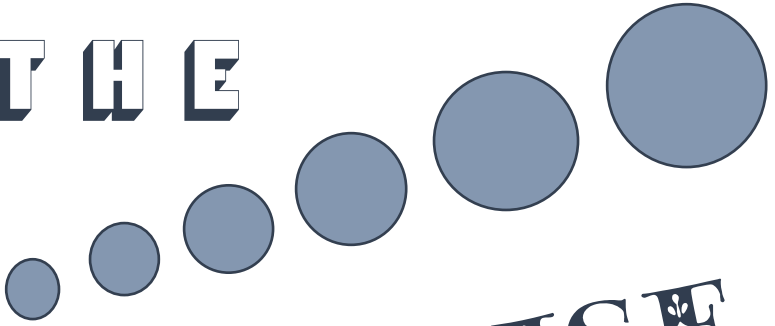


T H E



P R O M I S E

O F

S A L V A T I O N

farnsworth

Introduction...

Dedication:

To my God and Savior Jesus Christ, for by Him we have been given the knowledge of salvation to the glory of the Father.

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Introduction...

Psalm 50:23 - “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.”

Have you ever been asked if you are “saved”? Today, there are many ideas around salvation and what exactly it means for God to “save” someone. It is imperative to every soul that the question be answered, but when you ask people of the question of salvation the answers are noticeably varied. There are some who were baptized way back when, some prayed a prayer, some joined a church, some were just driving down the road and “felt God all of a sudden and knew He was real”, some have “always been saved”, some went forward at the age of five and prayed the “sinners prayer”, some took communion in their home with themselves, some gave their heart to Jesus, some asked Jesus to come into their heart, some made Jesus the Lord of their life, and on it goes. While only Our Lord Himself knows those who are truly His children by the adoption of sons through faith, these responses do underscore an important fact we need to consider. The Truth of salvation. The truth is there is only One Way, One Truth, and One Life.

Most often today in circles of faith the topic of salvation is nearly always discussed in the sense of those who are already “saved” and those who still need to be “saved”. There are others still who believe they can lose their salvation, those who believe they must earn their salvation, those who work to keep their salvation, those who believe they are saved no matter what they do, and those who believe

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they are saved but can't tell you exactly why or what it means.

In the current year of our Lord, 2021, in the good ol' United States of America where I live, there is a seemingly endless multitude of results to be combed through and examined on the topic "What must I do to be saved?". Since the Lord Jesus Christ is not the author of confusion, but of our faith according to the truth of His Word, we need to ask if all these "ways" are of Him? Apparently, for many Christians today, any one of these ways is as good as another, so much so that many now find common ground with anyone with any faith in anything they call God - so long as we are sincere, we may say. After all, our Lord certainly isn't legalistic, so seems to be the popular view. However, this is a dangerous road to be travelled along the broad way. Do you realize that the difference between eternal life and eternal torment by the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself comes down to what a person believes? Since He is to be the judge, we should listen to what He has to say to us concerning the matter.

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us there is only one way, so we clearly have a problem. Things have come off the rails as far as men are concerned. And I also acknowledge that I am but one voice among this multitude who all claim to "use scripture" to show us the way of salvation - which may be the issue. God's word will not be used. It just is. It teaches us. It judges us. Never the other way around. Even so, I feel a duty to be a voice for the gospel in these days in which I live. Days in which deceivers are abounding, deception is abundant, the falling away hastens on, and the confusion of Babylon reigns on the earth. My prayer is that the truth will speak for itself here

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in these pages and that it may shine so clearly that you cannot but be helped by what you read.

Even those who quote the question from the Philippian jailor to Paul, “What must I do to be saved?”, straight out of scripture, seem to miss the point of Paul’s response in many cases.

Many look at the Romans road, as it is called, and lead people down the road to a place where they are to “call upon the Lord” to be saved, which, praise God, is necessary IF they have understood the gospel.

This call is often taught as a prayer that we speak at one particular moment in life – that’s right, the “sinner’s prayer”.

Will Jesus come into my heart because I asked Him to?

Just pray this prayer and all is well between you and the Lord as you go along your way. Is this the way of the Lord? If I’ve said this prayer should my soul rest in peace? What about asking Jesus into my heart? Is that the aim of the gospel? Will Jesus come into my heart because I asked Him to? How can we make sense of the gospel in a way that gives us scriptural truth of the knowledge of God regarding these things?

In this small booklet, we will attempt to examine some of these modern ideas of salvation in the light of scripture. We will ask some questions intended to provoke ourselves to study the Word of God and to reflect on the subtle differences that creep into our doctrine if we are not diligent. My hope in writing this book is to provide a brief, scripturally sound view of salvation as it is found in the Bible so that you can further study these things for yourself.

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You would think after this much time has passed, that men would know these things full well by now. After all, we're getting better, right? Making a lot of progress as far as man can see, right? Actually, as time goes on, we see how easily these things can slip, which is a warning to us in scripture concerning the things of the gospel, our faith, and salvation.

Hebrews 2:1 - "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

My thinking as I begin to set my hand to this work is that we need a message that comprehends the salvation of men all through scripture - in other words, salvation is not just a New Testament doctrine. Salvation is spoken of throughout scripture and we must understand the work of God in saving men from beginning to end. If salvation were by a particular church, how were men saved before that institution existed? If salvation were of a particular religion, how were men to be saved before it came into being? No, the message of salvation must comprehend all ages of men, and as such we should expect to find the truth of these matters in a way that speaks to men of every age since the very beginning.

I pray and hope that there will be helpful thoughts and scriptures shared here that may serve to encourage and help those who seek the Lord in truth and sincerity. I'm not looking for theological arguments, but rather for instructional doctrine for men, and to commit these things to writing for my own daughters and family as well. My desire is that those who believe in Jesus Christ may be better equipped to share the message of the gospel and to declare the truth of salvation more clearly, and that those may learn the truth who do not yet know the things of salvation as

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they are taught in scripture. This book is not about religion, theology, denomination, dispensation, and is certainly not a dissertation on the academics of soteriology and hermeneutics. It is a message of hope for a world that is in desperate need of the truth of God concerning His work of redemption and salvation of men. As Jesus Himself taught us in His Word:

Luke 13:2 - 3 - “And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

What we want to know here is, how can we know with certainty that we will be partakers of the salvation of which scripture speaks? Is there a knowledge of salvation that is available to us in easy, understandable terms?

Luke 1:77 - “To give KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION unto his people by the remission of their sins”

It is important first to lay some important groundwork concerning the gospel. There are many aspects and depths of the gospel that have been written upon extensively by many authors down through time. Our work here is simply to put forth an understanding of the primary components of the gospel as we see it in scripture. Salvation is entirely of God’s grace, and the gospel puts that on full display, but everyone will not be a benefactor of this grace by default. Even though Christ died for the sins of His people and was raised for their justification, the Scripture still tells us of many who will face eternal damnation! The question before us is “how can we be made partakers of the benefit that was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ?”. How are we made to be one of “His people”?

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It is likely not a secret to anyone reading this book that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and was raised according to the scriptures. However, what is mysterious to many is how these facts of history apply to us today and why they are meaningful as it pertains to our current topic of salvation. If it were not mysterious, we would not have the diversity of thought upon salvation regarding how men can receive it. The aspects of salvation we will study here are the testimony of Christ to men, the work of Christ in providing the gospel, and lastly how we are made partakers of its' blessings and promise. These three aspects are of interest to us here as we look to the scriptures to see the truth of God in Christ concerning these things.

As I always say, I would encourage you to finish this book through and gain the full scope of what I hope to communicate before you yield to the temptation to disagree with something you read. If you get all the way to the end, then you can disagree with full assurance if you feel the need to. Some of the thoughts shared here may be new to some and may challenge long-held popular ideas in some circles, but I would encourage you to search the scriptures as Jesus calls us to do. Our eternity depends on these things! If you finish the book and are inclined to dismiss its' aim and author, you are no worse off after all. May the Lord Jesus bless your study in His Word and may all who continue to seek Him in sincerity and truth be satisfied by the wisdom that comes from His hand alone.

Chapter 1 – The Word and the Father

Chapter 1 – The Word and the Father

There are two verses we need to look at as we begin this opening chapter to understand how the Lord has chosen to work among men. Let's quickly look at these and then dive in to how we can understand what they teach us.

When we think of the “Word of God”, there are some primary principles we need to understand. If we fail to understand the Word of God, it can quickly be corrupted, mis-used, and improperly applied to our lives. This is not a recent phenomenon but has been around since the beginning when the serpent asked, “yea, hath God said?”. Really, the only hope any of us have is that the Lord Jesus Christ will speak a Word for us by His Spirit to give us understanding.

Daniel 8:16 - “And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.”

It is Jesus Christ that can open our eyes to the Truth of His Word in ways that teach and instruct us.

Psalms 119:18 - “OPEN THOU MINE EYES, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

Luke 24:45 - “Then OPENED HE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, that they might understand the scriptures,”

And only He has the power to be able to increase our faith by the hearing of His Word.

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Luke 17:5 - “And the apostles said unto the Lord, INCREASE OUR FAITH.”

Romans 12:3 - “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as GOD HATH DEALT TO EVERY MAN THE MEASURE OF FAITH.”

This is that grace that He gives to those that humble themselves in seeking to Him. The fact that He has given us the means to seek Him is a grace all on its own. Grace is evident in every aspect of His workings with man. However, those who stand in pride He has resisted, and first requires them to repent and humble themselves to seek Him as a man ought to seek unto His God. He then has promised that those who seek Him will find Him - one of the first promises in His Word that must be believed. He is the Just One with the power to do these works in the heart of men who are dead in trespasses and sins. Apart from His work in men, there would be no flesh saved.

Psalms 103:13 - 14 - “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

Yes, even in Paul’s day, there were MANY who corrupted the Word of God and the Truth it holds for men.

2 Corinthians 2:17 - “For we are not as MANY, WHICH CORRUPT THE WORD OF GOD: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

And so, it is to this day as the author of confusion continues his work as the adversary of God in corrupting

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God's Word and confusing the hearts and minds of men. These first two principles we will share are to help cut through the noise and confusion. One of them is given to us in the first chapter of John:

John 1:18 – “No man hath seen God at any time; THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM.”

The way God has chosen to communicate to man is by His only begotten Son - Jesus Christ. As John explains in the first chapter of the gospel bearing his name, the Word was eternally existent with God before He came in the person of Jesus Christ being fashioned as a man.

John 1:1 - 3 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Jesus, which means “Jehovah is salvation”, was the name given to the child that was born to Mary of the Holy Ghost. She received the commandment from the angel Gabriel to give this name when the announcement of God came to her that He would fulfill His Word to His people through her giving birth to His Son. This principle of scripture helps us to understand that it is Christ who has been speaking to men on the behalf of the Father from the beginning of creation. All the testimony that has been revealed to men, which we now have in our Bibles, came to them by Christ. Let me see if I can pull this together quickly for you without too much lengthy exposition.

In many places in the scriptures we read phrases like “then came the Word of the Lord unto” and we would

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be given a name of a man that the Word came to. Let's put just a few of these references from scripture in here for clarity and then see what happens when we get to the birth of Christ.

- **Genesis 15:1** - After these things **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came unto Abram...

- **1 Samuel 15:10** - Then came **THE WORD OF THE LORD** unto Samuel...

- **2 Samuel 7:4** - And it came to pass that night, that **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came unto Nathan...

- **2 Samuel 24:11** - For when David was up in the morning, **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came unto the prophet Gad...

- **1 Kings 6:11** - And **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came to Solomon...

- **1 Kings 16:1** - Then **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came to Jehu...

- **1 Kings 19:9** - And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

- **Isaiah 38:4** - Then came **THE WORD OF THE LORD** to Isaiah, saying...

- **Jeremiah 1:11** - Moreover **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou?...

- **Ezekiel 1:3** - **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest...

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•Hosea 1:1 - **THE WORD OF THE LORD** that came unto Hosea...

Every other prophet of the Lord would declare to the people “Thus saith the Lord”, or “Hear ye the Word of the Lord”. However, when Jesus would speak forth the Word of Truth, He would say something very unique to Himself as a prophet – He would say “Verily, verily, I SAY unto you”.

•Joel 1:1 - **THE WORD OF THE LORD** that came to Joel ...

•Jonah 1:1 - Now **THE WORD OF THE LORD** came unto Jonah ...

•Micah 1:1 - **THE WORD OF THE LORD** that came to Micah ...

•Zephaniah 1:1 - **THE WORD OF THE LORD** which came unto Zephaniah

...

•Haggai 1:1 - In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came **THE WORD OF THE LORD** by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel...

•Zechariah 1:1 - In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came **THE WORD OF THE LORD** unto Zechariah, ...

So, just looking at a few examples here we see that the word of the Lord came to all of these men, and then when we get to the New Testament, we read this....

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• **John 1:14 - “And THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us...”**

So, the same Word that had been coming to men all through the scriptures, now came in the flesh in the person of Christ. This can be similarly understood when we realize that every other prophet of the Lord would declare to the people “**Thus saith the Lord**”, or “**Hear ye the Word of the Lord**”. However, when Jesus would speak forth the Word of Truth, He would say something very unique to Himself as a prophet - He would say “**Verily, verily, I SAY unto you**”. Quite a difference, and for good reason. The Son of God, the Word of God, had come to speak to men Himself rather than by men who were chosen to represent Him.

Hebrews 1:1 - 2 - “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners SPAKE IN TIME PAST unto the fathers BY THE PROPHETS, Hath in these last days SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

When we understand the ministry of Christ to include bearing witness of the Father to men, we can see that He has been working from the beginning to give witness to men of the Father. This is clearly declared in the book of Revelation for us by Jesus after His ascension:

Revelation 1:1 - “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, TO SHEW UNTO HIS SERVANTS things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

However, this ministry of Christ has been ongoing from the very beginning and is not unique to only this one

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book of Revelation. This is how the Father has communicated to man all through time – by His Son, who is the Word of God. Peter discusses some of these truths in His epistle as well, as He writes by the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:10 - 11 - “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WHICH WAS IN THEM did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

Peter says it was the Spirit of Christ that was speaking through the prophets in old time i.e. those men by whom the Word of the Lord was spoken, and that He says Jesus Christ is the one by whom that Word came unto them. We see further in Peter’s epistle the same principle at work in chapter 3:

1 Peter 3:18 - 20 - “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also HE WENT AND PREACHED unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, WHEN once the longsuffering of GOD WAITED in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

Many attempt to make this a mystical passage of some kind, but that is not the case as the scriptural consistency is clear to see. It was Christ who gave testimony to men of the coming destruction of the world in Noah’s day. It was Christ who was declaring the Word to Noah, and the one that was preaching to men, by Noah, of things to come while the ark was preparing. We could go on and on for

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some time here expounding this principle of truth, but what we need to know is that it is the ministry of Christ all through time to show the things of the Father unto men. He has been faithfully performing this work all through time from the very foundations of the world, and anytime we have the Word of the Lord spoken, we can know it came to us from the Father by His Son Christ, whom we now know by the name of Jesus.

We know that the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, worked the same way He saw His Father work.

John 5:19 - "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

This shows how the Father first spoke to His Son in secret, and then the Son, the Word, would declare the testimony He had received openly to creation. The Son is the one by whom the worlds were made because He is the one who preached the testimony to creation openly. However, He only spoke those things He had received from the Father. Jesus Himself, in keeping with this pattern from the Father, taught His disciples in secret and then charged them to go preach openly the things they had received in secret.

Matthew 10:27 - "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops."

Mark 4:34 - "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

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Now knowing it is Jesus Christ the only begotten Son who has been declaring the things of the Father to men from the beginning, we should be ready to look at our second principle.

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The second principle we need to add to this first one will help us to understand how the Lord uses His Word among men. Knowing now from our first principle that the Father sends His testimony to men by way of the Son, Jesus Christ, let's look at this principle that will show us how the Word of testimony is used by the Father to communicate to men. We find this principle given to us most clearly in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 19:10 - “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.”

When we think of the word of the Lord, whom we now know by the name Jesus Christ in this age, and the work He has been

*“THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS
IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.
- Revelation 19:10*

doing from the beginning to declare to men the things of the Father, we need to understand that His testimony has always been prophetic - that is, it speaks of things yet future to man but not yet fulfilled. This second principle is paramount to understanding how it is that God seeks to work among men in their hearts. The fact that the testimony of Jesus is always prophetic to man is not without purpose but is in fact a deliberate act of God. Let's unpack this principle a little as well to help us understand why.

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We know from the very beginning pages of scripture that God does things by His Word, that is by His Son Jesus Christ. We know also from Revelation that the Word is always prophetic – that is, it precedes everything before it comes to pass. It is the power and force behind the work that God does. When the Word goes forth from His mouth, there is power in it. God does not have to “work” as we do to get things done. He accomplishes them by His Word and in accordance with His will. God doesn’t need materials to work with, energy to carry out the work, or time to get the job done. Those are elements of work committed to His creation. As the creator, he is not bound by these things but has fashioned all of these for use by His creation.

God doesn't need materials to work with, energy to carry out the work, or time to get the job done. Those are elements of work committed to His creation.

Let's look at a few examples from the creation account to see this in action. I believe it will be helpful to us as a foundation.... which is probably why the Lord included it first in the pages of the scriptures.

**Genesis 1:3 -
“And GOD SAID, Let there be light: AND THERE WAS light.”**

Genesis 1:6 - 7 - “And GOD SAID, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: AND IT WAS SO.”

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Genesis 1:9 - “And GOD SAID, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: AND IT WAS SO.”

Genesis 1:11 - “And GOD SAID, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: AND IT WAS SO.”

Genesis 1:14 - 15 - “And GOD SAID, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: AND IT WAS SO.”

Genesis 1:24 - “And GOD SAID, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: AND IT WAS SO.”

In this commonly taught and well-known passage, we see according to the testimony of Christ that God made all these things by His Word. Accordingly, we are to learn from this account that when God speaks, stuff gets done. Things happen. By simply speaking, He was able to create the entire known universe that has continued to fascinate and confound man for all his generations on the earth. We still labor today to unfold its mysteries after thousands of years!

Isaiah 40:21 - 22 - “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out

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the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:”

Over and again in the passage of creation in Genesis we read the phrases “God said” and “it was so”. What we are to learn here as men is that when God gives forth a Word, it will be so. Seems simple enough. As we know from Revelation, and can clearly see here, the Word of God is prophetic in nature. When the Word was spoken, “Let there be light”, it was a prophetic Word. It was a Word that came before the fulfillment that was to follow.

What we lose sight of as men, is that God may not always FULFILL His Testimony IMMEDIATELY, as He clearly did in the creation account - and it turns out to be good for us that He doesn't! We will explore this more thoroughly, but for starters, think about the time Christ cursed the Fig Tree. Christ uses the tree as an important example for us.

Mark 11:12 - 14 - “And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, NO MAN EAT FRUIT OF THEEE HEREAFTER FOREVER. And his disciples heard it.”

Now, after Christ uttered those words, many might have been looking on and thought to themselves nothing had happened. The tree still looked the same as before! There must not be any power in His word or God must not have answered Him concerning this one thing. Many such thoughts might have crept into their minds. However,

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in time we see the next day that the fulfillment was clear to men.

Mark 11:19 - 21 - “And when even was come, he went out of the city. And IN THE MORNING, as they passed by, THEY SAW the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.”

So, there was a gap between the spoken word to men and the fulfillment that followed on this occasion. This lesson specifically teaches men exactly what God requires of them and is exactly the lesson Christ was teaching here. He speaks it plainly to Peter in the very next verse!

Mark 11:22 - “And Jesus answering saith unto them, HAVE FAITH in God.”

The TIME that lapses between the speaking of the Word and the fulfillment of the Word can vary greatly. Sometimes He speaks and it is fulfilled immediately. Some of His testimony has been waiting to be fulfilled for thousands of years! Either way, the time that lapses between these two aspects of His work does not affect the validity of the testimony He has given by Christ. God can wait as long as He wants to fulfill His Word, and it has no bearing on whether it is true or not - unless He has given testimony to a specific time for the fulfillment of His Word, which we also see in scripture. Since He is eternal, He has all the time! However, sometimes He will, by His testimony, tell us when the time is for fulfillment to come. His prophetic testimony, and the fulfillment of it, is the chief way that the true God in heaven who made all things separates Himself from all other would-be gods and the way He separates His Word from all other so-called holy

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books. In fact, He challenges any other god to compete with Him in this arena of prophecy.

Isaiah 41:21 - 26 - “Produce your cause, saith the **LORD**; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the **King of Jacob**. Let them bring them forth, and **SHEW US WHAT SHALL HAPPEN**: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or **DECLARE US THINGS FOR TO COME**. **SHEW THE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME HEREAFTER, THAT WE MAY KNOW THAT YE ARE GODS**: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. **WHO HATH DECLARED FROM THE BEGINNING**, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.”

Isaiah 42:8 - 9 - “I am the **LORD**: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and **NEW THINGS DO I DECLARE: BEFORE THEY SPRING FORTH I TELL YOU OF THEM.**”

Isaiah 46:9 - 10 - “Remember the former things of old: for **I AM GOD AND THERE IS NONE ELSE**; I am God, and there is none like me, **DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING**, and from ancient times

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the things that are not yet done, saying, **MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, and I WILL DO all my pleasure:**”

Isaiah 45:21 - 22 - “Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: **WHO HATH DECLARED THIS FROM ANCIENT TIME?** who hath told it from that time? have not I **THE LORD?** and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I **AM GOD,** and there is none else.”

Clearly, no one has ever nor can ever stand up to the challenge.... It is the Lord alone who can declare His counsel to men of things before they come to pass. It is He alone who has the power to execute His Word with perfection. It is He alone who can do according to all His own

will and counsel without limitation. This prophetic aspect of God’s word and testimony is critical to understanding His work among men. It also separates true Christian faith from every other religion on the earth today.

For our purposes, we will not explore all these instances other than what is needed to show the principle at work.

We can see many things in scripture that we view as prophetic because they declare things yet unfulfilled. At one point in time, all of the testimony was prophetic! From

This prophetic aspect of God’s word and testimony is critical to understanding His work among men. It also separates true Christian faith from every other religion on the earth today.

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the time the Word spoke, “Let there be light”! Now that prophetic testimony was fulfilled rather quickly! The point being, all the Word of God, the testimony of Christ, is prophetic. The difference is that some of the testimony has already been fulfilled and some has yet to be. Knowing the difference proves to be critically important to us as we seek to know the way of salvation!

When God made man, however, He didn't speak him into existence as he did with other things in creation. God formed Man from the dust of the earth with His hands, breathed life into him, and then spoke His Word TO the man. The Word spoken to Him was prophetic testimony and was to be received by faith.

From the very beginning, the testimony of Christ was prophetic to man:

Genesis 2:16 - 17 - “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.”

So, what do we see from this aspect of creation? Well, we see that all of God's creation was made by His Word. When God made man, however, He didn't speak him into existence as he did with other things in creation. God formed Man from the dust of the earth with His hands, breathed life into him, and then spoke His Word

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TO the man. The Word spoken to Him was prophetic testimony and was to be received by faith.

So, in this way, the creature Adam was very different from other aspects of creation. Not only because He was made in the image of God and was given a living soul by God's breathing into Him the breath of life, but the Word came to Him after being formed and was "sown" into His heart. This work of the husbandman of the earth is brought out more clearly in the New Testament parable of the sower which has to do with Christ sowing the word into the earth. It is important to remember that we are made of earth, so the sower sowing seed into the earth is a perfectly clear representation of how God has worked with this creature called man.

Matthew 13:37 - "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;"

We see Christ expounding these truths more clearly, but the original work of creation represents the same truth. We can clearly see that the Word sown into man's heart was a prophetic Word of God. The Father had sent this testimony to men by Christ, and in time the reality of the prophetic Word took hold of them by their disobedience. Satan had lied unto Eve and convinced her that God's Word wasn't exactly true or complete, and she believed the serpent's testimony above the testimony of Christ - and the rest is history, as they say.

Once this was done, God did something miraculous and gracious for man. Because He had already known of man's fall before it ever happened, He had also provided a means for their redemption from sin. He is the only wise God! He is not just "all-knowing" as we

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sometimes think, but He is infinite in His knowing. His understanding is infinite and beyond measure!

Psalm 147:5 - Great is our Lord, and of great power: HIS UNDERSTANDING IS INFINITE.

There are no limits to His knowing or understanding. As Paul declares in his epistle to the Romans:

Romans 11:33 - “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

The means that He provided to redeem this creature was two-fold – which we will dive into shortly. What we learn is that there is another law besides what was given at first to man that provided a mechanism to redeem men from their fallen condition. A just way for a loving God to “save” His creation was available, but there are two aspects to this law that we need to understand. This redemptive act of God’s love, the purpose of God to demonstrate His grace, and the means by which He perfectly satisfied His justice is the basis for this book on the topic of the gift of salvation. As God had already shown man His prophetic testimony (what would happen if they ate of the tree), and man had experienced the validity of the prophetic testimony (what they experienced when they transgressed the commandment), God then did a new thing. Don’t confuse the idea that God never changes with the idea that He doesn’t do new things. New things are for His creation to learn of Him, and because He is infinitely wise, He will always be showing His creation new things for all eternity.

Isaiah 43:19 - “Behold, I WILL DO A NEW THING; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I

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will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.”

God never changes because He is infinitely wise and infinitely knowing. He is the end from the beginning. We change because we learn, but God never changes. Accordingly, His Son Jesus Christ also never changes either.

Hebrews 13:8 - “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

That is because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh

Matthew 1:23 - “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Jesus is the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 2:9 - “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

Jesus Christ is the express image of His person

Hebrews 1:3 - “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

and the very image of the God who is invisible.

Colossians 1:15 - “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:”

Knowing these things, we also see in scripture that the name “Jesus” is the name (singular) of the Father, Son,

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and Holy Spirit. Let's look at the command given by Jesus to His apostles at His ascension.

Matthew 28:19 – “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

This is known as “the great commission” and we see this command being obeyed through the book of Acts as the apostles declared the testimony of Christ and made disciples of the Lord as many believed their preaching. The point here is that the disciples understood the Lord's command and were obedient to Him in this very thing. In the book of Acts, we see the record of these apostles carrying out this Matthew 28 command by baptizing “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”, which is the name “Jesus”. Compare Matthew 28 with what we observe in Acts:

Acts 2:38 – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 8:16 – “(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.)”

Acts 19:5 – “When they heard this, they were baptized IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.”

Just KNOWING that Christ's previous testimony had been fulfilled was no longer sufficient for man if He was to be redeemed.

Jesus Christ and His Father are one and the same God, which we could show in a multitude of ways from scripture if we were writing a book on the person of Jesus Christ. This is at the heart of Christian faith and is a mystery often referred to as the Triune God, or the Trinity. However, back to our initial point here, for man's sake we are eternally indebted and grateful that the Lord does new things! This was the case with Adam and Eve. Just KNOWING that Christ's previous testimony had been fulfilled was no longer sufficient for man if He was to be redeemed. They could not only continue to know and declare that Word that had already been fulfilled. God came to them again and gave them another Word. Why was this necessary?

This was necessary because the law that God would use to redeem men was not the law of works, which now was man's condemnation rather than life. The law that had been ordained for their life had they continued in His Word that was first given, was now their judge and condemnation. The law of works could now only condemn man, and there was no work the man could do to remove the sin that was his own by his works. Now a corrupted creation, man was separated from God and could only continue in sin. God in His infinite wisdom and grace had already provided means for redemption - the law of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ through the shedding of His life blood on Calvary. Let's quickly look at these two truths from scripture and then get back to how the testimony of Christ was at work to redeem men.

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1. **The law of works** - this divine decree declares that any man or creature that keeps God's commandments shall live and that those who break His commandments shall die – not good for Adam and his posterity, who were now guilty of violating God's commands and deserving of death. The law of works states that a man who does everything God says shall live, which is good if you have kept all His commands but is death and condemnation for a creature like man who had violated God's law. – **Galatians 3:12** – **“And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.”**. So, the man that does everything God's law requires can live. Too tall a task for men. This still is a temptation for those in pride, as they read that a man can live if He keeps the law, which is true, and so they labor to do so in light of that truth – a study for another time perhaps.

2. **The Law of Faith** - There is however another divine law that gives hope to sinful men, declares the glory of God's grace, and provides mercy and pardon for transgressors – the law of faith. This law declares that a creature can be justified, that is declared to be right with God, by faith and not by works. This is our hope as those who are unable to live by the law of works, but to partake of the hope this law gives we must know what faith is. This law works in two parts. Faith on the part of the justified and payment on the part of the justifier.

The reason God came to man with another prophetic Word after the fall is that He desired to justify them - by the law of faith. Simply declaring the testimony of what was fulfilled, was not sufficient to give men opportunity for faith, which is essential to understanding the gospel today. While the completed testimony was TRUE, it could not give FAITH to men. How can we know that? Faith

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requires knowledge, belief, and confidence in testimony of Christ that is not yet **FULFILLED** because it requires hope and is predicated upon promises from God. Even acknowledging the truth of what God had said, and how it was fulfilled, provided no means for faith that can have a hope in a promise of any sort. If faith isn't rooted in **PROMISES** from the Lord, it is not faith. Just knowing what God has done and believing it, is not faith - **FAITH** is the substance of things **HOPED FOR**.

Hebrews 11:1 - "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

So, believing what has already been fulfilled gives knowledge to build our faith, but falls short of the opportunity to exercise ourselves in obedience to faith. In order for there to be true faith, there **MUST** be unfulfilled testimony from Christ involved.

A lot of people today will tell you that faith is just believing "in Jesus" or "in God", but we can clearly see from scripture that is not even close to being the case. Many people in scripture and even the devils themselves believe in God. The very next generation of men proved that - think, Cain. Cain knew of God but is spoken of in scripture as being of the wicked one. No, faith has a direct and immediate connection to the testimony of Christ - prophecy. This is critical to our understanding today of the preaching of the gospel and our hope of salvation. The reason the testimony of Christ came to Adam and Eve to preach another Word to them was to give them opportunity for faith.

Genesis 3:14 - 15 - "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field;

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upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

To give men opportunity for faith, it was necessary for God to speak a Word to them and to leave a gap between the promise and its fulfillment. This is where men live in time, and where the opportunity for scriptural faith lies – between the Word given and the Word fulfilled. If you think about the creation account, God could have left a gap between speaking it and when it happened. If He had and He asked anyone around, “Do you believe that there will be light?”, He would have been questioning their faith in Him. If He had given them a command to go along with the question, they would have had opportunity to exercise their faith – doing what He commands out of faith in His promise that there would be light. Granted, silly speculation here perhaps, but let’s follow through. Once the light came, there was no opportunity for faith because that which had been spoken had been fulfilled already.

When we see how the Father has communicated to men by His Word, we see there is a gap left between the spoken word and its fulfillment for a reason – so that men could receive it as a promise by faith. This is how God justifies men. He spoke of a coming redeemer to Adam and Eve so that they could have faith in His testimony and be justified by the law of faith. Cain clearly rejected the testimony of God even though he knew the same history as his brother, and his rejection of the truth was manifest by His works. Abel received the prophetic Word and walked in the light and hope of it, which was manifest by his adherence to the doctrine and commandments he had received. This principle must be known to understand the gift of

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salvation. God has by His Word of testimony all through time spoken to men of things before they come to pass, which gives men an opportunity to exercise faith towards him.

Noah received a prophetic Word by faith and preached it to his generation. No one outside of his family believed the testimony, and then the Lord shut up the ark door 7 days before He fulfilled His Word. A lot of people “believed” the testimony as they struggled to cling to their life in the following days and weeks of the flood, but that “belief” is not FAITH. All through time the testimony of Christ that has already been fulfilled is preserved for men in the pages of scripture to serve as an eternal memorial and witness unto the faithfulness of the Lord concerning His Word and character. We have a great cloud of such witnesses and memorials in the scriptures. The nation of Israel would often erect stone memorials of the Lord’s fulfilled testimony to remind them of His certain faithfulness regarding the yet unfulfilled promises He had given them. However, only those who had FAITH in the testimony before its fulfillment became partakers of the blessings of God.

If you read the scripture, you will find this principle at work throughout its pages. God spoke a promise to Abraham that he would deliver His seed from the bondage in Egypt after 400 years, which we now know that He fulfilled. The people of that era were justified by faith in the promise God gave. When God fulfilled His promise by Moses, He gave another word of promise concerning entrance into Canaan. The entire nation all KNEW of God’s fulfilled testimony that was past, His wonders in Egypt and the wilderness, but had no FAITH in His PROMISE, which is why they could not enter the land.

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Deuteronomy 32:20 - “And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, CHILDREN IN WHOM IS NO FAITH.”

So, knowledge, acceptance, and belief of what is past is not the FAITH that God requires of men to become partakers of His promised blessings. Everyone in the wilderness KNEW the same things about what God had done in the past! FAITH, scripturally speaking, specifically identifies the portion of the testimony of Christ that is future and has faith, believes, and KNOWS them to be true. So much so that we are willing to act upon that information. This faith is built upon the knowledge of the memorials of the fulfilled testimony that give witness of God’s faithfulness but has matured from knowledge of what is fulfilled to wisdom concerning things to come, which lives in light and hope of what is promised.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 - “the excellency of knowledge is, that WISDOM GIVETH LIFE to them that have it.”

Knowledge cannot justify. Faith is the required means for a man to be justified, which cannot be exercised in only believing things that are already fulfilled and past.

Chapter 3 – Rightly Dividing the Word

2 Timothy 2:15 - “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of truth.”

Now that we understand these first two principles of How the testimony of God is given to men by His Son Jesus Christ, and we understand that the purpose of the prophetic testimony is to give men opportunity for faith, we next then need to understand the principle of discerning the difference between the two parts of the testimony - past fulfilled testimony and future promises.

there is a difference between knowledge of the past and faith concerning things to come.

If you read through the scriptures, you will find a great cloud of witnesses that

lived in faith of what God had said even though they hadn't seen it yet. In the book of James, Abraham and Rahab are the two chief examples spoken of. Looking at Rahab, we see that everyone in the land had the same KNOWLEDGE of what God HAD DONE. All the inhabitants of the land even feared because of what God HAD DONE in Egypt. However, Rahab alone had FAITH and didn't perish with the rest of the inhabitants of the land. So, there is a difference between knowledge of the past and faith concerning things to come.

Hebrews 11:31 - “By FAITH the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”

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When we look at Rahab’s story in scripture, we see the belief that separated her from the unbelieving was not manifest in what they knew about what God had done already, but by way of how they responded to His prophetic testimony.

Joshua 2:9 - 11 - “And she said unto the men, **I KNOW THAT THE LORD HATH GIVEN YOU THE LAND**, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the **LORD** dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And **AS SOON AS WE HAD HEARD THESE THINGS**, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage **IN ANY MAN**, because of you: for the **LORD** your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”

Clearly, Rahab’s response to the knowledge of the testimony concerning the children of Israel being given the Land by Jehovah, which was yet unfulfilled and prophetic at the time, is what separated her from the unbelieving. All of them had the same belief about what was done and past. So much so in fact that they were scared about what might happen next. Rahab **KNEW** what would happen next by the light of prophecy, and this light gave her knowledge to act and live in a way that demonstrated faith.

By way of her example, the Lord is preserving a witness of how He works in the hearts of men by His word and faith to deliver them from destruction. Her faith gave her knowledge of things she knew would happen, even though she hadn’t seen them yet. This confidence was

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given by examining the memorials of fulfilled testimony of what God had done in Egypt, and in bringing the nation of Israel into Canaan, which gave confidence in the unfulfilled testimony of Israel being given the land. While others were fortifying their cities to withstand what was foretold by the testimony of Christ concerning the land of Canaan, Rahab had Faith and yielded to the truth of what had been revealed by the Word of God concerning her and her city. This knowledge, belief, and confidence to act on a future yet unseen but believed to be true by promise is FAITH.

This is the lesson of the centurion that Christ used as a marvelous example of faith in Matthew.

Matthew 8:8 - 10 - “The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but SPEAK THE WORD ONLY, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I HAVE NOT FOUND SO GREAT FAITH, no, not in Israel.”

This man knew if Christ simply spoke the Word, the fulfillment would be certain. This is why we pray unto Him isn't it? We beseech Him to speak a Word on our behalf. Lord, speak a Word to open my eyes, give me understanding, and increase my faith to make me useful in your service to keep alive the testimony of the truth to the glory of Christ. Any prayer we pray to Him relies on this faith that, without Him, we can do nothing.

It is out of this heart of faith that kings, and great men of Israel, would wait on a Word from the Lord

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concerning the battles they would fight. When the Word came to them declaring they would gain the victory, they knew to go in that faith. Every prophet and saint of every era has lived unto God in this confidence of FAITH. We could spend pages and hours demonstrating this from the prophet Elijah calling fire down from heaven to the healing of the bitter waters and every other exercise of faith in scripture. They all have confidence in promises made by God through His Word and they acted out of that confidence.

The understanding of this principle is paramount to our faith today. Paul was teaching Timothy of these principles in 2 Timothy. His admonishment was to study the Word to shew himself approved.

Perhaps we all know the verse from 2 Timothy. But the apostle's caution to the young preacher is to **RIGHTLY DIVIDE** the Word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of truth.”

To discern between fulfilled testimony and future promises (i.e. between knowledge and wisdom) certainly must have been part of the discernment Paul was teaching Timothy to practice and observe, because we see this exact caution in the text!

2 Timothy 2:16 – 17 – “But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymanaeus and Philetus; Who CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, saying that the RESURRECTION IS PAST ALREADY; and OVERTHROW THE FAITH of some.”

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Teaching things that are future promises as having already happened leads to ungodliness and the overthrowing of faith. I hope you can clearly see the problem here. When we give witness to things God has spoken of as a promise and bring them into the present, we have removed the gap that He intended to leave so that men could exercise faith towards Him. This is destructive to the souls of men and to the message itself. If the fulfillment is future to us, we must know that and live in the hope of the promise being fulfilled. In this way, we can have faith; i.e., confidence in things yet unseen. Confidence towards God that even though we haven't seen these promises yet, we know them to be true by His Word - by Christ's testimony. This principle will become clearer as we go on, but for now I hope that we have thoroughly demonstrated the point. The entire testimony of Christ is necessary to us - both past and future:

Matthew 4:4 - "But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Every Word of the testimony is needed and is to be believed. Out of all the testimony that has been given, we are to study to be able to rightly divide between the parts of His testimony that are fulfilled and those which are spoken as future. The fulfilled testimony gives us knowledge and witness to the fact that God is faithful to fulfill His Word - memorials that give knowledge. The future testimony is given so that we might have faith towards God - promises that give hope. Every saint who has ever been justified in the sight of God was made so by this act of faith concerning things to come - not acknowledging only what is past. From just Abel and the men of Nineveh, who believed God and were justified by faith, to the father of us

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all, Abraham himself, who believed God and was justified by faith, we see this aspect of faith at work among men.

These two principles will allow us now to look at the promise of salvation according to the proper scriptural truth. We now understand that it has been Christ that has been declaring the testimony of the Father to men from the beginning. We also understand that the reason the testimony is prophetic is so that men can have the opportunity for faith in the gap between the sending of the Word and the fulfillment of the Word. This is why we have the testimony of Christ in Acts 26 that was spoken to Paul by our Lord Jesus Christ:

Acts 26:15 - 18 - And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified BY FAITH THAT IS IN ME.”

All those who have ever believed the prophetic testimony of God by His Word have put their faith “in Christ”. It is Christ that has been the one by whom the testimony was received. He is the Word of God. All who have had faith in these prophetic promises, have put their faith “in Him”, and it is by this law of faith that He has chosen to justify men - specifically those who have FAITH in Him. Not those who only acknowledge the things He has done already as fact, or assent unto the power that He

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has as a fact, or even profess the fact that He simply exists.... No, those who have known His testimony to be true by what He has fulfilled and believed by faith His prophetic Word concerning things to come. These are the children of God by FAITH. As we look ahead in coming chapters to the gift and promise of salvation, we need to understand these things.

1 Corinthians 1:21 - “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE.”

So, the wisdom of God has made provision to save them that believe. But believe what? Will God save all those who have believed they “are saved”? Will He save all those who have asked Jesus into their heart or made Him the Lord of their life? Will He save those who readily acknowledge the testimony that is already fulfilled? As we move ahead, I trust the truth of this promise of salvation will become clearer. Paul says there is preaching that declares the Word of God. Part of the preaching is to declare the things God has done already that had been previously prophesied by Christ but are now done. This gives men the knowledge of God. The second part of preaching this testimony is to declare the testimony of Christ that is still prophetic. Those who believe will be saved by this preaching through the grace of God and the imparting of faith in His Word, which is the truth Paul is speaking. God will save those that have faith just as He always has done since the fall of man.

With these two principles under our belt, and with an understanding of the importance of studying to rightly divide the truth, let’s move on to our next chapter as we

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continue to study this gift of salvation that is spoken of in His Word of Testimony. To be clear, the two principles stated thus far are:

1. Christ, the Word of God, has been the one communicating to man and declaring the testimony of the Father from the beginning. This is part of His ministry.

2. This testimony has always been prophetic to man. At this point in history, some of the testimony is fulfilled and some is future, and we are required to study to know the difference. Faith must operate in the arena of unfulfilled testimony and not only in the memorials of fulfilled testimony.

Chapter 4 – The Work of Christ

Now that we have understood these principles of the ministry of Christ to declare the testimony of the Father, let's move on to the work of Christ that meets the needs of those who have understood and received the testimony. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God. This is the work that is most familiar to many who know the things of scripture as they relate to the gospel. We will show here a little more context than the typical representation of these things perhaps, but the story of the gospel is well known to many. It involves the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, his burial and resurrection. All things that are familiar to many. What we want to expound here is the purpose of the gospel in the context of scripture as it relates to salvation doctrinally and not theologically - that is in teaching men what they need to know to partake of the grace given to men in the gospel rather than trying to sort out exactly how God works in bringing it about. In this chapter we hope to lay the needed groundwork to understand what was done by Christ at His first coming, and then we can go into our next chapter to gain a better understanding of how we are made partakers of the blessings that He died to give to men.

The gospel speaks of the entirety of the work of Christ to provide salvation for His people. This mystery of God that is taught in scripture of how the God of heaven and earth that created all things came into the world through the virgin birth, lived a perfect life of sinless perfection, offered Himself in the body of His flesh through death as a willing sacrifice for sin on Calvary's cross, was buried for three days and three nights, rose again from the grave, and ascended into heaven to be seated at the right

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hand of the Father until the appointed time of His return to earth. In this chapter, we are going to look at how God provided what was necessary to redeem His people, and we will then in our next chapter look at who “His people” are and how we can know we are one of them.

To demonstrate this truth, let’s start where the apostle Paul started when teaching these things. The gospel story can best be understood from the relationship that God had with Abraham, who is called the friend of God in scripture and the father of those who are of faith.

Galatians 3:7 - “Know ye therefore that THEY WHICH ARE OF FAITH, the same are the children of Abraham.”

God and Abraham had several conversations that show us the way of salvation and declare the truth and purpose of the gospel story to us. Let’s look at one particular account in Genesis that will help us to understand this gospel of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 15:4 - 6 - And, behold, THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, SO SHALL THY SEED BE. And HE BELIEVED in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

We see both of our first principles at work in this passage. The Word of the Lord came to Abraham. Who is giving testimony of the Father here? We know it is Christ. Christ, the Word of the Lord, came unto Abraham by the Spirit and declared a prophetic Word to him. This

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Word had to do with the fact that God intended to give him a son and that through that son, he would have descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. It was this testimony of Christ that spoke of things yet unfulfilled that Abraham believed by FAITH. It was this faith that was accounted to Abraham for righteousness by the law of faith. It really is simple. Abraham believed the promise of God, i.e. an announcement in advance of what God will do, and in the gap between the Word spoken and the Word fulfilled, he exercised faith in the one who spoke this Word. Abraham was persuaded of these yet unfulfilled words of promise by what he knew to be true about the fulfilled testimony that was past. It was this faith in His testimony of promise that was required to be justified by the righteousness which is of faith. That is why God spoke it to him before it came to pass, so that Abraham could have FAITH. Later, after having professed faith in this Word of promise, the Lord tried his faith in asking Abraham to offer his son Isaac to him. Abraham's faith was made perfect, as James tells us, by continuing to demonstrate faith in this promise despite the trial. Good lesson for us in there, as we will see.

The Lord then makes this promise to him:

Genesis 15:7 “And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land TO INHERIT IT.”

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The blessings God promised Abraham by the Word of His Testimony were not dealing with this life, but the life and world to come in the resurrection.

Now, here we have to do a little work in scripture to understand what this conversation is all about. The Lord was promising Abraham he would INHERIT the land. As we continue through the conversation they are having and especially look at the witness of the other scriptures, it becomes abundantly clear that the Lord and Abraham both KNEW that they were discussing an inheritance that lay beyond this natural life. Abraham had faith that he would inherit the land IN THE RESURRECTION and not during the days of his flesh here. This is BIG and MUST be understood to understand the gospel hope today. The blessings God promised Abraham by the Word of His Testimony were not dealing with this life, but the life and world to come in the resurrection. That's what the inheritance is all about. That is why Abraham wandered as a pilgrim and a stranger in the land of promise during the days of his flesh, because He was living in FAITH of a PROMISE that had to do with the WORLD TO COME.

Hebrews 11:8 - 10 - "By FAITH Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should AFTER RECEIVE for an INHERITANCE, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the LAND OF PROMISE, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the HEIRS with him OF THE SAME PROMISE: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

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Abraham obeyed the commandments of the Lord as witness to his faith and to serve as an example for us of being a pilgrim and a stranger in this present world. He was promised to be heir of the world in the resurrection and was commanded to wander during the days of his flesh. Because he had FAITH in the promise, he obeyed God. We see from Romans 4 that Paul explains this gospel truth:

Romans 4:13 - “For THE PROMISE, that he should be THE HEIR OF THE WORLD, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.”

So, God had promised Abraham that he would be the heir of the world - that he would inherit it in the resurrection. God then confirmed the oath by Himself as Abraham lay in a deep sleep according to Genesis 15. The Word clearly was a future promise, and Abraham believed God concerning this promise which is what the scripture calls FAITH. Yes, Abraham knew about the creation and believed that Word. Yes, He lived shortly after the flood and certainly knew of Noah’s day and the testimony of Christ that had been fulfilled in sending the flood. However, it wasn’t until He believed something about the future that the scripture gives witness to the righteousness he was to have imputed to Him by faith. Noah had been made heir of the same righteousness.

Hebrews 11:7 - “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became HEIR OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS BY FAITH.”

Those who are in Christ by faith also have this same promise today, and for those who have faith in the

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testimony of Christ, we live in faith and hope of this same righteousness.

Galatians 5:5 - “For we through the Spirit WAIT FOR THE HOPE of righteousness by faith.”

Working out the “how” is in God’s dominion. Abraham just knew that He had a promise, so He believed it.

Knowing that God had made this promise to Abraham is essential to understanding the work of Christ in the gospel. Abraham now possessed a promise, from God who cannot lie, that he would be

the heir of the world. The remaining question then is, how can Abraham, who was born of the seed of Adam as a sinner, receive an eternal inheritance when he is destined to suffer death because of his sin? We know Abraham was a sinner by nature, being born of Adam, but also by his own choices had sinned as well – should sound familiar to those of us who are accustomed to striving against sin in our own flesh. We have in scripture records of him deceiving others because he was afraid. So, how can a sinful man be the heir of the world promised to come? Well, because God had promised him he would be. Working out the “how” is in God’s dominion. Abraham just knew that He had a promise, so He believed it. Now, Abraham was a man of great faith and knew the promise of a redeemer already as it had been preserved from the beginning. This work God would do to fulfill His promise to Abraham involves other promises of God concerning His creation as well, such as the promise to create a new heavens and a new earth.

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2 Peter 3:13 - “Nevertheless we, according to his PROMISE, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

This new created heavens and earth speaks of the work God has promised to do in the world to come after the end of this present world - which is evil, having rebelled against God. This new world which is promised to come is the world of which Abraham is to be the heir. That was God’s promise by His Word of testimony. However, Abraham was not fit to inherit in his natural state because he was a sinner - and so are we.

1 Corinthians 15:50 - “Now this I say, brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”

In order that God might fulfill His Word to Abraham, He had already prepared a work before the foundation of the world to make Abraham fit for the promise he was given. That is where we pick up with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:8 - “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES made unto the fathers:”

The very purpose of Christ’s first coming was to confirm the promises that He had made to the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob. Each of these men were heirs of the same promise made to Abraham by the Word of the Lord. Each of them was equally unfit as the children of Adam but was to be made fit by the working of the law of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. The law of faith says that a man can be justified by having faith towards God

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in receiving the Word of His testimony. However, justification comes at a price. The justice of God cannot be disannulled but must rather be satisfied. The word spoken in this law cannot be disannulled, but must find fulfillment. Remember, the law of works is also prophetic testimony of God. The Word is what must be fulfilled concerning us - transgression must be punished with death. What is at issue is the fulfillment of the Word - God cannot lie, and the testimony must be fulfilled. This is the price of redemption that Christ came to pay! He came to be the fulfillment of the divine decree Himself! Jesus Christ came to die and shed His blood so that these men who had believed His promises, could be made fit by His sacrifice to receive the inheritance they were promised.

1 Peter 1:18 - 21 - “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was FOREORDAINED before the foundation of the world, but WAS MANIFEST in these last times for you, Who BY HIM DO BELIEVE IN GOD, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

As Peter points out here, the blood of Christ was necessary to satisfy the debt of man according to the law of faith. This sacrifice of the Lamb of God was spoken by the Word from the beginning of the world, but was not manifest, or shown to men, until the time came for its revealing. By Him, that is Christ, we believe in God because He has born witness to us and declared the testimony of the Father to us.

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The Word of promise God had spoken by Christ to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob required an act on His part to fulfill so that they could be made fit to receive the promises they had believed. This involves a work upon the heart of man by God's Word and His Spirit. The testimony of Christ being mixed in the heart with faith to believe things yet unseen and future to us, is the way in which God has chosen to justify sinners. The blood of Christ provided the payment necessary to satisfy the requirements of the law of sin and death. Both laws are perfectly fulfilled in the gospel of Christ.

The law of works no longer holds any hope of life for us, but as sinners we still qualify for justification by the blood of Christ if we have faith in His testimony. In Romans chapter 4, Paul is correlating our faith in God's Word of promise by the testimony of Christ to that of the faith of Abraham. We will look at this in more detail later, but we see in chapter 5 that after discussing these things of Abraham Paul makes this statement:

Romans 5:1 - "THEREFORE being JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

It is important to know that the "therefore" spoken of here goes back to the inheritance of promise in chapter 4. So, the justification available to men is through faith - complete confidence in the testimony of Christ, both fulfilled and future. However, there was a price necessary to be paid so that those who have faith towards God concerning His testimony could be justified and receive the inheritance of the saints according to His promise. When we discuss the work of Christ during the days of his flesh on this earth, we see that it was this mission He was sent to

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accomplish. The mission he was given of the Father was to come and make Himself a sacrifice for the sins of those who would believe His testimony. That is because He has promised some things to those who believe His promises, and He will fulfill all His good pleasure in giving these promises to them. To do this, they must be made fit. We see this directly correlated in other scriptures as well.

Hebrews 9:15 - “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that BY MEANS OF DEATH, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, THEY WHICH ARE CALLED MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE.”

We could certainly go on at some length of these things. The sacrifice of Christ was intended to fulfill the WORK that was necessary for God to give the PROMISES to those who believe His Word. They had been unfit, but by receiving His blessing they are made to be fit. The blessing is that of the Spirit, which is given to those who receive the testimony by faith. This is called the blessing of Abraham in scriptures because it is his example of faith that we follow.

Galatians 3:14 - “That THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

This blessing of the Spirit of Life makes the recipient fit to inherit the promises that have been spoken by the Word of the Lord. The blessing of Abraham made him fit, and when we receive the testimony of Christ as Abraham did, we also are made fit by the same means.

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Colossians 1:12 - “Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH MADE US MEET to be PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE of the saints in light:”

The means for us to be PARTAKERS of this provision that was made for our justification is FAITH:

Romans 5:1 - “Therefore being JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

However, the means by which God made PROVISION for our justification is the sacrifice and blood of Christ.

Romans 5:9 - “Much more then, being now JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

So those who have faith in the promises are partakers of the provision that is made for justification. The blood is the only thing that can justify a sinner, but for it to justify you, you must be a partaker of the promises by faith. It is the blood of Christ that was shed to cleanse us from our sins:

The blood is the only thing that can justify a sinner, but for it to justify you, you must be a partaker of the promises by faith.

1 John 1:7 - “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and THE BLOOD of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN.”

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But for it to be applied to us, we must become partakers by faith.

Acts 15:8 - 9 - “ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH.”

This represents both aspects of the law of faith - the justifier (Christ) and the justified (sinful believers).

This work of Christ in coming to sacrifice Himself, was a fulfillment of promises He had given by His Word and was necessary for those who had received His testimony to receive their inheritance in the world to come that has been spoken of by Him. God had announced this coming sacrifice of Himself by Christ Jesus long before it happened - in fact He had ordained it since before the world was. But, in the process of time, the Words of His testimony were fulfilled in their season. That is how God works by His Word.

Luke 1:20 - “And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, WHICH SHALL BE FULFILLED IN THEIR SEASON.”

Speaking the truth of His testimony before it comes to pass and leaving a gap in between the speaking and the fulfillment to give men opportunity for faith is how God has chosen to justify men.

This has been the way God has always worked among men by His Word of testimony.

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Habakkuk 2:3 - “For the vision is YET FOR AN APPOINTED TIME, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, WAIT FOR IT; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

As we know, without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Hebrews 11:6 - “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

And we know that He desires that all men would know the Truth so that He can have mercy upon them.

Ezekiel 33:11 - “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I HAVE NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

2 Peter 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, but that all should come to repentance.”

This coming of Christ to sacrifice Himself was pictured in the body of doctrine known as the law of Moses. The law was given to the children of Israel, not for righteousness, but to keep the doctrine and truth of the promised coming redeemer alive in their hearts by faith - to keep them expectant in heart of their coming redeemer. The entire body of doctrine was for this purpose. It taught men of their sin by making it appear to them as sinful and

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gave knowledge of what Christ was to fulfill when He came to suffer and die to redeem His people.

Matthew 5:17 – “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but TO FULFIL.”

Their observance of these doctrines was to be an act of obedience in faith as they lived in hope of the coming Savior – just as Abraham’s wandering was to be an example by obedience of the faith He had in God’s promise. This is paramount to a proper understanding of the gospel. Many try to affirm the keeping of the law in their doctrine to this day. The teaching of the law is necessary to prove the sinfulness of man, but is wholly incapable of producing faith, which is necessary to obtain an inheritance among the heirs of salvation. It is also a failure to rightly divide the Word.

1 Timothy 1:5 – 7 – “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; DESIRING TO BE TEACHERS OF THE LAW; UNDERSTANDING NEITHER WHAT THEY SAY, NOR WHEREOF THEY AFFIRM.”

We could write an entire book on this subject alone, and maybe we should. It is a topic well worth our time and study to be completely grounded in our FAITH towards Christ, however for the purposes of understanding the gift of salvation, we don’t have to dwell here too long.

The ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth safeguards against a misapplication of these doctrines from the Old Covenant. The law was to picture what Christ

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would accomplish at His first coming, and once fulfilled, this testimony became another tremendous memorial of the fulfilled Word that God has given to men by Christ. Another powerful witness to His faithfulness and might to execute His Word.

Hebrews 10:1 - “For the law having a SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

That is why the law is no longer sufficient as doctrine to give men faith, and that is why it has been done away in Christ for those who are of the household of faith.

2 Corinthians 3:9 - 11 - “For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if THAT WHICH IS DONE AWAY was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”

The law was never referred to as any kind of gospel. It was not a part of the everlasting gospel that has been promised from the beginning and ordained before the world unto eternal glory, but was an instrument used for a particular purpose and for an appointed time. It was a Word of God spoken to men and has been fulfilled in Christ. For example, the ministration of death or condemnation, as Paul calls it, made a remembrance of sins every year.

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Hebrews 10:3 – “But in those sacrifices there is a REMEMBRANCE AGAIN made of sins EVERY YEAR.”

Whereas the gospel ministration of life remembers them no more.

Hebrews 8:12 – “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I REMEMBER NO MORE.”

So the old covenant, served the purpose of exercising believers in the doctrine of it by faith while it pictured the work of the coming Christ which was future testimony to them, but ceased to be valid for the purpose of exercising faith after He had come and fulfilled all of its types. That is why the Old Covenant, ordained by an earthly mediator with carnal things, was to be done away.

Hebrews 8:13 – “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

The law was given in order that sin may be made to abound (i.e. to make it appear unto men, so they would acknowledge the truth of their own sin) and was to picture the coming redeemer and keep alive the doctrines that held pictures of these hopes for men throughout their generations. However, it was not sufficient to teach men how to exercise faith once it was fulfilled – there was no more future fulfillment of the law to which they could look in hope of His promise. The fulfilled testimony now stands as another memorial of God’s faithfulness to bring His Word to pass. At that point in time as the law was to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ at His first appearing, just as God has always done, another Word was given for preaching and doctrine

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to declare the testimony of Christ concerning things to come - the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Luke 16:16 - “The law and the prophets were UNTIL JOHN: since that time THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PREACHED, and every man presseth into it.”

We have explored that preaching and testimony more fully in another book, *The Gospel of The Kingdom*,

. The acceptable time to believe is in the gap between the Word spoken and the Word fulfilled – that is where FAITH must act!

but for our purposes here we will say that the testimony of Christ to men today is still prophetic. The message we are sent to preach of His Word today speaks of the future to men to give them opportunity for faith as it has always been! We are preach-

ing and declaring the things to which God has given witness by His Son before they come to pass. In between the preaching of the Word and its fulfillment is the accepted time for men - the time when they can exercise faith in Him. The acceptable time to believe is in the gap between the Word spoken and the Word fulfilled - that is where FAITH must act!

2 Corinthians 6:2 - “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”

Christ has already paid the price to justify and redeem those who believe the testimony He has declared of the Father. What is required is FAITH - knowledge,

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belief, and confidence in the testimony of Christ, both fulfilled and future. Specifically, we see that faith operates in the area of future testimony to be scriptural faith. As a prerequisite, the fulfilled testimony must be believed and builds confidence in what is yet unfulfilled. This is where the rubber meets the road for salvation. We are now ready to delve more particularly into the gift of salvation. What it is. What it isn't. How can we know and have confidence in these things? Let's get into the Word and get some knowledge, belief, and confidence!

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1 Corinthians 1:21 – “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE.”

One of the most common misconceptions in our time is the idea that salvation is something you “get” when you ask for it from God. Accordingly, many times you will hear phrases such as “when I got saved”, “back when I was saved”, “are you saved”, “you need to get saved”, “I am not sure I am saved”, and many other such phrases that seem to communicate that salvation is something that is in your past that happened to you. While this is a popular way of speaking of salvation, is it really the truth of God’s Word? There are certainly scriptural grounds for questions of self-examination regarding our spiritual condition such as “when we believed”:

Romans 13:11 - And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Or questions of being “in the faith”

2 Corinthians 13:5 - 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?”

And of whether or not we have received the down payment or “earnest of the Spirit” according to the promise of Christ.

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Romans 8:9 – But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

But questions about “making sure you are saved” are actually foreign to the pages of scripture. We see that over time, we can be subtly moved away from the truth a little at a time until we no longer stand upon the sure foundation we were given. As it pertains to salvation, we especially need to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Is it something we should see as “getting” now, or is it a future promise? Let’s look at a few examples from the pages of scripture so that you can see what I am talking about.

When we examine the topic of salvation in the pages of scripture, we can discern an important distinction that stands in contrast to many of these common representations of salvation we hear today. Let’s see if you can pick up on it.

Peter speaking to the church at Jerusalem said this in Acts 15:

Acts 15:11 – “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE SHALL BE SAVED, even as they.”

Peter in his first epistle:

1 Peter 1:5 – Who are kept by the power of God through faith UNTO SALVATION ready to be revealed in the last time.

Paul writing to the church which was at Rome told them this:

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Romans 13:11 - “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER than when we believed.”

Paul again to Thessalonica:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 - “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but TO OBTAIN SALVATION by our Lord Jesus Christ,”

To the church at Rome:

Romans 5:10 - For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we SHALL BE SAVED by his life.

And here again in the book of Acts:

Acts 2:21 - “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED.”

OK, so before we proceed any further with the promise of salvation, what have we noticed here in just these few passages? Clearly, the salvation spoken of here is spoken of in the future tense - as if it is unful-

filled testimony. Peter had clearly already believed the truth and received the earnest of the Spirit when he spoke as if looking forward to being saved, and so had Paul. So, what are we to make of these passages? Do we indeed “get

Peter had clearly already believed the truth and received the earnest of the Spirit when he spoke as if looking forward to being saved and so was Paul.

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saved” as commonly taught? Well, maybe, but let’s look at a few more.

Hebrews 1:14 – “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who SHALL BE HEIRS OF SALVATION?”

1 Peter 1:3 – 5 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION ready to be revealed in the last time.”

If we stop here at this passage in Peter’s first epistle, it will be, I think, immensely helpful to our understanding of God’s gift of salvation. Peter here correlates the inheritance of the saints with the hope we have by the Word of God, and further states that we are kept by the power of God through faith UNTO SALVATION. This is a good place to start digging a little deeper into the true meaning of salvation. If we are preserved by faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, then that means we are living in hope of some things that we have not yet received. They have been spoken to us by the Word of God through the Testimony of Christ but have yet to be fulfilled in the process of time. As we look at what Peter is teaching, he shows that salvation itself is a promise of God. In other words, we are living by faith in hope and expectation of the salvation He has spoken of by promise. We are in the gap, so to speak, between the promise being sent by the Word and the fulfillment in process of time.

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Peter says that this faith is to preserve us UNTO salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time. Faith itself is a gift from God that comes by the hearing of the preaching of His Word.

Romans 12:3 - “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as GOD HATH DEALT TO EVERY MAN THE MEASURE OF FAITH.”

How is it that God deals this measure of faith to men? Well, it is given through hearing His holy and living Word - preaching. Not reading it, knowing it, memorizing it, or using it to prove why you're OK with the level of sin in your life, but by HEARING it. Listening in humility to be taught of His promises. Learning at His feet in meekness. Hearing itself is a gift HE gives to those who humbly seek after Him.

Romans 10:17 - “So then FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, and HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.”

All of His work in us today starts with His Word. That is what we have been studying thus far in this book. Christ is the author of our faith as well as the author of our salvation.

Hebrews 12:2 - “Looking unto Jesus the AUTHOR and finisher of our FAITH;”

Hebrews 5:9 - “And being made perfect, he became the AUTHOR of eternal SALVATION unto all them that OBEY HIM;”

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Christ is the one by whom we have received faith because He is the provider of the Word of Testimony that we believed, and He is the author of salvation since He both provided the means of faith by His Word and the means of redemption by His blood. He is also the finisher of it because it is by Him that all of the promises of God will be fulfilled.

2 Corinthians 1:20 – “For ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD IN HIM ARE YEA, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

As we know from our earlier principles of Christ’s testimony, if we are in FAITH of something, that means we are in expectation of a promise we haven’t yet seen fulfilled, which is Peter’s point. As we proceed through the next few verses, he makes this very clear.

1 Peter 1:6 – 9 – “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH, EVEN THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS”

When we understand that the faith we have is being tried in this life, and that salvation is to be received at the appearing of Jesus Christ, the whole context of the gospel and the many scriptures that declare these truths becomes clearer.

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If they already had their salvation, it wouldn't be by faith.... Faith speaks to promises believed and hoped for in confidence

Peter says that these saints need to persevere through these trials by FAITH as obedient children UNTIL they receive the thing that they have now only by FAITH - the salvation of their souls! If they already had their salvation, it wouldn't be by faith.... Faith speaks to promises believed and hoped for in confidence, not only to things that are already done and fulfilled. That is why He says twice in this passage the same thing we have seen in all our previous examples - that salvation is in the future and we are living in the faith and hope of it by His Word of promise. Now, we do see some places in scripture where salvation is spoken of in the present tense, but those are the minority of places. If you are interested in how those scriptures represent these truths, just know that we look more closely at them in chapter 6.

Here in 1 Peter, we have the things going on NOW (in the gap between the promise and its fulfillment, which is FAITH) which is the trial of our faith in the spoken Word of promise, and the fulfillment of that Word which will be brought to pass when Christ appears. When the faith we have in His Word of promise endures to the end, when He appears, then our faith will be found unto praise, honor, and glory and we will receive that very thing which we have known to be true by faith - the salvation of our souls.

Peter then says that the prophets have searched and enquired diligently concerning this grace that is to be brought unto us, and that they testified of these things by

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the Spirit of Christ, who is sent to men to declare the testimony of the Father. He then says that the grace we look for and in which we hope is to be brought unto us..... At the revelation of Jesus Christ - when He appears. Compare this passage with what we are told in Hebrews concerning these same things.

Hebrews 9:28 - “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME without sin UNTO SALVATION.”

Same exact concept and context concerning His appearing and our salvation. It is a promise that is given to men that will be received when Christ appears for those who look for Him - more on that here in a bit as well.

One thing we peculiarly begin to notice in light of these passages is that many of the passages we commonly discuss concerning salvation actually speak of it in a future tense, and we almost don't even notice them because we assume it means that salvation is given at that time rather than in the future at the appearing of Christ. As far as some of those common references that speak of salvation as a future promise, let's look at a few:

John 10:9 - “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he SHALL BE SAVED, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

Acts 2:21 - “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED.”

Acts 11:14 - “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house SHALL BE SAVED.”

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Acts 16:31 - “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou SHALT BE SAVED, and thy house.”

Romans 5:9 - 10 - “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, WE SHALL BE SAVED from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Romans 10:9 - “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED.”

So, in these and other places in scripture that are familiar to us, we can clearly see by examining them that the salvation spoken of is actually in a future tense. As we continue to study through the scriptures, I believe you will start to see why. This way of communicating the salvation of which scripture speaks is entirely consistent, and actually makes for a clearer understanding of our faith and doctrine when studied out.

The salvation of which scripture speaks is a promise to be given to a certain group of people - the saints. Without going into a full study of that topic, suffice it to say that the saints, or holy ones, are the body of believers that have accepted the testimony of Christ by faith all through time. This promise of salvation is spoken of by way of the testimony of Christ and is yet at this time future to us and an unfulfilled part of His testimony. That is why salvation is through faith - it is part of His testimony that hasn't been fulfilled yet, which is where faith is exercised. Salvation is a term that speaks of the deliverance and rescue that is promised to those of the household of faith. This promise

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is given to men to give them hope, or as this word communicates in Greek, an earnest expectation. Paul explains salvation in this way in his epistle to the Romans.

Romans 8:24 - 25 - For we are SAVED BY HOPE: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we WITH PATIENCE WAIT for it.”

Paul correlates this hope we have of salvation to the redemption of our bodies, which is the thrust of the whole plan of God concerning this age and His saints. He has prepared a city, and an entire new creation, which is specifically for His Son and the saints who have believed His testimony. We see in this chapter we are clearly waiting for this redemption of our body that is also a part of the promise and part of our being made fit for the inheritance.

Romans 8:22 - 23 - “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING FOR the adoption, to wit, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.”

Redemption is also a promise of God given by Christ that is yet unfulfilled at this time. We have received the Word of redemption in the form of a promise, and now live by faith waiting for the hope we have been given by His promise to be fulfilled. This redemption speaks of the salvation of which we are in hope, which Paul clearly says here. We are saved by hope, but we haven't yet received the promise, or we wouldn't be hoping for it. This hope of salvation according to His promise is absolutely essential to our faith and life on this earth now as a part of our spiritual armor.

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1 Thessalonians 5:8 - “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, THE HOPE OF SALVATION.”

If we are armed with this hope of salvation, it clearly serves to aid us in the trial of our faith now in this present evil world in the days of our flesh. There is a good reason for that! We will show as we proceed exactly why that is the case. For now, let’s fully comprehend exactly what the testimony of Christ is concerning this promise of salvation. It is laid up as a gift for those whose faith endures to the end. It is spoken to men as a Word of promise and is to be received by faith in the acceptable time - the gap between the promise and the fulfillment.

Psalms 69:13 - “But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in THE TRUTH OF THY SALVATION.”

The time for salvation is before the fulfillment of His Word is brought to pass. Just as in Noah’s day - the door was shut seven days before the rain began. Those who had opportunity for faith, had that opportunity while the message of future things was being declared through preaching, but when the time came for fulfillment of the Word of testimony, the door was shut, the preaching ceased, and the acceptable time of salvation had passed with its closing. It was the same in Lot’s day as well.

Genesis 19:10 - “But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and SHUT TO THE DOOR.”

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Noah pled with his generation to believe the testimony of Christ and repent while there was hope. Our ministry today is the same.

Luke 13:25 – “When once the master of the house is risen up, and HATH SHUT TO THE DOOR, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:”

The preaching of the kingdom of God is now sent through all the world not only to declare past testimony that is fulfilled concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but the gospel message that **MUST** carry the prophetic testimony of the coming appearing of the Lord for His saints, the destruction of the earth, the return of Christ as reigning King over the kingdom of God at the end of the age, the coming resurrection of the just and unjust, the creation of a new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, the promise of the New Jerusalem, the eternal glory and dominion of Christ with His saints, and the destruction of the unbelieving. All of these and other future promises of God in Christ are a part of the testimony of Christ that is yet unfulfilled. This unfulfilled testimony is where faith must operate in order to please God. We will demonstrate this again as we move along, but it is essential to our understanding of salvation.

Salvation is a promise to the saints who receive the testimony of Christ by faith. That salvation is to be received as a promise to give men hope and to preserve them in faith until the end. The salvation we look for is to be brought unto us at the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We can read the book of Revelation to see

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the future fulfillment of these promises we have now by faith.

Revelation 12:10 - “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME SALVATION, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

As we are told in Lamentations:

Lamentations 3:26 - “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly WAIT FOR THE SALVATION of the LORD.”

Or as we see in Psalms 119 in numerous places.

Psalms 119:41, 81, 123, 166, & 174 - “VAU. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.....CAPH. My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word..... Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness..... LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments..... I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.”

These and many other passages really make it clear for us that the psalmist was longing for the fulfillment of the promises he had believed by faith - which is how salvation works among men. Is your soul fainting as you wait in expectation for His promise? Are you continuing in the faith by consoling yourself in the hope of His Word? Many professors of the Christian faith today don't know what the promises mean and are content to live in this present world with its pleasures and riches. Many even fear death because they are holding on to this life as dear and

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precious. Where is the testimony of those who have believed the promises of God? Where is the hope of those who have believed the testimony of Christ and by virtue of faith in His Word have overcome the things this world offers to keep men drowned in its cares?

Revelation 12:11 - “And they OVERCAME him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH.”

Hebrews 2:14 - 15 - “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; AND DELIVER THEM WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH WERE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECT TO BONDAGE.”

Those who have received the testimony of Christ by faith and have an eternal inheritance to look forward to in the Kingdom of God, have no reason to live in love of their lives or this world. All our hopes and promises rest in Christ in the world to come and not in this present evil world. This is the hope given by the gospel of the kingdom being sent into the world. This is the hope that gives men opportunity for faith in Christ.

Colossians 1:21 - 23 - “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: IF YE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH grounded and settled, and BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature

which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

This FAITH in which we are to continue is not only a knowledge that God fulfilled His testimony in sending Christ to be crucified and resurrected; it lives in hope of His promises through the ASSURANCE given by the fulfilled testimony. The gospel of the kingdom is the body of doctrine, faith, and ordinances that pertain to the yet unfulfilled testimony of Christ. It is by FAITH in these things and obedience to that faith during the trial of faith in this life, that men are made partakers of the blood that Christ shed on Calvary’s cross. In *The Gospel of the kingdom*, I wrote:

So, what is the gospel of the kingdom? It is the gospel of Christ that speaks to us of His PROMISES. It is the gospel Paul preached among the Gentiles everywhere he went as he taught of all these things. It starts with the PROMISE made to Abraham, speaks of the work of Christ to CONFIRM that promise to Abraham, and follows through to the PROMISE NOW BEING PREACHED to those who will be blessed with faithful Abraham and receive the inheritance of the saints. It includes ALL the things concerning Jesus Christ, who was the Seed promised to Abraham when the gospel was preached to him. You will notice that Paul had taught the Gentiles at Galatia about Abraham, which gets into the inheritance of the Saints. We’ll discuss that in more detail later.

The gospel of the kingdom of God emphasizes the Work of God in Christ with an eye to the future - prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus. This will become clearer as we continue, but it looks ahead to His kingdom

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and the time when He will sit on His throne and give His reward unto the saints.

Matthew 25:31 - “WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE of his glory.”

Colossians 3:24 - “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

Revelation 22:12 - “And, behold, I come quickly; and my REWARD is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

All of this is predicated upon His work on the cross being completed as foretold, which was absolutely necessary to ever have the resurrection of the just and the kingdom that was promised.

Luke 17:24 - 25 - “For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. BUT FIRST HE MUST SUFFER many things, and be rejected of this generation.”

It speaks to us of the things beyond this age and looks to the “world to come” as scripture puts it. The suffering that came first was foretold by the law in a shadow, we now show forth in a shadow the communion at his table in the kingdom, and the gap between the events in the text of Luke 17:24 - 25 is the same gap that is in Isaiah 61:2 which Christ quoted partially during His earthly ministry.

Isaiah 61:2 - “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God...”

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The gap between the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord and day of vengeance continues to this day as we continue to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. One part is fulfilled. One part is future - accepted by faith. Both true in one man, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we see the fulfillment of the suffering Christ, and we look ahead by faith in the gospel to the kingdom now promised and waiting to be revealed in the Father's own time - the appointed time.

It is important to remember that the Word of the Lord to man ALWAYS carries announcements from God about what He will do in the future. Since God cannot lie, we know that the word PROMISE in scripture is God making ANNOUNCEMENTS in advance of what He WILL do. Not quite the way we use the word in our own time... This allows for our exercise of faith in Him. We believe that things we haven't seen will surely happen. The fact that the Word of the Lord came with an announcement to us saying that it would be so is reason enough to believe.

That is how Abraham was justified, is it not? God told him about the future, and Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. This is the substance of our faith in the gospel. God has declared things about His Son that are true, yet future to us. Have you believed His account of His son? He has declared Him to be Lord! Have you worshipped? He has declared Him to be Savior! Have you pled? He has declared Him to be the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world? Have you availed yourself of His blood? He has been declared to be King! Have you bowed the knee and entered His holy service? He is declared to be coming again! Are you watching?

*Luke 12:35 - 36 - “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto **MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD**, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find **WATCHING**: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”*

The gospel of the kingdom declares all the truth of the gospel that we know so well regarding the marvelous work done at Calvary, but doesn't leave that work relegated to the past. The gospel of Christ carries that work forward with a view to the risen Savior, His return and the inauguration of the kingdom he has long promised to His saints. Repeatedly in His teaching and parables Christ would speak of “entrance” into the kingdom. This is central to the faith we preach and is one way that God works in us by faith to preserve His saints, that we should not be led away with the error of the wicked or condemned with the world. As we get further into the book, we will look at more of the “entrance” spoken of in Christ's teachings and the “entrance” spoken of by the apostles in their epistles to the saints.

Many young people who have grown up in churches today do not have a grasp of this gospel and may have never even heard much of “the world to come” or the “inheritance of the saints”, but that ought not be the case. Our young people need a hope that speaks to things beyond this present world that they see - a hope rooted in the promise of God concerning things to come. We will have more to say on this later, but it is sound doctrine that keeps God's

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children faithfully and obediently waiting for His glorious appearing.

1 Peter 1:13 - 14 - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:”

Colossians 1:23 - “If ye CONTINUE IN THE FAITH grounded and settled, and BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

Watchfulness for His return is a required part of our obedience to the gospel. Continuing in the faith, being steadfast in hoping to the end rather than viewing the gospel and their own salvation as only things that happened so I can “go to heaven when I die”, is an important distinction of true Christian faith. Seeing the faith as only a means of “going to heaven when you die” is more of a pagan concept than a Biblical one. Too strong

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of a statement, you say? You will find many Christians today that have nothing more of faith than that offered in the “afterlife” religions of the Egyptians and other pagans in days gone by.

The gospel of the kingdom is no such thing. It equips us by faith to heed the call “follow Me”! Have you asked yourself the question, “When Jesus said to ‘follow me’, where was He going?” He tells us in His word:

John 16:28 - “... again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

We are sure of our Savior, certain of His Word, undaunted and unoffended by the trials of this life which we have learned to expect as pilgrims here, unattracted by the lures of the riches of this life as they grow dim in light of Him, and are unwavering in our faith of the good promises made to us in Christ by God our Savior.

We see the reward of blessing is given to those who endure in faith until the appointed time – Like Naaman. Christ used Naaman as an example of faith as well.

Luke 4:27 - “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”

In Naaman’s example, he was given a promise from the Word of the Lord spoken by the prophet Elijah. We know this was a Word from the Father given by His Son, the Word of God. The promise He had received involved some faith, some obedience, and some endurance until the appointed time – exact parallels to the gospel of the kingdom today. Let’s go over to the record of this scriptural memorial of God’s fulfilled testimony to see if it benefits our knowledge in any way.

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2 Kings 5:10 - 14 - “And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?”

Here we clearly see a commandment with a promise that required a faith that would endure until the appointed time of the Father to receive the blessing. There is a reason God did not heal Naaman the way Naaman wanted - because Naaman's way is not the Lord's way. It also would not have preserved the testimony of faith that Christ intended to reference to the Jews in years to come. We see that Naaman's promise required obedience to the faith. The promise is where the blessing came from, but only if Naaman yielded to the Word and endured to the end.

The appointed time for Naaman was 7 times - the number of completion in scripture. If Naaman had been offended after 5 or 6 times and quit, He would not have obtained the promise. He had to endure to the appointed time. This is an example for us who are required to endure to the appointed time as well - only our appointed time is the appearing of Christ. The promise is to those who endure to the end in our case.

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Mark 13:13 - “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall ENDURE UNTO THE END, the same shall be saved.”

This is why the apostles encouraged all who had professed FAITH in the promise to demonstrate obedience until the end and not cast away their confidence - because there is a GREAT REWARD!

Hebrews 10:35 - “CAST NOT AWAY therefore YOUR CONFIDENCE, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and HE that shall come WILL COME, and will not tarry.”

Again here, as in many other places, we continue to see the promise given to those who endure to the appointed time - the end. Here we see that the great reward is given to those who endure until the promised appearing of the Son of Man, who is to give us the reward and end of our faith - the salvation of our souls, as Peter says. The very next 2 verses point this out for us.

Hebrews 10:38 - 39 - “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.”

So, like Naaman, we are to endure to the appointed time to receive the blessing of reward. This is not a works salvation, as we will go on to examine, because we certainly know that is a lie as well. This is a faith that works out its own salvation through faith unto the end, which is what we are called to do. Faith comes first by the Word of

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God, and then obedience in love to the law of Christ as we walk in faith concerning things to come. The salvation is of promise and the testimony of Christ is unfailingly true. The question is not of its certainty, but of our partaking of it.

Naaman persevered because of the hope he had by promise. Was his a “works salvation”? Well, there were works involved, but only because he had received a promise. The hope we have by promise is the very strengthening force of the work of God to preserve us by faith. It is His Word dwelling in our hearts by faith that equips us to persevere. It is His power that strengthens and confirms us to the end by the power of the hope he has communicated to us by His Word. All of Naaman’s own ideas and works could not provide his “salvation”, which is what man’s religion has always attempted. However, having a promise from God taught him how he was to receive the “salvation” he sought. It was absolutely of God’s mercy and grace and made solely available to Naaman by promise. There are, however, requirements for man and that is certain. This is in scripture called “obedience to the faith”. It is a holy obedience to Christ that is the result of that man’s faith in the promised outcome to the one who heeds the holy call in faith. As James might say,

James 2:4 - “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”

The truth of the narrow way I hope is becoming clearer. It is by grace - God’s character and good-will that he demonstrates towards sinful man. It is of faith - Faith that is exercised in the unfulfilled testimony of prophetic

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promise. It involves obedience – there’s no getting out of that one.

Hebrews 5:9 - And being made perfect, he became the AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION unto all THEM THAT OBEY HIM;

The fact is that if we have believed Him concerning things to come, there will be things we are asked to do to be a witness of the things we expect by faith – a light yoke indeed, but a yoke to be certain. I hope to go into more detail in a coming chapter on obedience to the faith, but you’ll not escape the reality of Christ’s words by any theology you claim:

Luke 12:47 - “And that servant, which KNEW HIS LORD’S WILL, and PREPARED NOT HIMSELF, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

That verse ought to be enough to keep us walking in humility until His appearing... which is how we are called to obey the faith. When we strike out on the trail of faith, it is the obedience He asks for that truly searches out our hearts to make examination of whether we have really accepted the testimony as true. That is the point of Abraham’s trial that James speaks of in his epistle. Abraham had been told of a future by the Word of the Lord and then given a trial of faith to expose his persuasion of the promise.

James 2:21 - 22 - Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

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Some will say then that is salvation by works! No, it is salvation by promise. When we get to the chapter on obedience it will hopefully be clearer. As Christ says, His yoke is not grievous. Obedience sounds scary to sinners though. More on that later.

1 Chronicles 28:9 - “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for THE LORD SEARCHETH ALL HEARTS, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”

This may feel a little uncomfortable, I am sure, in the modern context of things we hear. The truth is that those who have by faith received the testimony will be saved, but the Lord knows our hearts are deceitful and has provided a means of obedience to the faith so that men can search their own hearts and by His Word know the truth. There are many professors of faith who have no godly fruit by which to be known. There are many who say they believe, only later to turn back to the world out of which they have been called. There are many who have deceived themselves that faith only requires assent to the past fulfilled work of Christ and now live out their days as they please, expecting to “go to heaven when they die”. We also see there are many who know the Lord at the judgment that are not granted the inheritance promises in spite of what they knew.

Matthew 7:21 - “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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

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prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

There is a difference between doing many works that men see as wonderful, and doing the will of the Father as revealed in His testimony by Christ. Naaman had the same question in his mind, after all, as he was judging after the appearance of things.

2 Kings 5:12 - Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

We need to understand the faith that speaks to the revealed testimony of the Father – which is what Christ is teaching. This scriptural teaching of our service to Him in the earth as a witness to the true and heavenly things we live in hope of, also allows for clear preaching of a Godly warning to those who take the local church all too lightly, this is more and more common in the great falling away from the faith foretold by scripture.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a FALLING AWAY first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

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This apostasy isn't only immorality and the like, although that will accompany it. It is the falling away from the FAITH (the substance of things hoped for) in favor of many things in this present world such as:

- applying the Word of God and His promised blessings to only this natural life to improve everyone's life experience.
- departing from the observance of the doctrines and ordinances as committed to us in scripture.
- leaving behind the watchfulness and expectancy of the Lord's people for His appearing.
- exchanging faith in His Word for a superstitious belief in His power to "bless" us in ways we choose.
- the inclination to have an open ear for fables and stories but no appetite for the Word of God.
- the use of our mouth to call Jesus Lord, but our lack of obedience to the Lordship He would seek to exercise over us by His Word.

If we are only "looking unto Jesus" as an example of HOW to live as a good person, we have entirely missed His preaching and doctrine.

There are many other spiritually deceiving hazards of that sort. Kind of like in Jesus day with the Pharisees - just "doing what the Bible says" because it helps us respect the marginalized, care for the poor, tend to the sick, love sacrificially, serve one another, be a good spouse or employee, feel more fulfilled, and many other "wonderful works" such as these. But where is the FAITH? Those are only

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the works of men. Where is the HOPE that is a work of God? The EXPECTATION of the fulfillment of His Word. Where is the proclamation of the PROMISES? If we are only “looking unto Jesus” as an example of HOW to live as a good person, we have entirely missed His preaching and doctrine.

Jesus didn't ask if there would be religion and works in His name when He returned. Actually, He taught there would be great deceptions in His name before He comes! What He requires is an expecting people!!! People of FAITH!!! People who have believed His Word and testimony and are walking in the light of it!!!

We could go on at length with these manifestations of the corrupted minds of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Let us humbly seek Him who can save our souls and submit in obedience to the faith as we live in hope of the promises He has given. This is the truth of the grace of God.

1 Timothy 6:11 - 14 - “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, UNTIL THE APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:”

Of the things we have spoken, here is a brief summary so far. God has spoken His testimony by Christ. Men are required to believe it in the gap before its fulfillment to be partakers of its promises by faith and to be

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justified in His sight. Salvation is a reward given to those who endure by faith to the end – which is the appearing of Christ who is bringing the grace unto us we have hoped for according to His word. Those who fall on sleep before His appearing having this hope in them, are to be resurrected and made partakers of the promise as well. As of right now, they who have died with His testimony in their hearts by faith are in His presence and awaiting the fulfillment of these same promises they expect to inherit.

Psalm 16:8 - 9 - “I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: MY FLESH ALSO SHALL REST IN HOPE.”

1 Thessalonians 4:14 - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

The reason we need to understand salvation as a promise becomes clear when we understand Paul’s warning to Timothy. When we start preaching things that are intended to be promises of God to give men faith as if they are already here or past, it is destructive to faith and leads to more ungodliness. The “gap” has been removed, and the opportunity for exercising faith and having hope in His promise vanishes with it. Certainly, we can see this is the case with salvation. How many people profess faith in Christ saying they “are saved” and yet lie dormant in His service, are unfaithful to His assembly, are lackadaisical in their study, seldom read the Word, strive over trivial affairs of this life, bask in the pleasures of this world and its entertainments, and many other such things that are contrary to sound doctrine, and yet cling to an idea that they “got saved” because they prayed a prayer or believe “in Jesus”.

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Let's be clear, salvation is a gift of God to the household of faith who have trusted in His Word and promise. Those saints who have believed and been obedient to the testimony they have received. There are clear warnings to the vain man who has deceived himself.

James 2:19 - 20 - "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

Galatians 6:7 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for IN DUE SEASON we shall reap, if we faint not."

Salvation is clearly taught as a promise of God in the scriptures, and we have only scratched the surface so far in this book. Men are required to hold fast their FAITH in His Word of promise to the end to be made partakers of the promises they have professed to believe. That sounds strange to some who have concerns with doctrines that lead men to doubt their salvation or eternal security, of which I am one. It is actually just the opposite. This truth serves to build faith. It certainly doesn't make it shipwreck as is so common today. For those who have accepted the promise of God by faith and are living in hope and expectation of His promises, the more time that passes the more true and real His promises are to us. Faith increases. Expectation grows. Obedience increases. Love abounds. The light of hope burns more brightly. The idea

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of casting away our confidence becomes more preposterous. Let me attempt to here explain.

Before I demonstrate by way of “parable”, let’s look at some of the scriptures that clearly admonish professing believers to endure in their faith.

Mark 13:3 - “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall ENDURE UNTO THE END, the same SHALL BE SAVED.”

Colossians 1:22 - 23 - “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: IF YE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

Hebrews 3:6 - “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of THE HOPE firm UNTO THE END.”

Hebrews 3:14 - “For we are made partakers of Christ, IF WE HOLD the beginning of our confidence STEDFAST UNTO THE END;”

Hebrews 6:11 - “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTO THE END:”

1 Peter 1:13 - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

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Just like Naaman’s promise, there was obedience until the appointed time that was required. There are many other places in scripture that teach these same principles and truths. I want you to look at these in the light of the previous passages we have seen, that teach us that we “shall be saved”, that we are waiting to receive the end of our faith even the salvation of our souls, that we have the hope of salvation, that we have received the word of salvation, that we are the heirs of salvation, and that Christ is appearing the second time for those that look for Him unto salvation. Here we have several admonishments to the churches and saints that they need to endure in their faith to the end as well, which precisely matches Christ’s own words and teaching to endure and overcome. This is what the trial of our faith is that Peter speaks of and that Paul admonishes the saints to press forward in.

1 Timothy 6:12 - “Fight the good fight of FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE, whereunto thou art also CALLED, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

Timothy had professed faith in the promise and is being encouraged by Paul to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life – which is also a promise to be received in the world to come.

Titus 1:2 - “In HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE, which God, that cannot lie, PROMISED before the world began;”

Titus 3:7 - “That being justified by his grace, we should be made HEIRS according to the HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.”

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1 John 2:25 - “And this is the PROMISE that he hath promised us, even ETERNAL LIFE.”

Mark 10:30 - “But he SHALL RECEIVE an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE.”

The reason for Paul’s encouragement to Timothy is that even in the early days there were those who “walked no more with Him”, “went back from following Him”, or “went out from us”. Paul had witnessed this in his own ministry as well.

2 Timothy 4:10 - “For Demas HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”

The importance of this cannot be glazed over. Our salvation depends on it.

Hebrews 10:38 - 39 - “Now the JUST shall LIVE by FAITH: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who DRAW BACK UNTO PERDITION; but of them that BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.”

What a verse we have here! Clearly, there is a faith that is vain and a faith that endures to the end unto the salvation of the soul. Christ is only the author of one of those. He is the author of the One True Faith. The kind He gives by His Word. He is only the finisher of one of those too. I really want to explore this as this is the primary point of understanding the promised gift of salvation. Since many have taught and believed that we have salvation

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already, there are those who are rather dismissive of their adherence and obedience to the faith – which Christ warns against for a reason. Further, because the gospel is preached to “save people” nowadays rather than teach them the truth of the testimony of Christ so that it can be believed, many professing believers have little understanding of the hope of the inheritance that is promised to those who believe and endure to the end. The Word all works as one and when you fail to rightly divide it, it is destructive in all sorts of ways and increases ungodliness.

2 Timothy 2:17 - 18 - “And THEIR WORD WILL EAT AS DOTHS A CANKER: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

This understanding of the gospel and the Word of God is not a works salvation; it is a salvation promise. Those who believe the promise will be obedient by virtue of the power of the hope they have received – the very

words that are received are Spirit and Life.

The price was entirely paid by Christ on Calvary's cross where He shed His blood a ransom for many, and the gospel preaching by which it is revealed is of His Word, Spirit, and power. Man has no hope for salvation apart from this Word of promise.

Hebrews 6:18 - 19 - “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE SET BEFORE US: Which

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hope we have as **AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL**, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;”

1 Peter 1:13 - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **HOPE TO THE END** for the **GRACE** that is **TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST;**”

The price was entirely paid by Christ on Calvary’s cross, where He shed His blood a ransom for many, and the gospel preaching by which it is revealed is of His Word, Spirit, and power. Man has no hope for salvation apart from this Word of promise. What is in view here is a promise that requires actual **FAITH** to partake of. A faith that does some things in this life out of the holy expectancy created in their hearts by the **Word of Promise** from God Himself.

1 Peter 1:23 - “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD**, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

James 1:21 - “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and **RECEIVE** with meekness **THE ENGRAFTED WORD**, which is able to save your souls.”

A faith fully persuaded of things it has never seen, is what is needed. A faith that is willing to do what would be irrational to anyone who didn’t know or believe these promises.

1 Peter 4:3 - 4 - “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein **THEY**

THINK IT STRANGE THAT YE RUN NOT WITH THEM to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.”

All of this is entirely consistent with how the word of testimony by Christ works among men and is clearly set forth in the parable of the sower as Christ taught kingdom doctrine to His apostles. In another book titled, *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, I shared these thoughts:

“The parable of the sower brings all this teaching home as it pertains to the gospel of the kingdom.

Matthew 13:18 - 19 - “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

This parable continues to be useful in our study in other ways, but here we notice that the word sown is the “word of the kingdom”. We then go on to see all the adversaries that are against the fruitfulness of the Word in people’s lives. The adversary without, Satan, catching away the seed. The adversary within, our own nature and stony ground of the heart. And the adversaries among, the world and its system and values that keep us blinded to the truth of God’s Word and thus in bondage to this present life. None of these first three cases of seed sown overcome or endure, which are qualities unique to His workmanship and His children.

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1 John 5:4 - "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Matthew 13:23 - "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word [of the kingdom v.19], and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

As Christ was teaching those who were demanding to know WHEN it would appear, he taught them that it wasn't to come to them by observation because it is an inheritance promised to those who are in hope of receiving it by his promise through faith. He then makes the statement that "the kingdom of God is within you". Now we could wrestle with this in all sorts of imaginative ways, which some do, but there's no need to identify this as anything other than what we have already been taught - the seed of the Word of God! If the kingdom rests within us by having received the word of the Christ concerning the coming kingdom by faith, then we can clearly understand the statement made by Christ as DOCTRINE and not THEOLOGY. This also makes clearer for us the statement we looked at earlier regarding receiving the kingdom:

Mark 10:15 - "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not RECEIVE the kingdom of God as a little child, he SHALL NOT ENTER therein."

The Word of God concerning the kingdom, the seed, was already in them because it had been heard, the question is what kind of hearer are we? The parable of the sower gives us four different kinds of hearers. Hearers that have the Word snatched away before they can understand by the enemy without - Satan. Hearers in whom the Word

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doesn't mature because of the **enemy within** - the stones of the heart of our own carnal nature. Hearers in whom the Word is choked to death by the **enemies among** - the present world and its system of cares, riches, and pleasures. The fourth example in the parable is the only one who overcomes the world by receiving the word in faith and hoping unto the end as we have been commanded. Christ admonishes many times about hearing because hearing is how we "receive" the things of God:

Luke 8:18 - "Take heed therefore how ye hear..."

It is really clarifying to accept what the scripture teaches on this because then Christ immediately goes on to say to those whom He had just taught about the kingdom of God (His Word) being within them:

Luke 17:22 - 25 - "And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

Immediately after telling them these things about the kingdom being within them (by His Word), he then goes on to discuss and teach concerning the promise and hope of the coming of the Son of Man! We see the fulfillment of the Word of the gospel of the kingdom being related to the return of the Son of Man in many other places in scripture as well. This clarifies that the "kingdom of God" (also called "kingdom of Heaven by Matthew, likely for the sake of the Jewish crowd he was writing to) is not

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only referring to the supreme and sovereign rule of God the Father in the heavens (that fact is not and has not been a mystery of any sort!), but looks to the time in which He will reign by His Son Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ assuming the throne of glory will be the kingdom that is “of God” and not “of men”. For this reason, Christ refers to the coming of the Son of Man as the kingdom of God that is promised to come and hoped for by MEN - well, at least those of faith.”

The parable of the sower teaches exactly what we know to be true from our previous study in this book on the topic of salvation. Those who are faithful to the end according to the hope of the gospel, will receive the promises of which they have been made partakers by faith. Salvation is among those

Salvation is among those promises given by faith and is a reward to those who are faithful to the end according to His testimony. Salvation is not a certificate you receive that authenticates your membership in heaven’s club.

promises given by faith and is the gift of God to those who believe Him. He has promised to preserve those who have believed by the power of God through faith to the end according to His testimony. Salvation is not a certificate you receive that authenticates your membership in heaven’s club. Nor is it a confidence in our works to save us. Cain and Abel both had works. One was in faith of the promise and obedience to that faith and the other was disobedient rebellion of doing things his own way. Every saint of faith in scripture has works of obedience to that faith that pleased God. That is because obedience from the heart is

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a requirement, which means a man must first have faith towards God before that man can do anything to please Him.

Salvation is a Word God has spoken concerning those who believe the testimony of Christ – which will be fulfilled in due season. In the meantime, we can expect a trial of the faith we profess. That’s also a promise. This trial is to teach and chastise our hearts so that we might not be destroyed with the world but delivered from it by the power of God. Each chastening teaches us to hope in His Word of promise rather than this life.

1 Corinthians 11:32 - “But when we are judged, WE ARE CHASTENED of the Lord, THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED with the world.”

Before we proceed, this may be a good time to use an example. Paul teaches that we are justified by faith, and then James wants to make sure we know that faith without works is dead. We saw this a little bit at work in Naaman’s story as well as Rahab, Noah, Abraham, and so on. We need to understand the truth of this narrow way.

When Rahab had faith in the promise of God to give the land of Canaan to Israel, she hid their spies and sent them out in peace. When Noah received the Word of promise, he built an ark to the saving of his house. When the Ninevites received the prophetic testimony of Christ, they repented and changed their ways. When Naaman received the testimony, he obeyed in faith to the full measure commanded and came up clean. When the Word of the Lord is given to men, and is received by faith, there is a change in course that corresponds to the truth received – the answer of a good conscience towards God, if you will. We have been given the preaching of the Word of the kingdom of God – what has changed for us? James

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would ask, what are you doing in this present time that shows the faith in this word concerning things to come?

If the present world is to be destroyed, why lay up treasures here? If Christ is heir of all things and has received the dominion of God from the Father, why aren't you listening to His holy commands? If we are commanded to observe the assembling of ourselves unto Christ as part of the doctrine of our faith so that we can be a testimony to the world of our expected gathering unto Christ in the future, why would we disregard His will? If He has manifested His will that we love one another, why would we continue striving out of a love for ourselves? If He has promised to reward us richly in our eternal inheritance in accordance with our faithfulness in service here and now, wouldn't we live more richly unto Him? If we are to reign in His kingdom in the world to come, would we cling to this life as preciously as we do? You see, in every aspect of the kingdom we preach, there are corresponding actions we would find reasonable if we held to its' doctrine in fierce expectancy.

Colossians 3:23 - 24 - "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."

The doctrines of baptism and the Lord's supper are given to churches in this age to preserve the truth of the heavenly congregation of saints as a part of the doctrine of the faith - because we look forward to those promises that they declare in expectancy, just as the ordinances of the old

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testament congregation looked forward to Christ's first coming. This teaches us the importance of observing baptism properly as well as observing "closed" communion rather than "open" in the church. That is because the doctrine itself is to picture the heavenly counterpart it represents - unless you are a member of the congregation in the resurrection, you won't be partaking at the Lord's table. I get into more detail of these things in *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, but they are inextricably woven with our stewardship of the faith we profess.

Let me share by way of example how this might look from our perspective in order to show how faith and works cooperate according to the law of faith:

Suppose a school teacher says to his children in class, "I am going to be out of the room for a while, so I want you to each complete your math assignments and then begin reading the book of Genesis. Be looking for me when I return because I am going to need some help bringing some things in the room. If each of you complete the assignments and will meet me at the door when you see me coming, then I will give each of you a special gift."

Now, if we examine this situation, would we say that the gift is of works? Is the gift of faith? The gift is spoken of as a promise and is only available by the power and grace of the one who gave the promise, but also involves obedience to the promise in faith by the students. A trial of their faith if you will. Any student who doesn't believe the teacher won't bother doing the work. Any student who thinks the gift likely isn't worth it will not do the work. Others may believe the promise, start down a good path only to get distracted or discouraged and give up on the promise deciding it isn't worth the trouble. Still others may

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get so busy working in pride so they can brag about getting more done than the others that they lose sight of the promise and fail to watch. One thing we know from human nature, those not working and living rebelliously will attempt to get the obedient kids to abandon their work as well. If they don't succeed in this attempt, they will deride them and make fun of their efforts... Finally, we may have some who faithfully carry out their work while diligently watching for the teacher's return. When he returns, they are ready through faithfulness in watching and obedience to the commandment. They eagerly meet the teacher at the door with high EXPECTATIONS. All of this was set in motion by nothing more than a word of promise from the teacher.

The gift is the teacher's to give by his own grace and power. The teacher chose before the promise was ever spoken to give it to those who believed and fulfilled his will. As far as the students are concerned, each student chose their own responses to the situation and will receive according to their response. Really, it's pretty close to the parable our Lord gives in Mark 13.

Mark 13:34 - "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

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Sleeping is the spiritual opposite of watching – a people expectant for their Lord’s return is part of the obedience. Without faith in the promise, our work is of no use. An empty faith in the promise that does no work is vain. These are both ditches on the

Without faith in the promise, our work is of no use. An empty faith in the promise that does no work is vain. These are both ditches on the sides of this narrow way.

sides of this narrow way. Likewise, confidence in our own ways and works is of no use without having a promise. A faithful steward is what is wanted. A man who has FAITH in His Lord concerning His Word. A Word of promise. An exercise of faith. A time of fulfillment for the Word at His appearing.

Psalm 31:23 - “O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for THE LORD PRESERVETH THE FAITHFUL, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.”

Matthew 25:21 - “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and FAITHFUL SERVANT: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: ENTER THOU into the joy of thy lord.”

1 Corinthians 4:2 - “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found FAITHFUL.”

Now, our parable may fall short in the area of one thing. Our teacher cannot know the hearts and minds of the students to judge them properly as Christ can. However, let’s look at these scriptures below in light of this “parable” that I attempted to share.

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Luke 12:35 - “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, THEY MAY OPEN UNTO HIM IMMEDIATELY. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”

Luke 12:46 - “But and IF THAT SERVANT SAY IN HIS HEART, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and WILL APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS.”

We also see clearly in the Lord’s parables that He will judge His servants. When we look at the promise of the gospel, there are two clear things we need to see. Firstly, there is **prophetic testimony** that teaches us of His will concerning the future - that gives us light concerning this life. We now can see afar off and know the end from the beginning. A light to our path as it were.

Secondly, He gives us His **commandments** to show us His will concerning the present - that gives light to this life in the more immediate sense. A lamp unto our feet you might say. With both his testimony and His commandments, we have everything we need to carry out the work of our Lord as faithful stewards while we wait for His appearing. As he said, the ones whom he finds doing those things faithfully when He appears are to be rewarded, and

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those who knew the Truth of His will and testimony, but did nothing with them, will be given their portion with the unbelieving.

Luke 12:47 - “And that servant, which KNEW HIS LORD’S WILL, and PREPARED NOT HIMSELF, neither DID ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

Preparing ourselves comes from a knowledge of what He has promised to do in the future - His testimony. Obedience to His will concerns our activities in the present that are a byproduct of faith - His commandments. There is a reason our Lord Jesus taught His disciples of an imminent return.

Mark 13:35 - “WATCH YE THEREFORE: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:”

And a reason He also taught the disciples who had believed in the promised kingdom to endure until the end through all the trials of faith.

Matthew 10:22 - “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but HE THAT ENDURETH TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED.”

Many would be allured back to the world with its pleasures and riches.

Luke 21:34 - “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

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Many would be offended when the promises weren't fulfilled in a time frame of their own thinking. Many expected the promises to be received in this life and did not understand the mystery of the world to come.

John 6:61 - 62 - "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

Christ was cautioning His disciples to not be offended concerning the promised kingdom of which He had been teaching them, and of which they had believed by His testimony. When the kingdom promises they believed didn't come to pass, and He went away, would they continue in faith of those things they had heard and believed? The temptation to doubt and abandon the faith is real.

Luke 8:14 - "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and ARE CHOKED WITH CARES AND RICHES AND PLEASURES OF THIS LIFE, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Many would be offended through difficulty of circumstance. The temptation to give up on the faith in the promised kingdom is also tragic.

2 Peter 2:20 - 22 - "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered

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unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

Many also held to the certainty of the things they had been persuaded of until the very end - these are the overcomers. These are the faithful. The heirs of the promises. The saints of God.

Acts 14:21 - 22 - “And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and EXHORTING THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, and that we must THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Psalm 119:33 - “HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I SHALL KEEP IT UNTO THE END.”

Psalm 119: 112 - “I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, EVEN UNTO THE END.”

Revelation 2:26 - “And he that overcometh, and KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END, to him will I give power over the nations:”

Chapter 6 – Preaching the Word

In this chapter, we will get down to brass tacks, so to speak. I have done my best to prepare you for this chapter by laying the scriptural groundwork of these principles:

- The testimony of Christ in declaring the things of the Father
- The prophetic nature of Christ's testimony to man which gives opportunity for faith
- The purpose of God in leaving a gap between His spoken Word and its fulfillment
- The work of Christ on Calvary's cross to shed the blood necessary to pay the price demanded for the sins of those who have believed His promises.
- The nature of salvation as a promise of God through Christ's testimony to men. This Word is now preached in the acceptable time, the gap between spoken word and fulfillment.

With this much under our belts, let's apply this knowledge to our own time and preaching to see if we can come to wisdom concerning the truth of salvation. Clearly, there is a misunderstanding of salvation and the gospel in our world today. And this is not new or surprising, as we are told by Christ and the Apostles it would be so. We also know in the last days, there is a great deception coming on the world in His name that would deceive even the very elect if it were possible.

Matthew 24:24 - "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

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The preaching of the future kingdom after the destruction of this present world safeguards against these deceptions. There are and will continue to be, however, many who apply the scriptures and the gospel to only the

blessings we can know in this life. You've heard it all before... If you do this, you'll be blessed. If you do that you'll be blessed. Success, prosperity, health, and more is to be yours if you are "blessed" by God. You know the drill. All commonly applied to the temporal things of this life. All of this world's treasures that the unregenerate heart desires above the knowledge of God. So much so, that in the future deception it will sweep away most of humanity into thinking the peace and prosperity being achieved by men is a "blessing" from God. Don't look now, but the deception that applies Jesus blessings only to the things of this present world is already sweeping Christianity around the globe in large part.

Don't look now, but the deception that applies Jesus' blessings only to the things of this present world is already sweeping the globe.

All of that said, if we apply what we know to many modern salvation approaches, we see some clear differences. You won't find teaching and preaching in the Bible by the apostles that focuses on telling people they need to "get saved", or even asking them if they "are saved". What you do find is preachers sent with the declaration of the completed testimony that had been fulfilled to give witness to men of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to declare the testimony of Christ and to proclaim the message of the gospel of the kingdom. As they preached these things, they would declare the hope of these promises to men who

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believed and accepted the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus and His coming kingdom, and would warn men that they needed to believe these truths so that they would be saved from the wrath to come. Then the apostles would teach those who had believed the ways of the Lord concerning the doctrine of faith and they would give them the commandments of our Lord for obedience to that faith.

Acts 8:12 - “But when they believed Philip PREACHING the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women.”

What that means is very simply this; believing facts that are true about what God has already fulfilled is not the faith He is looking for. It is necessary, but not complete enough for people to DO anything BY FAITH. A message that teaches “faith” only in what is past requires no obedience to the faith. Faith must convey testimony that is future so that the recipient who believes the testimony can have hope in some promises. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Additionally, this hope must be in a promise Christ has given if He is the author and finisher of it.

Follow closely here. Using the principles and understanding we have of how God justifies men, what kind of faith is needed today to be an heir of salvation? Believing that Christ died? That is a start towards knowledge. Belief that He was raised? Again, fulfilled testimony that gives knowledge. What we are called to do is to use the knowledge of these things to have FAITH in what the Lord Jesus Christ taught and spoke of concerning things to come. That is what is required to be justified by faith.

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Well then, a person must have accepted the testimony of Christ – prophecy. This is the pattern of faith. This is the reason the gospel of the coming kingdom of our Lord was sent into the world – to announce its arrival to men before it comes, so that they can exercise faith towards God and prepare themselves according to the teachings Christ gave. Even the thief on the cross demonstrated this faith in the unfulfilled prophetic testimony of Christ while he was dying on the cross.

Luke 23: 42 – 43 – “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me WHEN THOU COMEST into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Now that is faith! Here this thief was watching the Lord Jesus die on a cross in front of his own eyes and acknowledges the truth of the witness he had heard and believed that this same Jesus was to reign as King! What a testimony of faith that is to us! He wasn't offended by what he saw with his natural eyes because he had faith to see the truth! Faith taught him that the Word concerning the kingdom that Christ had been preaching was still to be given even though he was watching Christ die right next to him. This same faith in the prophetic testimony of Christ was, and is, at the center of true gospel preaching from the time of John the Baptist until this very day because it has yet to be fulfilled. It is a promise. By teaching men of the promises of God before He has fulfilled them in Christ, men have opportunity for faith.

Matthew 4:23 – “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”

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Matthew 9:35 - “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and **PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Mark 1:14 - “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**,”

Luke 4:43 - “And he said unto them, I must **PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD** to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.”

Luke 8:1 - “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, **PREACHING AND SHEWING THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**: and the twelve were with him,”

Luke 9:1 - 2 - “Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he **SENT THEM TO PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and to heal the sick.”

Acts 1:3 - “To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and **SPEAKING OF THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**:”

Acts 8:12 - “But when they believed Philip **PREACHING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Acts 19:8 - “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and

PERSUADING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Acts 20:25 - “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone **PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, shall see my face no more.”

Acts 28:23 - “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom **HE EXPOUNDED AND TESTIFIED THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.”

Acts 28:30 - “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, **PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

The preaching of the coming kingdom represents the unfulfilled portion of Christ’s testimony today. We see the final announcement of its arrival on earth in Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:10 - “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **NOW IS COME salvation, and strength, and THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD**, and the power of

his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

The fulfilled testimony of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection stand as an eternal memorial of the grace of God in fulfilling His promise to redeem those who will believe in the promises of the Father in Christ.

You might have just noticed that this announcement in Revelation 12:10 is the same announcement of the promise of salvation coming as well. That is because both promises rest in the appearing of Christ. As this message concerning things to come is received by faith in the hearts of men, they too are justified in the sight

of God like all the saints who have gone before that believed Christ’s prophetic testimony. The fulfilled testimony of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection stand as an eternal memorial of the grace of God in fulfilling His promise to redeem those who will believe in the promises of the Father in Christ. It is the centerpiece of all history and has made reconciliation possible between God and man to the glory of God! Its matchless wonder will stand eternally as a witness to the glory, grace, riches, and the strength of God our Savior who gave His life a ransom for many. However, this fulfilled testimony is a fulfillment of the law and the promise to redeem his people, and apart from the preaching of the kingdom there is no promise that can give hope and call us to obedience to the faith.

If a person believes Jesus died and rose again, are they “saved”? Well, they can claim the promise of

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salvation but only if they have some hope in some promises that stem from that belief. Those promises that give hope must lie in the Word of God for Christ to be the author of them. We need to understand and believe that by His resurrection He has been made Lord and Christ. We need to understand and believe it is Jesus we call upon for deliverance as risen Lord and Savior. We need to know and believe it is Jesus who has been given the kingdom of God over which He is to reign. We need to know and believe He is returning for those who are in faith of these things. We must by faith begin to call upon His name and accept the witness of the truth concerning Him - that He is nigh unto every one of us. We notice also with this question above that “saved” is implied as already taking place -we need to know that the word of salvation is sent into the world to be a Word of promise. The question is will they be saved when the salvation spoken of is fulfilled in the process of time? None of us have been saved yet as far as the fulfilled testimony of Christ is concerned in time. The grace that is to be brought unto us at His appearing is what we wait for. In the meantime, we have been sealed unto salvation by the Holy Spirit of promise. Whether or not we have His Spirit is the real question for us today.

This was the thrust of the discussion in Acts 15 concerning gentile believers. The question was one of the validity of the promise of salvation given to the gentiles and whether or not they would become partakers of the salvation that was promised if they had not been circumcised.

Acts 15:1 - “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, YE CANNOT BE SAVED.”

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This led to the decision by the church and the Holy Ghost to not burden the gentiles with the yoke of the law of Moses. Now, we gentiles enjoy the grace of Christ apart from that yoke. We possess this promise of salvation that has been preached unto us by faith.

Acts 13:26 - “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is THE WORD OF THIS SALVATION sent.”

Secondly, the testimony of Christ concerning things to come is where faith must lie in order to exercise obedience to the faith. Even the apostle Paul’s admonition to Timothy to not be ashamed of the testimony of Christ makes little sense in the modern context to most people.

2 Timothy 1:8 - “Be not thou therefore ASHAMED OF THE TESTIMONY of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

What Paul is saying is that we are living in the full expectation of Christ’s coming kingdom, and that we are to be fully persuaded to live in faith of the fulfillment of that hope - which the world finds laughable. Even a recent President of the United States, thatahem.... Christian nation..... made a joke mocking the idea that the Biblical end of days is real. The preaching of the kingdom of God and of Christ is the message that is sent into the world to sanctify a people that live in expectation of their God - which is what the Bible calls a people ready for the Lord. The gospel is declared to keep men in faith and expectation of the testimony being fulfilled and obedience to the commandments of Christ in hope of his promise. These truths are a safeguard to us as spiritual armor.

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You cannot make sense of the scriptures with a gospel that only teaches you to believe that Jesus died and rose so you can “get saved” and “go to heaven when you die”. If you could, how can you make sense of scriptures that clearly teach there are many who will know the truth of the fulfilled testimony but lacked FAITH in the promises – those who were never delivered in their hearts from a love of this present world. You know, like Lot’s wife... That was the problem with the children of Israel who could not enter Canaan because they had NO FAITH even though they knew the history of what God had done. Same with the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees of Jesus day who all readily acknowledged the truth of what God had done by Moses but had NO FAITH in the promise of a coming redeemer. This pitfall is not new to our modern times. So too today many acknowledge the truth of Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection with NO FAITH in the fulfillment of the promised kingdom or obedience to that faith.

How can we even know what overcoming in the faith means without these promises that give us such strong hope?

Revelation 3:2 - 5 - “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. HE THAT OVERCOMETH, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but

I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

Being an over-comer, like we are called to be, is having a faith that endures to the end. A faith that is not whimsical. A faith that is committed to the reality of the promises to which Jesus has born

Jesus here told the church at Sardis that only a few of the entire congregation would walk in white as saints! How can that be?!

witness and testimony. A faith that lives in full expectation of its fulfillment and soon arrival. Jesus here told the church at Sardis that only a few of the entire congregation would walk in white as saints! How can that be?! Did they not all believe that Christ died? Did they not all believe that he was buried? Did they not all believe that He was raised? It is inconceivable that they did not all believe the same things about what had been fulfilled to be in the congregation at all. Then how can this be? The question is one of faith. Faith concerning the things to come that are declared by the testimony of Jesus is the only kind of faith that is able to be tried or capable of producing obedience of any kind. The kind of faith that believes in an acceptable time - between the promise and the fulfillment. Christ is already crucified. Christ is already raised. Those truths must be believed by faith as well, but we cannot walk BY FAITH apart from the future unfulfilled testimony.

From what the Apostle Paul shares in Romans 10, we can see from a study of the passage that it is quite consistent with his teaching on salvation.

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Romans 10:9 - That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth THE LORD JESUS, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart THAT GOD HATH RAISED HIM from the dead, thou SHALT BE SAVED.

Even here, we see salvation as a promise in the future. One important thing to remember is that Paul didn't write an epistle that was 1 verse long. This statement is made in chapter 10 of an epistle that is 16 chapters long. By the time he writes this statement, he has already covered everything else we have studied in this book, so in context there is an UNDERSTANDING of what it means to confess the LORD JESUS and to believe that HE is RAISED from the DEAD.

This verse speaks to at least six specific aspects of biblical gospel doctrine, which are: The title of Lord given to Christ by God the Father, the person and identity of Jesus as the Son of God, the death of Jesus to atone for sin, the power of His resurrection life, the truth of the salvation promise He gave, and our access into this grace by faith.

By the time Paul speaks of the gospel in the language we see in chapter 10, it is clear he did not intend for these statements to be viewed as a one-stop shop for “soul-winning” as it is sometimes viewed today, but rather as a synopsis, or summary statement, of the gospel message itself. A sort of capstone that serves to represent the essential truth of the entirety of the gospel message concerning Jesus Christ. In the prior chapters he has discussed the resurrection 10 times, the death of Christ 11 times, and the power of Christ as Lord at least 7 times. He does so to teach and convey the various aspects of gospel doctrine concerning the identity, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ. All the while, he constantly

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references what has been fulfilled already and the implications of that fulfillment as it relates to promises we have for the future.

If we quickly summarize the journey through Romans, we will see a clear correlation to the salvation promise of which he speaks and how faith works in us according to what has been fulfilled and what is yet future to us by the testimony of Christ. Paul states in Romans 1 that it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that declares Him to be the Son of God.

Romans 1:3 - 4 - Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD with power, according to the spirit of holiness, BY THE RESURRECTION from the dead:

The resurrection then is a witness to the truth of Jesus' identity. When Paul, according to the gospel he preached, declared that GOD would judge men and that every knee would bow to Him, He declared that those events would find their fulfillment in JESUS CHRIST. The resurrection is a powerful witness given by God of His Son, who is the judge of all men. To believe then that Jesus Christ is raised, is to believe He will sit in judgement as God, and to acknowledge by extension that I will be present before Him in judgement. That is a good start towards FAITH, I suspect, concerning what is done and what is yet to be fulfilled. Paul references this event in chapter 2.

Romans 2:16 - In the day when GOD SHALL JUDGE the secrets of men BY JESUS CHRIST according to my gospel.

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Paul then discusses in chapter 3 the complete failure of man's attempts at being righteous by his works and the righteousness that is given to men from God by faith. In chapter 4, He discusses how men are made recipients of the righteousness of God by faith. Paul speaks of Abraham as the chief example of faith in specific reference to the example in Genesis 15 which we also studied. He concludes chapter 4 with the hope we have of having righteousness imputed to us also (future tense) if we have the same kind of faith that Abraham had. The reason for this is once again the DEATH and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:25 - Who was delivered for our offences, and WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.

The resurrection of Jesus is witness to His identity (Romans 1) and is also the proof that His sacrifice was accepted by God, thus giving us confidence in His atoning blood and His promise of eternal life (Romans 4). Certainly, if Jesus was a false prophet, as some say today, then we wouldn't expect Him to be raised from the dead by the power of God. To believe He is raised is to understand that God has authenticated and certified all of the teachings of Christ while He was alive on the earth. After Paul discusses faith as patterned after Abraham, he then declares that we can have access to the grace of God that was purchased for us with the blood of Christ by virtue of that same kind of faith. The faith that is patterned after Abraham, the Father of us all.

Romans 4:16 - Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

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We then enter into chapter 5 with the confidence that if Abraham was declared righteous by God for his faith in believing the Word of testimony concerning things yet unseen and future to his time, then we too will be declared righteous through the same kind of faith by virtue of the blood Christ shed for our sin and by the power of His resurrection life.

Romans 5:1 - 2 - Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: BY WHOM also WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Paul further explains that we, who have believed, are now reconciled to God by the death of Christ and can have confidence that we will be saved because of His life. Thus, the resurrection of Christ is also a confirmation of the hope we have of the promise of salvation and of our life in glory with Him if we have faith like Abraham did, which is the means of access into the grace of God provided by His Son Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:10 - For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.

We then read in chapter 6 that there are reasonable implications of believing these things that produce obedience to the LORD - another word for Master. Again in this chapter the reason for these things is the death and resurrection of Christ.

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Romans 6:5 - For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Time and again Paul uses the resurrection to provide the necessary token of evidence concerning the things Christ gave witness to in His testimony concerning things to come. He repeatedly references this as both a memorial of what God had fulfilled and as a promise concerning what He has said He will do in the fulness of time. This leads us up to chapter 8 where He speaks of the sealing of the Holy Spirit and His work in the life of a believer.

Romans 8:9 - But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS.

He shares of the hope of our future glorification with Christ as joint-heirs with Him, and speaks of the hope of salvation for those who have received the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:24 - 25 - For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

We then come to chapter 10. The truth that is spoken in Romans 10 is conveyed to believers in the church at Rome to give them confidence that those who had believed these truths were to receive the salvation they lived in expectation of as promised by the Lord Jesus Christ. However, those statements were not intended to be communicated in isolation from the rest of the epistle - or isolated from the entirety of the gospel. A person must know who Jesus is, what it means to confess Him as Lord,

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understand why he died, what it means to know that He is raised, and to have faith towards Him concerning these things for that person to comprehend what Paul is teaching in Romans 10:9 and 10:13.

This is important as we bear witness to the gospel in the earth today and seek to fulfill His great commission. Interestingly, the Lord's command in Matthew 28 was not to go "soul-winning" per se, it was to go and make disciples. Scriptural study and experience shows these pursuits to be quite different in their aim and result in modern times. If a soul is to be won indeed, they must be a disciple of Jesus indeed. The doctrine and faith of a true disciple can be summarized in Romans 10:9, but Romans 10:9 is not enough scripture to truly disciple someone.

Matthew 28:19 - 20 - Go ye therefore, and TEACH all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

When we look at the church at Sardis and wonder why only a few would walk in white, we must conclude that the knowledge of the gospel story fell short of true FAITH concerning things hoped for and not yet seen. Apart from any future testimony, this belief is only knowledge. That can be the only reasonable explanation of the condition of that church. We need to move on from knowledge to wisdom! If you study the entire epistle to the Romans, you will see the correlation between fulfilled testimony and future promises throughout the book. Knowing God has fulfilled His Word in the past gives us confidence to live in faith of what He has promised to come! That is where faith

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thrives! That is the mark of one who is walking **BY** faith! Where is the expectation and hope of the promised kingdom that serves to keep our hearts from being overthrown with the pleasures and cares of this life? You know, the same cares and pleasures that Christ said would choke out the Word of His testimony? At Sardis, there was only found to be a few in the whole congregation that held to their faith in this way.

Standing fast in the faith doesn't even make sense to the mind in context of a gospel that is devoid of Christ's testimony concerning things to come.

1 Corinthians 16:13 - “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

Watch for what exactly? How do I stand fast? If you believed a gospel that gave you peace of going to heaven when you die, you likely aren't “watching” for anything – let alone standing fast for any reason. You are likely living out your life with an expectation of all the things you want to do, see, and experience here in this present evil world, and expecting at some point in the very distant future to go to heaven when you die. The faith we have from Christ's testimony is in the coming Christ and His kingdom with its promised inheritance for the saints who are to reign with Him in glory. Those who are watching for it are being obedient to the gospel – watching for the return of Christ.

1 Peter 4:7 - “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that you read *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, which compliments this little treatise, to go on and explain further the message of the kingdom we have believed by faith. My hope here was

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simply to provoke some thought, study, and prayerful seeking concerning the common salvation which is promised to us in Christ. Let us not be deceived in our minds but let us watch and be sober. The time is certainly at hand. Deception abounds on every side it seems, but our God is faithful - which means He will do what He said by His testimony.

I would like to close this chapter with an explanation of the scriptures as it pertains to salvation in its other aspects. While we do see most places in scripture that salvation is spoken of as a future promise to those who believe Christ's testimony, there are some places where it is given to be in the present tense. How can we understand this truth from scripture? It works the same as the kingdom, the inheritance, redemption, eternal life, the righteousness which is by faith, and any other promise God has given. I go into more length of this in *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, but I'll briefly explain as best I can. In God's Word, the **spoken testimony** is viewed as being as real as **the fulfillment** of His Word. We can see this truth at work in scripture in some clear places. Let's look particularly at eternal life using a portion of what I wrote in *The Gospel of The Kingdom*.

*Do we have eternal life now, or will we receive it later?
The Bible teaches both.*

*Mark 10:30 - "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and **IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE.**"*

*Titus 3:7 - "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to **THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.**"*

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*1 John 2:25 - “And this is **THE PROMISE** that he hath promised us, even **ETERNAL LIFE.**”*

*1 John 5:13 - “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that **YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*

Christ spoke of us receiving eternal life in the world to come, Paul speaks of the hope, or expectation, we have of it being brought to us. John says that it is both promised to us and we have it now. So, is it promised to us or do we have it now? Scripture clearly teaches both, but why? Faith is the answer.

Romans 4:17 - “(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”

Those who have believed the promise by faith do indeed have eternal life. As God’s children we are made partakers of the divine nature according to the working of His Spirit and the new birth. Accordingly, we also share in His declaration of those things which be not as though they were. In other words, speaking of the promises as if they are already fulfilled because they are so certain! John speaks of it as something we have abiding in us. How did it get there? It is through receiving the Word of God by faith:

1 Peter 1:23 - “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

It is the Word of the Lord that lives and abides forever, which is Jesus Christ according to John 1:1-3, and with Him

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abiding in our hearts by faith through receiving His Word, we can be assured of the eternal life that we possess in Christ. However, we only possess this promise now by faith, and are living in the hope, or expectation, of it being fulfilled. Those whose faith endures to the end, will receive the promise itself.

John 6:63 - "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK unto you, THEY ARE SPIRIT, AND THEY ARE LIFE."

We haven't yet experienced the life that is promised to us, but we have received an earnest payment of the promise that has been made. Eternal life will be given to those who believe, and it will be experienced after the res-

urrection in our glorified bodies which we will receive when he returns for us, which is why Christ said we will receive it in the world to come.

We haven't yet experienced the life that is promised to us, but we have received an earnest payment of the promise that has been made.

This principle also applies to salvation itself, which is received now as a promise by faith but is to be received in actual fulfillment when Christ appears. That is why we live in the hope of salvation, as Paul says.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 - "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the HOPE OF SALVATION."

And we are preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation, as Peter declares.

*1 Peter 1:5 - “Who are kept by the power of God **THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION** ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

Therefore, all the apostles admonished those who had professed a good profession to hold fast to the faith and endure to the end. Those who hold to the faith in earnest expectation of the promises being received, will receive the reward of the saints.

*Mark 13:13 - “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall **ENDURE UNTO THE END**, the same **SHALL BE SAVED**.”*

*Acts 15:11 - “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ **WE SHALL BE SAVED**, even as they.”*

*Hebrews 3:6 - “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE** and the rejoicing of the **HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END**”*

*1 Corinthians 1:7 - 8 - “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also **CONFIRM** you **UNTO THE END**, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

*1 Peter 1:9 - “That the trial of your **FAITH**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory **AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST**: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even **THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS**.”*

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Many today think of “when they got saved” as something that already happened to them, but you will see from scripture that salvation is a promise to those who believe the truth, the gospel, the testimony of Christ. God has appointed those who receive the testimony of Christ to obtain salvation and it can only be obtained by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is part of the inheritance of the saints as we see from Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:14 - “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be HEIRS OF SALVATION?”

We further see from scripture that salvation is to be looked for at the appearing of Jesus Christ. All who fell on sleep in Christ having this living hope inside of them will also be partakers of this gift of inheritance.

Hebrews 9:28 - “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time without sin UNTO SALVATION.”

Paul says in Romans 8 that we are saved by hope, but we haven't yet received that which we are hoping for - that's because it is a promise to those who believe the testimony of Christ.

Romans 8:24 - “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

We can see in many instances of scripture words that give testimony to the hope of salvation that we possess as a promise from Christ. This hope we have is a persuasion

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of faith that the Lord is might to execute His Word, as the prophet Joel declares.

*The fact that God views His Word and the actual fulfillment of it in time as **synonymous**, is both a good lesson for us and also helpful to our understanding of the kingdom of God since it is a promise that works the same way. We will see exactly how it is the same with the kingdom as we continue, but let's quickly look at an example:*

Mark 10:15 - "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever SHALL NOT RECEIVE the kingdom of God as a little child, he SHALL NOT ENTER therein."

I have seen many people wrestle with passages such as these that become much clearer when we see how God views his Word concerning something as synonymous with its fulfillment. After all, it's how he made the worlds. He doesn't speak and things not happen... Here we see concerning the kingdom that we must receive it to enter it. Could be confusing, but it is like eternal life, salvation, and many other promises in His Word. We must first receive the promise of it by faith, the word of the kingdom, and then we will be given entrance when all these things are fulfilled. So, the "kingdom" received is the Word preached, and the "kingdom" entered is the kingdom brought to pass in the fulness of time when the word is to have its fulfillment.

In this way, we are both "in the kingdom" by faith and "waiting for it", just as with eternal life which we "have" by faith but have yet to "receive".

Revelation 1:9 - "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos,

for THE WORD OF GOD, and for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST.”

Therefore, when we see verses in scripture that speak of salvation in the present tense, which are the small minority of places, we know by comparing scripture with scripture that in these instances it is spoken in faith. That is because the Word of God is completely certain. It is the same principle as the Lamb of God that was slain before the foundation of the world. The Lamb was slain in the fulness of time as we know but had been ordained by God before the world began. It was always going to happen because God had already ordained it. It was written in His own mind. In the context of God’s work, it is done eternally, revealed when He speaks it, but will be realized at the appointed time of the Father who is the one who determines times and seasons for these things. The Lord explains this truth to His apostles as they asked when the kingdom would come on the day of Christ’s ascension.

Acts 1:7 - “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which THE FATHER HATH PUT IN HIS OWN POWER.”

The Father will determine the appointed time for the fulfillment of the testimony. Our part is obedience and faith to the end whenever that appointed time may be.

Daniel 2:20 - 21 - “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And HE CHANGETH THE TIMES AND SEASONS: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:”

When we see verses like these:

Chapter 6 – Preaching the Word

1 Corinthians 1:18 - “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto US WHICH ARE SAVED it is the power of God.”

We can know that this is spoken out of a confidence in the promise of God that allows us to speak things that are not as though they were. Paul says to the same body of believers two chapters later:

1 Corinthians 3:15 - “If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself SHALL BE SAVED; yet so as by fire.”

You can look through the rest of the epistle and easily understand Paul had taught them exactly what you are studying through in this book - to live in hope of salvation as a promise received by faith.

1 Corinthians 5:5 - “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS.”

Even telling them later in the book that they ARE saved, IF they keep what He had preached unto them. If their faith in the promises was not in vain, they could have perfect confidence in salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:1 - 2 - “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which 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 preached unto you, UNLESS YE HAVE BELIEVED IN VAIN.”

Chapter 6 - Preaching the Word

Forgetful hearers are those who are overcome by the world, not those that are born of God. The empty, vain faith of these type of professors is not a product of faith in His Word of Testimony by His Son Jesus Christ by which we are begotten. Speaking in these places as those who “are saved” is clearly spoken to show faith in His promise. Just like our Father in heaven who declares the end from the beginning, we as His children speak with the same confidence. Just like all the other promises we wait for, we live in hope of salvation.

The examination of ourselves is not “are we saved”, which is an unscriptural idea since it hasn’t been fulfilled by Christ yet, but rather “are we in the faith of the promises?” and “are we living in obedience to that faith we profess with our mouth?”, and “do we have His Spirit?”.

The examination of ourselves is not “are we saved”, which is an unhelpful way to discuss salvation since it hasn’t been fulfilled by Christ yet, but rather “are we in faith of the promises?” and “are we living in obedience to that faith we profess with our mouth?”, and “do we have His Spirit?”. The promise of the Spirit is one promise we are to receive now, so examining if we have it is a scriptural and helpful way to view God’s work in our lives. If not, **NOW IS THE TIME** to repent from our unbelief and start living in **FAITH!** The certainty of these promises is not in question, but whether we will be partakers of them is.

Chapter 6 – Preaching the Word

Hebrews 4:1 - “Let us therefore fear, lest, A PROMISE BEING LEFT US of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to COME SHORT OF IT.”

The calling and election of God are without repentance and are as certain as when He spoke, “Let there be light”, but our personal calling and election needs to be made sure.

2 Peter 1:10 - “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”

We know the promises are certain, but they are reserved for those who are in faith. We need to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith as those who are to partake of those promises.

2 Corinthians 13:5 - “EXAMINE YOUR SELVES, 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?”

The ONLY PROMISE given in scripture that we can expect to receive now in this life is the earnest, or down payment, of our inheritance - the Holy Spirit and the living Word of God.

John 7:38 - 39 - HE THAT BELIEVETH on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of LIVING WATER. (But this spake he of THE SPIRIT, which THEY THAT BELIEVE ON HIM SHOULD RECEIVE: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

And it is imperative that we have received this seal of God through faith!

Romans 8:9 - But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The question in our time is not “are you saved?”, but rather “do you have His Spirit?” and “Have you acknowledged the truth in Jesus Christ?” and “Are you living in obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ?”. We should examine ourselves to see if we have this Spirit of Christ by examining the appetites and desires of our heart, the measure of joy we have as we follow Christ in keeping His commandments, fellowshiping in His assembly, and communing with Him in His Word. If we have His Spirit, He will give us new desires that are in keeping with His will.

Psalm 37:4 - “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

We will still war with our flesh during the days of our time on earth here, but we will not give ourselves over to the flesh and to sin.

Romans 8:9 - “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

Matthew 5:6 - “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

Since He is our righteousness, once we realize the fulness and richness of His promise to us, we will live in an earnest expectation of His appearing for us. We will have a longing in our heart to be with Him where He is - which is another promise He gave.

Chapter 6 – Preaching the Word

John 14:3 - “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, THERE YE MAY BE also.”

These questions are true and scriptural examinations of our hearts. These provoke us unto love and good works. These admonish us to hold fast to the faith. These keep us in earnest expectation. Compare that to the modern view of a salvation that is received when you pray to ask Christ into your heart and then go back to the pleasures of this life for the rest of your days seeking the Lord’s blessing in all you set your hands to while you live out your days... No comparison at all. Truth wins. There are many people today with a false profession, false hope, false gospels, and all of it traces back to what they believed when they were taught of these things. How many young people “got saved” when they were young only to be offended by and by and to wander out into the world, leaving their faith and the church behind. Interestingly, nearly all of these still think they “are saved”. What must they have been taught to believe that? Certainly not the truth. How many adults have professed faith to go to heaven when they die, but are absent from their service to Christ while they savor the things of this present world? All of these still expect to inherit and will tell you they “are saved”. Problem is, the judgement hasn’t happened yet, which is when the truth of the promise will be known, and the secret things will be brought to light.

Malachi 3:18 - Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Romans 2:16 - In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Chapter 6 - Preaching the Word

There is a difference between the righteous and the wicked to the one who judges the hearts - faith and unbelief. Let men seek unto Him and He will shew them the truth. For those who have believed the promise of eternal life by faith, Christ has additional instructions to help us along the way in life as we walk in faith, obedience, love and light until the day of His appearing. Those are for another time and another place perhaps though...

Some Closing Thoughts....

Some Closing Thoughts....

I pray that some of the thoughts shared here have been helpful to you in your faith. Confidence in the prophetic testimony of Christ is the faith which the scriptures show is needed to justify men through faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus, then having imparted His Spirit to us in making a new creature, continues to teach us in which ways we should walk by His Word. This is not a one and done deal. We do not remain unchanged or go back to our old ways and the things of this present evil world after coming to faith in Christ. The next steps of obedience then are given to keep us in the way as a disciple who is always learning from Christ. To guide us into the way everlasting. To promote growth in grace, knowledge, and faith. We will perhaps explore those commands another time as we look at obedience to the faith concerning the things we have heard from Christ.

In some ways, I feel I've said too little and left out important aspects of the doctrine of Christ and in other ways I feel I may have not been as brief as I had initially hoped to be in this book. So much truth, and so little time as it has been said... If you made it to the end, then I would like to thank you for your patience and endurance! I

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Some Closing Thoughts....

hope and pray for the glory of the gospel and our Lord Jesus Christ's sake that you have been helped in some way by investing your time here.

I would like to finish with an important charge from our Lord concerning the faith. Receiving His prophetic testimony is the mustard seed of truth and faith we need to receive His Spirit and be reconciled to Him in hope of the promise of eternal life. The Law of Christ perfects that work by trying the spirit of a man and growing the new creature HE formed in us by His Word and Spirit. As we obey in faith, let us not waver concerning the promise. We must be **WATCHFUL!** The hope of His appearing is everything to those of us who have believed, and faith in His promise is the beginning of all our obedience to Him. The Law of Christ **DEMANDS WATCHFULNESS** for His appearing.

Mark 13:37 - "And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH."

This is the Law of Christ that speaks to the commandment we have from the Father to hear the Son.

Luke 9:35 - And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM.

Our faith in His Word of promise by the testimony HE gave is demonstrated by our obedience to this simple command - watch.

Revelation 3:3 - "REMEMBER therefore how thou hast RECEIVED and HEARD, and HOLD FAST, and REPENT. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Some Closing Thoughts....

Repentance is needed for those who have been disobedient to the faith in this most important way. Repentance is being taught every step of faith as we obey the law of Christ as sons learn to be obedient to their father. Great blessings are promised to those who keep the faith to the end.

Revelation 3:4 - “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE: for they are worthy.”

May we walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being strengthened by the power of His might according to the inner man, living in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ until we are brought to the full stature of Christ - always doing those things that please the Father.

In the final conclusion, we rest in hope as those who wait upon the Lord to fulfill His Word of promise to bless those who believe His testimony by Christ through faith. Even though at times we fall on sleep and the ordinances and commandments are allowed to slip, He has promised grace to those who have faith towards Him and rest in His promise. He has also called us to repent when He awakens us to the truth. Even though we have not fully kept the pattern of these ordinances and commandments, may the Lord have mercy upon all who call upon His name in faith of the testimony of His promises. We hope in His mercy and His grace.

We glory not in knowledge, faith, charity, or any other glory seen or unseen, but the glory due to Jesus Christ, our Savior and our God. He has shown Himself mighty on the behalf of the weak and interceded for the prisoners who were cast in the pit of destruction.

Some Closing Thoughts....

Psalm 103:1 - 4 - “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.”

I am thankful we have a mighty God, who has interceded on our behalf to the glory of His own purpose and grace.

But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.”

Our hope is the intercession of Jesus Christ on our behalf to the Father, and His payment for the indebtedness we owe for our part in this rebellion and great war that has been raging. Thankfully, the Father always hears and answers the Son. May the Lord grant us wisdom in all things as we seek Him in truth, humility, and sincerity, and may we by His grace and goodness overcome until the end when we are to receive the hope that He has authored within us by His Word.

Revelation 3:5 - “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

Some Closing Thoughts....

And as our Lord lovingly spoke to and warned the churches in Asia almost 2,000 years ago, so He says to all now. Our final word of admonition.

Revelation 3:6 - “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”