

Salvation by Grace and Sin

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I. THE DEFINITION OF A CHRISTIAN AND THE CRITERION BY WHICH THEY ARE RECOGNISED

The foundation of Christianity is the Bible, and the Bible defines Christians as the disciples of Christ.

This is the Bible's definition, not mine.

Acts 11:26 – “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

Now, Christ Himself defines His disciple:

Luke 8:21 – “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.”

1 John 3:10 – “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

Matthew 7:18–23 –

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

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.*

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

John 14:21 – “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...”

II. WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO CONTINUE IN SIN AFTER REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

Hebrews 10:26–27

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

2 Peter 2:1 “But there were false prophets also among the people... even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

(Note: they *had been bought*, yet perished.)

2 Peter 2:15 “Which have forsaken the right way... following the way of Balaam... who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

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... the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness...

22 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.*”

Judas was one of Christ's disciples, yet he betrayed Christ to his own destruction.

Let us also consider this passage from Acts, which shows that it is not enough to be baptised or to pronounce Christ with the lips to prove one is truly a Christian or has eternal life:

Acts 8:9–24 Simon believed and was baptised, yet sought to buy the gift of God and was rebuked by Peter:

20 “Thy money perish with thee...”

21 “Thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

22 “Repent therefore...”

23 “For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

III. THE LIFE EXPECTED OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE FATE OF SINNERS

Read the whole of Romans 6. Here are key verses:

Romans 6:1–2

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Romans 6:11–13

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God...”

Romans 6:16

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey... whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

18 – “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

22 – “But now being made free from sin... ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

Note carefully: **your fruit is holiness**, and the end is everlasting life, for **the wages of sin is death**.

John 10:26–28

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep...

27 My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me.

28 And I give unto them eternal life...”

To follow Christ is to do what He commanded. He clearly said that only those who *do the will of His Father* are His brethren.

Revelation 21:7–8

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things...

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Notice the word **overcometh** — this implies a *fight* that has been won.

Hebrews 12:14

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

Luke 1:75

“In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

Believers are called to live in peace with all, and to walk daily in holiness and righteousness before God.

The Call to Separation and Purification

2 Corinthians 6:17 (KJV)

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

2 Corinthians 7:1

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

1 Thessalonians 4:7

“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”

The believer is called to moral and spiritual separation from impurity, cleansing both body and spirit, and completing sanctification in the fear of God.

The Divine Requirement of Holiness

1 Peter 1:15–16

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

3 John 1:11

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

Holiness is not optional in the Christian life. Imitating good, not evil, is the mark of one who truly belongs to God.

Those Who Live in Works of the Flesh Have No Inheritance

Ephesians 5:5

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous

man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

Galatians 5:19–21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Galatians 5:22

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...”

The works of the flesh exclude a person from the kingdom of God, while the fruits of the Spirit reveal the character of those who truly walk with Christ.

The Christian’s Progress Toward Perfection

The passage also invites the believer to read:

Philippians 3:12–21

(Reference to continued spiritual maturity and pressing toward the heavenly calling.)

Understanding Salvation by Grace

Let us consider the following verses:

Ephesians 2:8–10

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Romans 3:28

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Romans 3:20, 27–28

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

2 Timothy 1:9

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace...”

These passages clearly teach that we are saved by **grace**, through **faith**, and **not by works**. But how do we reconcile these truths with the many verses calling for holiness and obedience?

Hebrews 10:26: *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”*

Romans 6:1–2: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*

Romans 6:11–13: *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Romans 6:22: *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”*

Here is the simplest and most accurate synthetic explanation.

We have all sinned. We were sinners, slaves to sin. Because of this, our wages were death. We were like the prisoner who committed a crime worthy of death. Before the execution of his death sentence, he receives a presidential pardon (here, God's grace). It is by this grace that he is saved; it is not by works, for he has done no work to receive such grace.

To receive this grace, he must first repent. This repentance is not merely asking for forgiveness; it includes confession, regret for sin, a commitment to abandon it, and sometimes, if possible, restitution. Once he has repented, accepted Christ, and been baptized in water, he receives grace.

But just like a presidential pardon, when you receive grace, it is not so you can commit again the same offense for which you were pardoned. If you do, it brings wrath instead. That is why it is written:

Hebrews 10:26: *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”*

The passages from Romans 6 above also remind us that grace is not a justification for living in sin, because the sinful flesh has been crucified.

The Christian who still considers himself a sinner and not freed from sin is, in his own way, denying Christ's sacrifice, promises, and instructions. Christ gave us the criterion for knowing that we belong to Him and will be saved: doing the will of His Father. He said we recognize a tree by its fruit. Whoever does not meet this criterion must not question Christ's words but examine himself, repent, and enter the walk of sanctification.

This is the truth. We are not saying such a person will absolutely never fall, but that if he falls, it will mainly be due to ignorance, and every sin he becomes aware of, he will abandon. He will also reduce his ignorance through better knowledge of the Word of God. If any sin becomes recurrent

and repetitive, then he is still under the slavery of sin and not in the freedom and deliverance of Christ. He must therefore question himself.

Never forget: asking for forgiveness without repentance is not what God expects from us. He expects repentance. The one who repents regrets his sin and commits to abandoning it. Remaining in the same sins and coming every time to ask for forgiveness is not correct and does not bring justification, for no fear of God is shown, and the slavery of sin is still visible.

How to Understand Romans 7?

Let us consider this excerpt from Romans 7, which people often quote to argue that the Christian is still a sinner and salvation is by grace.

Romans 7:14–25 :

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I... [full passage preserved in meaning as provided in French].”

The interpretation that this passage shows the Christian as a sinner is incorrect, because in verse 24 the apostle asks who will deliver him from this body of death, and he answers in verse 25 that it is Jesus Christ. He further clarifies this in Romans 8:

Romans 8:2: *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

This clearly answers all the concerns from Romans 7 and shows that there are two periods in a human life: before Christ and after Christ. Romans 7 describes the period before Christ, which is a period of slavery to sin. It is this period we all lived that makes Scripture say, *“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

Christ comes to set us free (Rom. 8:2), marking entry into a new period. This new period is one in which we must reckon ourselves dead to sin (Rom. 6:1–2, 6:6–7, 6:18–19, 6:22). Paul himself, after coming to Christ, declares:

1 Corinthians 9:27: *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”*

Here he shows that he has dominion over his body.

The Support of Jesus Christ’s Words

If we say we are Christians, we must first believe Jesus Christ Himself. What does He say about obedience and sin?

- ✓ **Matthew 7:21–23**
- ✓ **Matthew 7:20**
- ✓ **Luke 8:21**
- ✓ **Matthew 19:17**
- ✓ **John 14:21**
- ✓ **Luke 11:27–28**
- ✓ **John 3:5**
- ✓ **John 14:15, 22–24**
- ✓ **John 15:10, 14**
- ✓ **John 8:11** — *“...go, and sin no more.”*
- ✓ **John 5:14**
- ✓ **Luke 6:46**
- ✓ **Matthew 7:26**
- ✓ **John 13:17**

Despite all these words of Jesus Christ, some people manage to build doctrines justifying that they continue to live in sin and are saved by grace, considering themselves permanent sinners and not dead to sin. Do not be deceived: Jesus Christ gave the criterion to recognize His own. Matthew 7:21 is clear.

If you are still in iniquity, even if you perform miracles in Jesus' name, He does not know you. Examine yourself. If this is your case, do not conclude that it is impossible to live free from sin; conclude rather that you have not been freed from sin, that you have not been born of water or of the Spirit. There is no grace for slaves of sin, for they have denied the grace offered to them by once again being overcome by sin (Hebrews 10:26).

V. SALVATION AND THE NEW BIRTH

John 3:4–5 :

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Do you understand the new birth? Do you know what it truly is? It is important to know this as well.

May God enlighten you!

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