:36, 1 John 5:11-13).

The corruption spoken of is decay, or ruin, akin to the Greek word

Yawn.

which signifies withering or shriveling up. It is never used to describe eternal damnation, and it is the object of this lesson to bring out scriptures which tell us that reaping everlasting life is different from receiving everlasting life. There is more to salvation than just a fire-insurance policy. There are those who will escape eternal judgment but will have spent their Christian lives enjoying their carnality and reaping ruin.

There is more involved than fire insurance, but thank God, fire insurance is part of the package.

EPHESIANS There are only two times in the Epistle to the Ephesians that the word "if" is used, and we will deal with one of them. In chapter 4: 17-32 Paul paints a contrasting picture between saved Gentiles and Christians.

I read it four times. Where do you see the term saved Gentiles? Why the entire book is written to show there are no saved Jews or saved Gentiles but saints who are brethren and members of one body.

After having spoken of the darkness of the unbeliever in verses 17 through 19, he tells the Christians, "ye have not so learned Christ - IF! He is saying the condition is that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him. In a recent Bible study I attended the Christians were asked if they read their Bibles every day. Only one person acknowledged that he did. Were the others really listening to and being taught by their Lord? It is not for us to judge individual spirituality, but it is not

hard to assume that some Christians don't listen to God's voice as much as they should. You can probably find out if you listen to Him by answering the stipulations mentioned by Paul. If you listen to Him you will put off the old man, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on the new man, put away lying; speak the truth, be (righteously) angry but don't let anger cause you to sin, not give place to the devil, not steal, but work things which are good, give to him that is in need, not speak that which is corruptible, speak that which will edify someone else, not grieve the Holy Spirit, do away with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and be kind and forgiving to others. Check out yourself on this list, and see if you are manifesting a life that is being taught, not just facts, but taught by Him. A lot of Christians know a lot of facts, but they display very little when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit.

So does a saved man who doesn't read his Bible every day go to hell? How many days would he have to not read it in order to go to hell? How many days would he have to read it after he started reading it to get back out of hell? Will a man who reads his Bible every day but changes the words go to hell?

PHILIPPIANS In Philippians 3:11, Paul makes an interesting statement. He had been saved for 30 years, and just four years ago had written the great assurance chapters of Romans 4 - 8. In two years he would write to Timothy that he still believed that God was able to "keep that which he had committed unto Him against that day." When Paul wrote to the Philippians, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" it was not his eternal life in Heaven that was in question. A number of times in his epistles Paul, saved and eternally secure, had a real concern that there was still something he might miss. Here he calls it "the resurrection of the dead." Since all the dead, saved, backslider and lost will eventually be resurrected, some to life and some to death, Paul must have been thinking of the first resurrection.

The word backslider is not found in the New Testament. There is no such thing as a backslidden Christian. Such is not found in the word of God. This is another term used carelessly by preachers who will not distinguish between Israel, whose position was changeable, and the born again Christian, whose position is unchangeable. I am in Christ, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and there is no room for me to slide in any direction.

that God uses John to explain further in Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

By using the word "attain" (used in Acts 27:12, attain to Phenice) Paul referred to something he had to go toward (as "I press toward the mark"). At about the same time, Paul wrote to the Ephesians stating that salvation was not of works. There must have been something to which Paul was referring more than his assured eternal life in Heaven. It reminds us of the fact that the Lord Jesus is creating sons, and then bringing these sons to Glory. Full salvation is more than a fire insurance policy to keep one out of the eternal Lake of Fire. In verse 12, even though he bears ample testimony that the work done by Christ for his salvation is complete, he knows he has not yet attained, but that there is a reason Christ has apprehended him. The first would be to become a child of God, which he was. The second would be to be a blessing to the Gentiles, which he already was. The third - may we build upon all the other scriptures we have studied - would be to reign with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom.

Wrong again, the object in view is not the kingdom but Christ-likeness. Christ had already laid hold on that for Paul (Philippians 3:12; 1:6) Paul just wanted to grasp the concept beforehand.

We know that the term, "Kingdom of God" can refer to all the redeemed of this age, prior ages or future ages.

No it can't. It never does.

But there is a special Kingdom for which God asked us to pray, and in which the Kingdoms of the world will become the Kingdoms of Christ.

This is the kingdom of heaven and this will happen whether anybody prays for it or not (Revelation 11:15).

This will take place at the seventh trumpet (the last trump), which happens at the same time as the seventh vial judgment that ushers in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Those that have suffered with Him shall reign with Him. Paul wanted to be a part of that elite group. If your mind is not in agreement with these things, Paul assures the "perfect" (mature) Christian that God can reveal even this unto you.

Brother, DID YOU JUST LOSE YOUR PLACE IN THE MILLENNIUM FOR THAT ARROGANT SHOT. In case you missed it folks, he just said that if you were as mature as he was you would know you were in danger of going to hell even though Jesus has already taken ALL God's waves and ALL his billows (Psalms 42:7).

COLOSSIANS Colossians 1:21 talks of people who have been reconciled (apokatallasso,

I can't find that word in my inerrant, preserved, perfect Bible.

to reconcile fully - used only in Ephesians 2:16 and Colossians 1:20,21). Even though, in Christ, we are holy, unblamable, and unprovable in his sight, there is still an important "if." Those who are reconciled fully still have to continue and not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. That simply means there is more than just being found unblamable in Christ - again it is the

recurring theme of not just being made sons because of His Atonement, but in the sons being led to Glory by the Captain of their salvation, the Author and Finisher of our faith. It may be in Colossians 2:20 that Paul is wondering if they are as dead to the rudiments of the world as they profess to be, or as they should be. That is a good question for every Christian. Paul follows it up with his very real challenges of Colossians 3:1-4, pointing out the glorious end of a victorious Christian life - appearing with Christ in Glory.

But God gives us the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57) and always causes us to triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14).

FIRST THESSALONIANS In 1 Thessalonians 3:8 we see two important truths presented. First, there is the possibility presented that some of the Thessalonian Christians might not stand fast in the Lord, and second, we see the intense desire of the Apostle Paul to have them become true overcomers.

So.

SECOND THESSALONIANS Normally, we would expect any Christian to obey instructions handed down to him in person by the Apostle Paul. We would desire every Christian today to be obedient to God's Word. The fact that some are not is something Paul considered a real possibility, and in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 he lays down specific rules for how to treat someone who doesn't obey. Mark well that even though he is disobedient, he is a Christian (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

My dear brother, this is the first passage you have interpreted correctly and the interpretation disproves your argument.

FIRST TIMOTHY The "if" of 1 Timothy 1:8 reminds us of some today who would try to demand obedience to the law as a fruit of Christianity. Romans 8:2 makes it plain that the law of

the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made us free from the law of sin and death. The rules we have to obey now are far more stringent than the Mosaic Law could ever be.

For example.

SECOND TIMOTHY 2 Timothy 2:11-13 has a very interesting set of "if"s. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live in him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. From cross-referencing 2 Corinthians 5:14, Colossians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:24 and many other scriptures, we can assume that the first if is true for every Christian. We are crucified with Christ. The next if is definitely conditional; if we suffer, we shall reign. If we do not suffer, we will not reign.

See above.

The Kingdom of God/Heaven which is used as a synonym for eternity with Christ

Never. Why would someone make a statement like this when there is no scripture to support it?

is a reality for every Christian. The earthly reign of Christ in the Millennium will be shared by all that suffer.

First Corinthians 4:12-16 and Romans 8:22 say that everybody suffers. Why would I fear missing the kingdom if I do not suffer when all men born of women will suffer as long as sparks fly upward (Job 5:1; 14:1).

The Greek word is *hupomeno*, and has a primary

My poor Bible. It just keeps getting slammed.

meaning of "to stay under." It is also translated endure (among them Matthew 10:22; 2 Timothy 2:10, Hebrews 12:2,3; and James 1:12) and take patiently.(1 Peter 2:20). If we deny him, he also will deny us. The Greek word for "deny" has

It's getting old.

a meaning of to disavow or reject, and is used in Acts 7:35 for the children of Israel rejecting Moses. We know it cannot mean loss of eternal life, but there is something for which we will be rejected if we reject Him. Christians can reject His Lordship over any one of the many areas of life, and, in doing so, we stand liable to be rejected for the great blessing of reigning with Him.

*This is a bold statement. I want one verse of scripture in the Authorized Version, left as God gave it to us, that says a born again blood washed child of God will ever be rejected by Jesus Christ. Just one. I am **accepted IN THE BELOVED** (Ephesians 1). That position is the ground of my acceptance, not my works. As long as I am in HIM I am accepted.*

If we believe not (are faithless), He abides faithful. We know He will be true to His Word. He said, "They shall never perish" which should be all we need to believe in eternal security. But He will be faithful to stand by His warnings, as well as His promises. We used to sing the chorus (and it was true), "Every promise in the Book is mine." But it is likewise true that "every warning in the Book refers to me!"

This is so sad. Every promise? What if I claim land rights to the property between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea? What if I claim the upper and nether springs of Kirjath-sepher? Does the warning of destruction in 40 days apply to me? Is God going to send a plague of murrain upon my cattle? My heart is grieved over such mishandling of the sacred volume.

2 Timothy 2:20 talks about a vessel in a great house. We understand he is talking about Christians. Even in the great house there are vessels to dishonor. If a man purge himself from these (probably referring to profane [wicked] and vain babblings [fruitless discussions] of verse 16) he will be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and suitable for the Master to use and prepared unto every good work. I wonder if a Christian's discussing the merits of his favorite football team or one of its players is a fruitless discussion?

No more so than slighting the finished work of the one and only completed sacrifice accepted by God for the full payment of sin.

HEBREWS As we approach this Book, we have to seriously consider the thoughts of C.I. Scofield whose notes have been helpful, but are certainly not infallible. He treated all the warnings of Hebrews as being given to "Jewish professed believers, (who were in danger) of lapsing back into Judaism or of pausing short of true faith in Jesus Christ" (Introductory notes, page 1291, Scofield Reference Bible). Rather than argue with him, we will note the language Paul

Who said Paul wrote Hebrews? Can you show me that in the Bible?

uses to describe those to whom he is speaking, and let that help us decide whether or not these people were Christians. Paul starts Hebrews 2 by saying that we must give heed. The warning passage repeats we, demonstrating he was not talking just to them, but to all. Verse 3 says, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. He acknowledges that this great salvation was first spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself. We might question how saved people can neglect this salvation. (He had previously indicated in Philippians 3:13,14 that he needed to press on.) The Greek word for neglect is *amemptos*

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

and it means to be careless of. Paul was not speaking of rejecting Christ or His salvation

But that is exactly what the writer said he was speaking about.

he was admonishing Christians not to be careless, and he used the same word to exhort Timothy not to neglect the gift that is in him (1 Timothy 4:14). It is much the same as Philippians 2:12, "work out your own salvation." Certainly Paul is warning Christians not to be careless, but to be watchful, as Peter said in 1 Peter 5:8. Hebrews 3:6 says we are the house of Christ if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Note first that he speaking to holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. Then notice that the condition depends on something we do, so it cannot refer to salvation, which is something He has done. Much confusion will be spared us if we have a full understanding of the eternal worth of the work Christ has finished for us and the responsibility we have to do things after we are saved. Your works determine the degree of your reward or punishment

*Reward yes, punishment never. Jesus paid it all!!!
Hallelujah.*

not your destiny. Instead of trying to side step the reality of God's warnings when we are accosted by those who do not believe in the eternal security of the Christian, let us face the facts. There is eternal life as a gift; there are rewards for the faithful Christian; there is punishment for the unfaithful Christian

*Reward yes, punishment never. Jesus paid it all!!!
Hallelujah.*

This does not negate his salvation, but when Christ says to some, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" don't expect Him to tell a lie about you. If you have not been faithful, there are dire consequences. Hebrews 3:7,8 reveals to us the sad truth that there are Christians who have hardened their hearts. Just as the provocation in the wilderness did not do away with their being Israelites but only kept them from enjoying Canaan, so the Christian who hardens his heart will not forfeit salvation, but future blessing. Even disobedient Israelites received the manna from Heaven, so receiving blessing from God does not assume you are obedient and faithful. Some try to equate being partakers of Christ with salvation. We often think of partaking as one of Webster's definitions has it, "to have a portion (as of food or drink)." The biblical word, *metochos*,

That is not a Biblical word. It is not in any Bible.

has the meaning of a participant. There is no problem, given all the other scriptures, in believing that we will be partakers, or participants in some activity of Christ in the future, and this could well mean reigning with Him in the Millennial Kingdom.

But it doesn't.

Hebrews 4:3 speaks of entering His rest, and the "if" means some will not. Verse 1 tells us to fear - this is a real possibility, and the requisite for entering into His rest is faith.

*This is amazing! The verse says "we which have (past tense) **believed** (past tense) **DO** (not might) enter into rest." How clear can it be?*

We are again admonished to harden not our hearts (verse 7), and reminded that although Joshua brought them into the rest of Canaan, their remains therefore a rest to the people of God (verse

9). Entering into His rest means we (Christians) must labor, but when we have entered, we will cease from our own works.

But verse 10 says that this has already happened. The call here is for me to apprehend that for which I am apprehended of God (Philippians 3 is the cross reference).

We labor for Millennial blessing, but, having entered, we enjoy God's complete rest. Hebrews 6:4-8 is a problem passage,

For whom? I don't have a problem with the passage.

and we generally say the people of whom the Apostle speaks are not Christians because Paul talks, in verse 9, about the things that accompany salvation. But the fact that Paul is persuaded better things of them does not erase the fact that those of whom he previously spoke had several experiences. They were enlightened, which comes from the Greek photizo,

I don't' guess I'll ever get used to seeing car wrecks or doubt being cast on the Bible.

meaning to shed rays. This word is also used in Ephesians 1:18 – the eyes of your understand being enlightened, that ye may know . . . the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. They had tasted of the heavenly gift, (meaning a gratuity; the same word as is used in Ephesians 3:7, gift of the grace of God) They were partakers (metochos, associates)

Another head on collision.

of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted (gouomai, to experience)

Fender bender.

the good word of God, and the powers (dunamis)

WILL SOME CHRISTIANS MISS THE KINGDOM? / 77

Okay, we all know you have a Strong's concordance and can follow the numbers to the back. Can we just stay with the Bible?

of the world to come. They were Christians, but they might still fall away, which cannot mean they lose their eternal salvation, but, having put the Son of God to an open shame cannot be restored to their former place of honor in God's coming Kingdom but are, as it says in verse 8, rejected, nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. "Rejected" comes from the Greek *adokimos*

Guess not.

which is the same word used by the Apostle Paul for "castaway" in 1 Corinthians 9:27. Their end is to be burned; how can we fail to link this with John 15:6, where Jesus speaks of withered branches being burned.

The vine is Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7). The born again believer who falls away can be recovered (2 Timothy 2:25-26) and restored (Galatians 6:1-3). Those in Hebrews 6:1-6 cannot. The writer makes it clear in verses 9-10 that the believers are not the class of people being addressed in the previous section.

Hebrews 10:26-31 would paint a dreadful picture with the possibility that a Christian could sin willfully.

Every sin is wilfull.

Who could plead innocence with that before us.

No one. So do we all go to hell? To purgatory? To the whipping post?

"The devil made me do it" is not an excuse for a Christian, but we do have one glorious "if" that is an antidote. If any man sin,

we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1) and the assurance of 1 John 1:9.

Will the advocate fail? I say no.

We can understand that in neither of these latter verses is regaining salvation even hinted at. We regain fellowship, therefore we regain usefulness, therefore we regain the possibility of being found faithful (not perfect) so that we will reign with Him. The importance of faith is underlined in Hebrews 10:38. We know it is possible to fall aside, or to draw back. We are faced with an utter dilemma - God says of that person, "My soul shall have no pleasure (eudokeo, to think well, approve)

Crunch.

in him." We are not only saved by faith, we must live by faith. The importance of the Word of God is displayed for us in Hebrews 12:25. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. They escaped not who refused him that spake on earth; much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

JAMES James 3:14 says, if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts. It is addressed to Christians, telling us what the state of our hearts can be, which should make us realize we are creatures of dust and, even though redeemed with an infinite price, have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. Let him that thinketh he stand take heed lest he fall. This idea is also given to us in James 5:19. The statement, given to a Christian, is that being in error is possible and this sounds like a serious error, for James concludes in verse 20 that this Christian is now a sinner. Not lost for eternity, but lost to much reward.

FIRST PETER 1 Peter 2:19 and 20 present an interesting contrast. There are two reasons that grief, or buffeting, come. If

you are buffeted for your own faults, you are expected to take it patiently, but God finds it acceptable if you suffer wrongfully, and still take it patiently. This theme is continued by Peter right up to the end of Chapter 4. 1 Peter 4:18 paints an interesting picture. We are told that, if the righteous scarcely (Greek: with difficulty) be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? We already know there are different ways in which the word "saved" It is certainly not "with difficulty" that a person places his trust in Christ for eternal salvation; however, God has told us that qualifying for Kingdom rule will not be easy. God is going to strictly judge His children and if they have such stern judgment, imagine what the unsaved faces.

Nuts to this Greek foolishness. It is not difficult to be saved or difficult to be blessed. One has only to believe (Galatians 3:1-3) to obtain both salvation and blessing. I am scarcely saved. Nothing I have done before or since the day I trusted Jesus Christ has made me worthy of salvation, reward or any of His manifold blessings. It has all been freely given by His grace.

SECOND PETER 2 Peter 1:5-7 gives us a list of attributes for Christians that are steps to maturity start with faith, then add virtue, Knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and finally charity, which is agape love. If the word "love" had been used, it would have found corruption in the modern concepts of love. Agape love, charity, is self-giving not self-gratifying. If you add all these things, you will not be barren or unfruitful. The word translated barren (argos) means inactive, unemployed, lazy, useless

Praise the Lord. We are almost to the end.

Those might be good words to describe one who has not been deemed acceptable for Millennial reign!

But they don't.

FIRST JOHN

Let's wrap things up quickly. First John cannot be understood outside its overall context. One of me has the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ and CANNOT SIN (3:9). One of me is a liar and worldly. The book is written to assure me that Jesus Christ will continually remind His Father that I am born of His seed (3:9) and He will remind me of this truth when my own heart condemns me (3:20). Thus, no matter how bad things look on the outside I KNOW that I have life.

REVELATION

*The Revelation threats are easy as well. Read carefully the promise of reward to the overcomer in each of the letters to the seven churches. Do you qualify? By works, certainly not. **Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?** (1 John 5:5). You see, I have been an overcomer since the moment I trusted the FINISHED work of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Revelation 13:9 contains an oft used reference to the necessity of listening to Him and hearing Him. As someone has paraphrased this verse, "He that hath an ear, let him use it." The last "if" in Revelation is a warning to the unsaved not to take the mark of the Beast. I feel certain that when the Rapture takes place, there are many religious people who will turn to the Book of Revelation for some of the answers as to what is going on. God has mercifully placed this text there to warn them that execution, the only alternative, is far better than taking the mark. The final warning is in Revelation 22:18, 19 and refers to tampering with His Word.

Isn't this astonishing, after suggesting almost 50 times that the word of God I have in my hand is not correct!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Good thing it's all by grace.

CONCLUSION

Let us finish with the words the Holy Spirit gave to the apostle Paul in order that he might pass them on to us.

In 1 Corinthians 4 Paul is addressing the judgment passed upon him by some members of the church at Corinth. Apparently, some of them did not think the life he was living or the service he was rendering measured up to their standard or expectation.

Not only does he express his total lack of concern with their opinion of his labors, but he states that in the day of judgment God will give praise to EVERY ONE of His redeemed.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:3-5).

Will God throw a man in hell who has merited His praise?

Will God banish from the kingdom a man who has merited His praise?

Of course not!