

*"The LORD make his face shine upon thee" (Numbers 6:25) as you seek and search for God as for hidden treasure (Proverbs 2:3-5; Matthew 13:44); and just think, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).*

*"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"*

*(2 Corinthians 13:5)*

*Does "The Spirit itself beareth witness with [y]our spirit, that [you] are the [child] of God"?*

*(Romans 8:16)*

*"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I [the Lord Jesus Christ] profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

*(Matthew 7:22, 23)*



- ⇒ Pray with an obedient heart; pray for a willingness to obey.
- ⇒ Start obeying whatever the Lord shows you.
- ⇒ Pray for the gift of faith. (Ephesians 2:8)
- ⇒ Pray that God would make you a “*new creature*” (2 Cor 5:17)
- ⇒ Pray for the miracle of being “*begotten of God*” (‘born again’) (1 John 5:18)
- ⇒ Pray that God would take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26)
- ⇒ Read God’s Word (the Bible) and ask the Lord to illuminate It for you and teach you in your heart.
- ⇒ And if you don’t feel like it, set your will and seek the Lord anyway and pray that you would want to seek God and that the Lord would find you and that you would find the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ⇒ Believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15; 1John 3:23a, Matthew 21:32)

May the Lord be pleased to add His blessing.

\* all Scripture quotations from the KJV

## **D**o you know that the Bible talks about counterfeit gospels?

- “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*”
- “*For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*” (2 Corinthians 11:4)

### **Do you know that it’s possible to “pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:7)?**

- These perverted gospels are similar to the Truth, but twisted by Satan via omissions/additions and miss definitions to render them useless. Satan makes these ‘perverted gospels’ appear good “*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*”. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

### **Do you know what these ‘perverted gospels’ are today? Can you see where ‘Satan has transformed himself into an angel of light’ in the ‘christian’ churches?**

- An extremely clever trap of Satan is to get people to become a ‘christian’ in a way that is not Biblical. These people then happily think themselves on the way to

heaven, will not search for the Truth, and will be surprised speechless (Matthew 22:12) to perish.

### **Do you know that there is such a thing as a false christian?**

- “*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I [the Lord Jesus] profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matthew 7:22, 23)

- A perverted gospel message can result in a person becoming a false christian. This is when a person thinks himself saved because he followed certain steps; but those steps are not how the Bible teaches salvation.

- A person can also become a false christian by simply having a mental knowledge of, and an agreement with, the True Gospel Way of Salvation, without it being an internal reality for that person. **So the knowledge of salvation is mistaken for actually walking in the way of salvation.** This is how Joseph Philpot describes a false christian: ‘He is perhaps wrapped up in a religious profession, advanced even to the office of a deacon, or mounted in a pulpit. He has learned to talk about Christ... and grace, and fill his mouth with the language of Zion. But what does he know [of these things as an internal reality?] Nothing, absolutely nothing! Ignorant of his own ignorance (of all kinds of ignorance the worst), he thinks himself rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing; and knows not that he is *"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."* [Rev 3:17]’ (adapted from The Soul's Growth in Grace, 1837)

### **and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Hebrews 3:6).**

### **It is every individual’s responsibility to study the Bible and pray for the Holy Spirit’s illumination of what he reads:**

- “[The Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11) God invites us personally: “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD*” (Isaiah 1:18).

- ⇒ Pray that the grace of God would be with you and that He would convict you of sin and your unrighteousness and of the judgment to come (John 16:8); and that you are lost and will perish.
- ⇒ Seek the Lord. (Matthew 6:33)
- ⇒ Pray for the “*fear of the Lord*”, as it “*is the beginning of knowledge*”. (Prov 1:7)
- ⇒ Pray to have your eyes and ears opened to God’s Truth. (Mark 8:18)
- ⇒ Pray that God would open the eyes of your understanding. (Luke 24:45)
- ⇒ Pray that you would see yourself as God sees you (dead in sin). (Ephesians 2:1)
- ⇒ Pray that God would make you hate sin and love holiness.
- ⇒ Pray to have a hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- ⇒ Pray for a “*broken heart*” and a “*contrite spirit*” (Psalm 34:18; 51:17)
- ⇒ Repent. Make a 180°. Turn from known sin in your life.

- In The Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan writes that "there is a way to hell even from the gates of heaven". The Bible tells us to "*strive to enter in at the strait gate*" (Luke 13:24) because many will be saying in the Day of Judgment "*Lord, Lord, open to us*" (Matthew 25:11; Luke 13:25) who thought that they were Christians.

- George Whitefield asks: "Give me leave to ask you, in the presence of God, whether you know the time, and if you do not know exactly the time, do you know there was a time, when God wrote bitter things against you, when the arrows of the Almighty were within you? Was ever the remembrance of your sins grievous to you? Was the burden of your sins intolerable to your thoughts? Did you ever see that God's wrath might justly fall upon you, on account of your actual transgressions against God? Were you ever in all your life sorry for your sins? Could you ever say, my sins are gone over my head as a burden too heavy for me to bear? Did you ever experience any such thing as this? Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul? If not..., do not call yourself Christians; you may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace. May the Lord awaken you, may the Lord convert you..." (Select Sermons, p. 79)

**"Let no man deceive himself." (1 Corinthians 3:18): The Bible doesn't offer a 'plan' of salvation (like an insurance policy); but a "way of salvation" (Acts 16:17) which one must enter into through the Door ("Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." [John 10:7]) the only possible Way ("Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." [John 14:6]) and then "walk in it" (2 John 1:6) ; "Fight[ing] the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12) and "hold[ing] fast the confidence**

**The Bible says that we must have assurance of salvation. However, this assurance does not come from another person or from being able to point to a Bible verse.**

**It is the Holy Spirit who assures of salvation:**

- "*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*" (1 John 4:13)
- "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*" (Romans 8:16)
- "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:*" (1 John 5:10)

**The Bible says to "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates [rejected, castaway]?"* (2 Corinthians 13:5)**

**So, did you 'accept Jesus' unconditional gift of salvation and eternal life by accepting Jesus into your heart'? Were you given some Scripture quotations to assure you of a home in heaven?**

**Was your experience something like this?:**

- "Do you want the Lord to receive you and make you His child?' 'Yes.' 'Well, read this: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Do you believe that?' 'Yes.' 'Now if He doesn't cast you out, what does He do?' 'I suppose He takes me in.' 'Amen. Now He has taken

you in and you are His child. Why don't you tell others about it.' So the bewildered seeker forces a waxy smile and testifies that he has been converted to Christ. He is honest and means well but he has been led astray." (A.W. Tozer, Born After Midnight, p.13, 14)

**Can someone such as a pastor, missionary, evangelist, or you or me, spend a lifetime 'working for the Lord' and perish?**

• *"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I [the Lord Jesus] profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* (Matthew 7:22, 23)

**Can people who prayed to get 'saved,' are baptized, attend church, read their Bible daily, pray, 'serve the Lord', 'witness' to others, and try their best to live Godly lives, perish?**

• *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* (Matthew 7:21)

• *"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:"* (Philippians 3:18)

• *"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."* (Luke 13:24)

so long as the truths rest only in the natural mind, whereby they induce vain confidence and terrible self-deceiving. The great enemy of souls will endeavor to keep all in peace who have "*a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" [Revelation 3:1]. And if one of his subjects passes over either from gross sins or from the more refined pleasures of this perishing world to an outward profession, he will not be alarmed. For he cares not whether souls perish under the title of 'worldling' or of 'Christian'--so long as he gets them into his own fearful damnation. Nay, I believe if he sees one become restless under some sense of sin, and that he cannot urge that poor soul on further in the old sinful way--he will transform himself into "*an angel of light*" [2 Corinthians 11:14], and recommend reformation and external religious duties, such as reading and hearing the Word--taking care to substitute "*form*" for "*power*" [2 Timothy 3:5].

Ah! my beloved friend, it is this stronghold which Satan fights against--and fallen flesh is in league with him! He may tolerate outward forms and external religious exercises--but inward power is represented as contemptible, unreasonable, and is called fanaticism and enthusiasm! Yet the eternal world of glory is full of this, swelling broader and deeper the anthem of praise to the holy Lord God and the Lamb. Without this divine life within, no soul of man can be saved, as the great day shall declare. It is, indeed, fearful to think what that dreadful day will reveal; and of all characters, I think those are in the most fearful condition--who have had Christ on the lip--but not in the heart, as in Matt. 7:21-23. My heart often says: "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" (Psalm 139:23, 24.)" (The Marvelous Riches of Savoring Christ: The Letters of Ruth Bryan)

of God” (Romans 8:16). There must be an internal reality.

**Are you a true believer; one who entered in at the “*strait gate*” and is obeying, abiding, holding fast, running the race, mortifying the flesh through the Spirit (all by God’s grace)..; or are you one of those who will be saying “*Lord, Lord*”?**

- The Bible says: “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” (2 Corinthians 13:5)

- So to summarize: a perverted gospel message can result in a person becoming a false christian. Or a person can also become a false christian by simply having a mental knowledge of, and an agreement with, the True Gospel Way of Salvation, without it being an internal reality for that person. In this second case, the knowledge of salvation is mistaken for actually walking in the way of salvation.

- Ruth Bryan, writing in 1851, discusses this second type of false christian. She writes: “This is a day of much lip-profession without real heart work, and the “*kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*” [1 Corinthians 4:20]. The “*kingdom of God is within you.*” [Luke 17:21] This is what Satan seems in this day to be most fighting against. He does not oppose a general profession of religion, which is now deemed respectable. Nor does he mind great strictness in outward religious forms--as that is often a means of lulling the conscience into false peace. He will not even disturb a sound creed [doctrine], and much zeal in contending for the truth of the Bible--

**Intellectually you can know what God says about sin:**

- “*God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (Psalm 53:2,3)

**The Bible also tells us that good works, religion... cannot save anyone:**

- “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” (Ephesians 2:8,9)

**You can know as a mental fact that in God’s eyes you are not a righteous (upright, moral, virtuous) person and that God sees:**

- “*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6)

**Factually you know that you will stand before a Holy God on the Day of Judgment:**

- “*every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*” (Romans 14:12)

# B

ut did you obey God's command to repent (Mark 1:15)? Was this preceded/ accompanied by a Holy Spirit wrought conviction of sin, and a felt lack of righteousness (John 16:8)? Do you know things not merely as declared in the Bible, but as revealed in yourself as personal realities? The difference is life and death. "*For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*" (1 Cor 4:20) So, did you experience such a Holy Spirit given illumination or do you simply know that you are an unrighteous sinner intellectually/ factually?

### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

- "It must first be stated that any work of genuine religion is, from first to last, carried on in the soul by the Holy Spirit"; but only as we read the Bible, pray for salvation, and obey what we understand. "Hence the very essence of religion seems to be a spirit of vigorous exertion--blended with a spirit of unlimited dependence upon God in earnest prayer." (JA James, 1843)

### The Gospel:

- God in His great mercy has prepared a way back to Himself for those who repent and believe, who want to take Him as Lord, obey Him, and who want to be saved from sin. The Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and thus didn't inherit

soul, thereby deceiving himself, but to wait until the Lord does so (for it is His work as "*the Amen, the faithful and true witness,*" [Revelation 3:14]).

**A person can hold to true Biblical doctrines, know and agree with right/True/Biblical teachings and rules; he can believe in man's sinfulness, in the need for repentance, in the necessity of the new birth...; and he can talk or preach of these things, and be persuaded of them in his mind and tell others about them; and still be dead in his sins, since he never experienced the reality of it for himself!**

- Just as, for example, it is possible to research and read about a far country and know and even memorize all sorts of information and statistics about it and to be recognized as a leading expert and scholar without ever having gone for a visit. Another person might not be half as informed as you are on the subject, but having been for a visit he knows the reality; he has touched, tasted, felt, seen, heard. As Job 42:5 says "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*"

- As Joseph Philpot points out "To see these things revealed in the Bible is nothing. To hear them preached by one of God's ministers is nothing. To receive the truth of these into our judgment and to yield to them an unwavering assent is nothing. Thousands have done all this who are blaspheming God in hell... a man must have salvation as an internal reality, as a known, enjoyed, tasted, felt and handled possession, or he will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Heavenly Birth and its Earthly Counterfeits, 1843) As the Bible says: "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children*



work of convicting (John 16:8) is complete and it's ALL by God's grace.

- “*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Hebrews 5:9) There is no salvation apart from obedience. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the Author of salvation. The Lord must ‘write’ it so to speak, but He can only work in us as we respond by obedience. The Lord does nothing against our will.
- The Lord Jesus said “*without me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Being “*begotten of God*” (‘born again’) (1 John 5:18) is not a step-by-step plan on a tract. It is God’s work. A miracle. One can’t call up to God and ‘get saved’ by repeating a prayer. The Holy Spirit works in hearts and brings to conviction and repentance and to the ‘new birth’ (miracle), those who respond to God. It’s all mystery. John 3:8 compares the ‘new birth’ with the blowing of the wind - we can’t see it, don’t know where it came from, where it’s going... (“*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*”)
- Being “*begotten of God*” (‘born again’) (1 John 5:18), being given and receiving forgiveness, the gift of the Holy Spirit, being made a “*new creature*” (2 Corinthians 5:17) is free; but costs me my old life and my old Self. Everything must go on the altar. The Lord Jesus Christ said: “*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*” (Luke 9:23)
- It is possible for one to say to himself “*Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*” (Jeremiah 8:11; Ezekiel 13:10) One must be careful not to preach ‘peace’ to his own

man’s sinful nature. Thus, the Lord Jesus, God in the flesh, could shed his blood (Matthew 26:28) and die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, because “*...without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness of sins]*” (Hebrews 9:22) “*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:15). The Bible says if we don’t repent we will perish forever (Luke 13:3). God “*commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17:30) The Bible says: “*repent ye, and believe the gospel.*” (Mark 1:15)

### **Why is it necessary to repent and believe the Gospel?**

- Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden. The result is that we, their descendants, are born with a sinful nature and also commit sin ourselves. The understanding is darkened, the heart corrupt, the will perverted, and our nature earthly, sensual, and devilish. We are unrighteous and hell-bound sinners.
- This is how Thomas Brooks put it: “But when Adam fell; we fell. When he lost all; we lost all. There are five things we lost in our fall: Our holy image - and so became vile; Our divine sonship - and so became children of Satan; Our friendship with God - and so became His enemies; Our communion with God - and so became strangers; Our happiness - and so became miserable.” (A Cabinet of Choice Jewels, or, A Box of Precious Ointment, 1669)
- “Conceive of a criminal in jail under sentence of death, and at the same time infected with a fatal disease. In order to his being saved, he must be both pardoned and cured. For if he is only pardoned, he will soon die of his disease. And if he is only cured, he will soon be

executed. Such is the emblem of the sinner's case; by actual sin he is condemned to die, by inherent depravity he is infected with a spiritual disease. In **justification** he is pardoned; in **sanctification** he is cured; and the two blessings, although distinct, are always united, and are both necessary to salvation. Thus you see justification changes our relation to God; but sanctification changes our spiritual condition. And regeneration, or the new birth, means our first entrance upon a sanctified state.” (JA James, The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation, 1843)

- Hell was prepared for Satan and his demons; and those people who do not repent (make a 180° turn from the ‘broad way leading to destruction’ [Matthew 7:13] to the “narrow” “way of salvation” [Matthew 7:14; Acts 16:17]) and believe the Gospel and who are not “begotten of God” (“born again”) (1 John 5:18) will also perish forever “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44) and where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13).

- **Biblical repentance and Holy Spirit wrought conviction of sin: Conviction of sin is a spiritual illumination wrought by the Holy Spirit in my heart** that not only have I sinned, and that against God (Psalm 51:4), but that my very being is sin. **Knowing intellectually that I was born a sinner and have committed sins because of my sinful nature is NOT conviction of sin.**

- Repentance is a determination of the will to turn one's heart from sin to God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Repentance is to start obeying God. Repentance requires action: it is sins acknowledged, despised and abandoned. It is making restitution for wrongs. Repentance is to surrender to God, an admission that God is holy and

### **Seriously consider:**

- “God will speak to the hearts of those who prepare themselves to hear” (Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, p. 21) The Lord Jesus spoke in parables and similarly everything is hid and revealed only to the seeking honest heart by the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who inspired/wrote the Bible in the first place.

- “*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*” (Jeremiah 29:13)

⇒ **God will not teach the man who is not willing to obey.**

⇒ **God will not satisfy the merely curious.**

⇒ **God reveals Himself to a humble, repentant, seeking heart, who wants to take Him as Lord and wants to be His obedient servant.**

- The willingness to obey what we are taught must be there: “*Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth*” (Psalm 86:11).

- Salvation requires a preparation of the life: “*break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.*” (Hosea 10:12); “*to him that ordereth his conversation [manner of living] aright will I shew the salvation of God.*” (Psalm 50:23)

- “Salvation belongeth unto to the Lord” (Psalm 3:8), the new birth is “*of God*” (John 1:13) and we can't receive it unless it is given (“*A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.*” [John 3:27]). And it is freely given, but only given and the ability to receive it given once the conditions (seek, repent – start obeying, believe the Gospel) are met and the Holy Spirit’s preparatory

his Bible, the Lord will tear down and take from him (but only as he is willing to give up through obedience to the Lord) his old life and old Self. The Lord will build His house (a Christian person — 1 Peter 2:5) on a cleared and prepared spot. He will dig deep so that the foundation will be solid (Luke 6:48). Or to take another Biblical example, the Lord will plough up the stones and weeds so that the seed of the Word can grow on good ground (Matthew 13). But again, the Lord only works in us as we allow Him by obedience.

- Hell was prepared for Satan and his demons; and those people who do not repent (make a 180° turn from the ‘broad way leading to destruction’ [Matthew 7:13] to the “narrow” “way of salvation” [Matthew 7:14; Acts 16:17]) and believe the Gospel and who are not “begotten of God” (‘born again’) (1 John 5:18) will also perish forever “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44) and where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13).

Without Holy Spirit wrought conviction of sin and repentance and without obeying the command to repent and believe the Gospel, salvation is impossible, since these precede God’s forgiveness of sins and God’s gift of faith. And it is only by faith that we can receive God’s gift of salvation, by the new birth, by the Holy Spirit of God.

**The Gospel described here is a different Gospel from the one that you know, isn’t it?**

Listen to your conscience, ‘search the Scriptures’, seek the Lord. Both cannot be the Truth and your life is at stake.

right while I am a lost sinner; it is a commitment to live a new life in Christ. Repentance is a self declared sinner’s cry to God for mercy. Repentance is “*Godly sorrow*” (2 Corinthians 7:10) for sin, worked by the grace of God in a person’s heart by the Holy Spirit. Repenting of individual sins and being very sorry for the consequences and reforming, without the Holy Spirit’s conviction, illumination of the root of the problem, and without “*repentance toward God*” (Acts 20:21) is ‘worldly sorrow’ that still leads one to hell (2 Corinthians 7:10).

- “*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*” (Proverbs 28:13) Thomas Brooks writes: “It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and astonishing impudency - for a man to beg the pardon for those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake! Look! He who has not repented of all known sin, he has not yet sincerely repented of any known sin, nor as yet experienced the sweetness of forgiveness of sin.” (A Cabinet of Choice Jewels, or, A Box of Precious Ointment, 1669)

• A. W. Tozer writes: “No man has truly repented until his sin has wounded him near to death, until the wound has broken him and defeated him and taken all the fight and self-assurance out of him and he sees himself as the one who nailed his Savior on the tree... Let us beware of vain and overhasty repentance, and particularly of no repentance at all. We are... a sinful people, and until the knowledge has hit hard, until it has wounded us, until it has got through and past the little department of our theology, it has done us no good. A man can believe in total depravity and never have any sense of it for himself at all. Lots of us believe in total depravity who have never been wounded with the knowledge that we’ve sinned. Repentance is a wound I pray we may all

feel.” (Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p. 112/3)

### **Repent, believe the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Christ, and expect salvation:**

- Without Holy Spirit wrought conviction of sin and without repentance and believing, salvation is impossible, since repentance and believing precede God’s forgiveness of sins.
- JA James: “Once someone is brought, by the Holy Spirit, to conviction of sin and repentance; the person is also commanded to look to the Lord Jesus Christ and believe Him and believe in Him. We are as much commanded to repent as we are commanded to believe the Gospel”: “*repent ye, and believe the gospel.*” (Mark 1:15). To believe that the Lord Jesus is willing to save ME and to forgive ME. To believe means to commit myself to the Lord and to become one with Christ, and trust in Christ that His shed Blood is able to save me, as long as I abide IN CHRIST. “*And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*” (1 John 3:23).

### **Were you told to ‘repent of your sins’?**

- ‘Repenting’ of individual sins and being very sorry for the consequences and reforming, without a Holy Spirit wrought conviction of your general and utter sinfulness and unrighteousness, illumination to the root of the problem, is not “*repentance toward God*” (Acts 20:21); but is ‘worldly sorrow’ that still leads to destruction (2 Corinthians 7:10). It is a false repentance. Satan’s counterfeit. An ‘almost’ repentance. Simply, a ‘works’ repentance. A reformation, not the foundation for God’s forgiveness and regeneration.

Lord Jesus Christ living in his heart. Also, he must continue to “*hold fast*” (Hebrews 3:6) until he dies; or he will not enter into “*rest*” (Hebrews 4:11).

- The “*kingdom of God is within you.*” (Luke 17:21)
- The Bible pictures the Lord Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom (Luke 5:35) and the church (born again believers) as the bride. The “*marriage supper of the Lamb* (the Lord Jesus)” will take place in heaven (Revelation 19:9).
- A born again believer becomes one spirit with the Lord Jesus, the Heavenly Bridegroom: “*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*” (1 Corinthians 6:17) The Bridegroom can only save His bride; he cannot save strangers. If you don’t know Him now as a personal internal reality, than He will say to you “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matthew 7:23) on that day. “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:*” (1 John 5:10). If one doesn’t have “*the witness in himself*”, than if he believes in God and believes the Bible’s teachings he is believing the way that the devils do (James 2:19).

### **Were you told that ‘God has a wonderful plan for your life’?**

- One must repent and believe the Gospel and be miraculously “*begotten of God*” (1 John 5:18), and take up his cross (Luke 9:23), obey (Hebrews 5:9), and walk in the way of salvation, abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:4-6) “*that eternal life*” (1 John 1:2) and holding fast unto the end (Hebrews 3:6); or he will perish.
- If one begins to seek the Lord and to repent and to read

attempts to please God are but religious motions and exercises; reformations and good works.

- While on earth a born again person is ‘stuck’ with his old nature, since he lives in a sinful body. So, the born again person has two natures—his old nature and his new nature. It is like he is a semi-detached house. Because of this the born again person is in a constant warfare: “*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*” (Romans 8:13); “*Fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Timothy 6:12).

(some points in this section adapted from Human Nature in its Fourfold State. Thomas Boston [1676 - 1732])

### **Eternal Life is IN a Person (the Lord Jesus Christ)!**

- 1 John 1:2 says “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*” Note that it says “*that eternal life*”, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Eternal life is not in the letter of the Scripture; it is not simply intellectually believing a specific Biblical teaching, for “*the devils also believe, and tremble.*” (James 2:19). Life is in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:4). He said “*I am the resurrection, and the life*” (John 11:25).
- Eternal Life is not only something a person can be received into after death. It is a fellowship that he must be received into now here on earth, in the person of the

### **Were you told ‘to have faith’ in order to be ‘saved’?**

- Faith is not something that can be ‘worked up’. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*” (Ephesians 2:8) Faith is a gift to a repentant heart. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who works faith (which in this case is the ability to receive the inner testimony/assurance of the Holy Spirit that my sins are forgiven and that I have become a child of God) in a person: “*Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2). Faith is a fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galations 5:22).

### **Were you told to ‘repent of your unbelief’?**

- The way that this statement is usually used nowadays, ‘repenting of unbelief’ means repenting of not having believed that God exists or repenting of not having believed some facts about the Bible. While it is good to intellectually change ones mind with regards to these ideas, it is not enough: “*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*” (James 2:19).
- This statement (‘repent of your unbelief’) misrepresents Biblical repentance because it narrows the concept of repentance, reducing it to this one specific instruction; and as we previously covered, Biblical repentance is much broader and goes hand in hand with conviction of sin and believing the Gospel. We are commanded to repent and believe and it is also Holy Spirit wrought by grace. The Bible commands: “*repent ye, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15), not simply ‘repent of your unbelief’.

- However, if someone has genuine Holy Spirit wrought conviction of sin and repentance and has repented and feels that the wrath of God might justly fall on him and this person doesn't "believe the gospel", than he can and should 'repent of his unbelief' and obey God's command to "believe the gospel". *"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ"* (1 John 3:23a). *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;"* (John 16:8-9) So, there is a time and place to 'repent of unbelief'.

- It is worth repeating JA James: "Once someone is brought, by the Holy Spirit, to conviction of sin and repentance; the person is also commanded to look to the Lord Jesus Christ and believe Him and believe in Him. We are as much commanded to repent as we are commanded to believe the Gospel": *"repent ye, and believe the gospel."* (Mark 1:15).

**Do you know that the Bible also says that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)?**

- Being 'born again' means 'to be begotten' 'to be conceived'. It is not simply a label, but a reality. Regeneration is God making a (spiritually) dead person alive (Ephesians 2:1). It is God's work; God's miraculous work in the heart: *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13); *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,"* (James 1:18). It is receiving a new (divine) nature from God, having the Holy Spirit come to dwell in your heart. (This can only happen to someone whom the Holy Spirit convicts and who obeys

God's command to repent "*toward God*" [Acts 20:21].) and "*believe the gospel*" [Mark 1:15b].) The Bible calls this becoming a "*new creature*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is not make believe. The Holy Spirit will assure you of His presence, as you obey the Lord, as promised in the Bible: *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* (Romans 8:16).

**Do you know why the new birth is absolutely necessary?**

- A man "*cannot see the kingdom of God*" except that man "*be born again*" (John 3:3). There is no holiness without regeneration. It is "*the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,*" (Eph. 4:24). And no heaven without holiness; for without "*holiness... no man shall see the Lord:*" (Heb. 12:14). Will the Lord Jesus prepare mansions of glory for those who refuse to receive him into their hearts and walk on His way of salvation here on earth? Will the old sinful nature, Satan's image, gain entry to heaven? *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth"* (Revelation 21:27). It is only the Lord's image through the new birth, His nature, the "*new creature*" (2 Corinthians 5:17), the "*heart of flesh*" (Ezekiel 36:26) that is acceptable to God. At the gates of heaven the question will be: *"Whose image and superscription hath it?"* (Luke 20:24) And if the answer is 'Satan's', than the soul will be rendered to Satan.

- Heaven is not the sensual paradise that sinners make it out to be. Those who are not born from above, who are not "*strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (Hebrews 11:13), would not be at home there since every corner is filled with what they least like —holiness, true holiness, perfect holiness.

- Without having gone through the new birth all of my