

A PRODUCT OF THROUGH THE BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

((Bruce McGee Ministries))

SEALED IN HIS SPIRIT

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Questions like these, at one time or another, enter the minds of every person. "Am I *really* saved?" Or, "Will I be saved *forever*?" Or, "Can I *lose* my salvation?" Or, "Is it possible for me to grieve the Holy Spirit of God so much that I squander away my salvation?" Indeed, how can a person know, really know that he is saved?

Every Christian, at certain crisis times in his life will have some doubt about his salvation. Sometimes Christians raise the above questions during Bible study; and especially when they come across passages of Scripture that speak about the condition of salvation and the state of salvation. For instance, what does God mean when He says we are "*...sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise..*" (Ephesians 1:13)? And is that when we are "*..baptized with the Spirit?*" Or does "Spirit baptism" come only after water baptism?

What does God mean when he says, "*..once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift..*" that it is impossible to be renewed to repentance again?

Can a Christian ever really become truly comfortable with his salvation? Can he rest in the joy of God's eternal forgiveness and really live the "abundant life" that Jesus promised?

In order to approach these questions appropriately, let us first remember that the Christian is not to live his life by reasoning, nor by feeling, (and especially not by fears). But Christians are to live their lives "*...by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord..*" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Please pray as you read this, and look up the passages of Scripture that are used. Ask God to guide you in your study of this important question. Jesus promised that His Holy Spirit would "*..teach you all things..*" (John 14:26). So rely upon Him as you read and study.

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CHAPTER 1 HOW DOES A PERSON GET SAVED?

The little boy was watching very closely as his newly arrived little sister was crying loudly. He asked, "Mom, Where did you say babies come from?" Mom said, "From Heaven." He said, "No *wonder* they kicked her out!"

Well, how *does* salvation happen? Is it of people? Is it something we do ourselves? Or is it of *heaven*? Is salvation an act of man, or is it an act of GOD? In the gospel of John, at the very beginning of the book there is a tremendous statement.

"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 anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:1-4)

A person's life IS because God gave it. Parents are "procreators" not creators. God is Creator of all life. Every new-born child is of God. Men and women only have "procreative" ability. They can only cause children to be born by God-given authority. If God did not GIVE the authority to have children, none of us would ever have any children. Now, I know that this is a touchy subject in today's world. Some people contend that it is OK to have an abortion; and others (myself included) believe abortion is murder because life begins at conception. Another reason for this being a touchy subject is that some folk believe that a loving God would not allow children to be born by rape or incest. But we must remember that God is CREATOR, and we are "procreators." We have the authority vested in the human race to beget children. That authority comes from God Almighty. We could not have children if He did not give that authority. God is perfect; but we are imperfect and sinful. *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord*

search the heart..." (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Since we are sinful, we mess things up a lot. And although God has given us the authority to have children, it is we human beings who cause the problems of birth - not God! To God, every life is precious, and worth the blood of Jesus Christ. God didn't cause rape or incest - man did. But God's plan is still redemption. And He desires redemption of EVERY human being.

"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." (2Peter 3:9)

Life comes from God, and many only has a little part in it. And that part that man has - he messes up with sin. So, if a child is conceived by man's sinful act, it is a greater act of mercy to be sure that child is born and led to Jesus Christ. It is an act of unjust unbelief to take the life of that child and never allow him/her to come to know the joy of eternal life.

Eternal life also comes from God. It is a GIFT from Him. Eternal life is not the giving of life that lasts for eternity. God has already give that to every soul. Every human being is going to exist for eternity.

WHERE a person exists for eternity is another matter. That depends upon what decision he makes in this physical life. But the fact of *existing* for eternity is already established by God.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

The words "living soul" mean: *continuing entity*. Man was created to exist eternally. So the fact of existing for eternity is not in itself what we call *eternal life*. Eternal life is a quality of life more than a quantity. It means living with God and knowing His love. It means finding joy in experiencing God each and every day.

We receive physical life from God, and a soul that exists for eternity. We also receive eternal life (the quality) as a gift from God. It is not of man; it is an act of God's love and mercy.

There was a man named Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night

according to the third chapter of the gospel of John. This man was a Pharisee, and a teacher of Jewish law. He knew the Word of God mentally. However, Nicodemus wasn't alive spiritually. Nicodemus made one simple statement to Jesus and then Jesus gave him a directive.

"..Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:2-3)

You see, Nicodemus was spiritually blind because he was an unsaved sinner. He could not comprehend the things of God because he did not have the Spirit of God to guide him in understanding. Jesus was simply saying that Nicodemus couldn't understand until he was "born again."

Nicodemus gives verbal proof of his inability to comprehend in the next statement.

"..How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4)

Nicodemus' heart could only comprehend things of the mind and things that were physical. He could not understand the spiritual implications of Jesus' statement. Jesus responded by telling Nicodemus how to be "born again."

"For God so love the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Carefully looking at this statement reveals that God takes the active *initiative* in salvation. Man only *responds*.

God *gave* salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a free gift for all people. The word "whosoever" tells us that this gift of eternal life can be given by God to *anyone!*

Man's only part in salvation is to "*believe*". Jesus said, "*..whosoever believeth..*"

Looking at this word Jesus used, clears up a lot of misunderstandings about salvation. The word Jesus used is a common Greek term which means "cling." It was the word used by the wrestlers of that day. Those wrestlers, by the way, ran headlong into one another and usually held onto one another until one of them was DEAD! Now, here's the idea. In order for a person to be "born again" he must run headlong into Jesus and cling to Him until death. THAT is man's *response* to God's gift!

However, man in his physical state, is a habitual and continual sinner. And therefore human beings lack the ability to cling to Jesus until death. But, PRAISE GOD, there is nothing that He doesn't know about us! Therefore, along with the free gift, God gives the *ability* to cling to Jesus.

We'll come back to that in a moment. But first, what must a person do to receive the free gift of salvation and the ability to cling to Jesus for all his life?

Jesus said it best.

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)

THERE'S the message: REPENT! Repentance is simply turning around. As human beings without God, we are heading down the road to an eternal burning pit. God is calling for us to "repent" and to turn around and come toward Him.

When we hear the *gospel*, we either decide to repent or keep going. The gospel is the story of Jesus coming in flesh to die for our sins on the cross. It was we who should have received this punishment because of our sinfulness. But God poured upon Jesus all the sins of humanity and judged all of those sins at the cross. He did that so Christ Who was guiltless could offer up to God the acceptable sacrifice for our sins. We are the guilty, but Jesus paid the price for our sins.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath GIVEN HIMSELF for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." (Ephesians 5:2)

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and GAVE HIMSELF for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing..." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Jesus is the *"..lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Revelation 13:8) It has always been God's plan for Him to die for our sins, and to be raised for our justification.

THAT'S the GOSPEL!

Now, when a person hears this *gospel*, he is *convicted* that it is TRUTH. And if that person will humble himself and ask God's forgiveness, then God immediately grants that the payment Jesus made will be applied to that person.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

Still, salvation is not just hearing facts and giving mental assent to the truth of those facts. Once convicted of the truth of the gospel, the person then must truly repent and ask God's forgiveness.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19)

But those devils aren't SAVED!! WHY? Because they haven't asked Jesus' forgiveness, and haven't asked Him to become LORD of their lives. And THAT'S the sign of *repentance*.

"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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9-10)

A person can mentally believe the facts about Jesus and just have a

desire to be "good." But when we openly "confess" or commit our lives to Him as LORD, then we are saved, Jesus Himself said....

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33)

Now, let's go back to how we receive that free gift of salvation and the ability to cling to Christ. Paul states it best in the following statement:

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

God's offer of salvation is by His grace, or unmerited and undeserved favor. And the manner in which we are saved is "through faith" which is also a gift from God upon our repentance.

Once there was a cousin of mine from Atlanta, Georgia who came to visit with us at our country farm in Louisiana. Since he was from the "city," I was showing him all the exciting things around our place. We had to cross lots of fences, and each time i would hold up the barbed wire so that he could crawl under. Finally, we were almost home and w came to the *electric* fence. This time he INSISTED that it was his turn to hold up the fence and let me go through first. Well---- I LET him!

I said that to say this. *Electricity* is an example from which we can receive some understanding about the gift of faith. The huge dynamos which provide the electricity are in a central location. But the current is carried by thousands of individual wires. Without the wire, the current cannot be received.

God is always holding out the gift of eternal salvation from his central power plant in Jesus Christ. But God also knows we need faith that will enable us to cling to Christ all our lives. Therefore, He GIVES that faith also! FAITH is our power line to Jesus.

In Acts 3:16, Peter makes a very interesting statement about a man who was healed physically.

"And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

You see, Peter knew where faith came from. It comes from Jesus Christ. When we trust Him, and surrender unconditionally to Him, then He "seals" us in His Holy Spirit. Listen to what Paul says, "*In WHOM ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in WHOM also after that ye believed, ye were SEALED with that holy Spirit of promise.*" (Ephesians 1:13)

So "How Does A Person Get Saved?" It is a gift of God, not a work of man. Man's only work is to respond by repentance, submission and trust.

Have YOU responded in repentance - turning around TO God instead of continuing to walk AWAY from Him? Have you responded with submission - surrendering to God's will for you and doing the things He wants you to do? (Like humbly asking God to forgive you and to receive you? Like walking down an aisle and making a public confession of your faith in Jesus Christ? Like being baptized and joining a local church so you can be active in your growth as His child? Like studying your Bible every day, and praying every day? Things like these do not make a person saved. But they show that you are not going by how you FEEL, and are following God's WILL in your life.) Are you trusting God every day to lead you and guide you so that you can receive the maximum enjoyment from living in this world?

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more ABUNDANTLY." (John 10:10)

If you have truly responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ, then God has granted you the gift of eternally life through faith in Jesus. It is an act of the Sovereign God, not of man. It is an act of God that He is willing to confer upon any person who will respond in the way God has prescribed: through repentance and submission and trust.

And THAT'S how a person gets saved. Once a person surrenders to Jesus as Lord of his life, that person is JUSTIFIED. That person also begins a process of BEING SANCTIFIED, and one day will be GLORIFIED (spend eternity WITH God).

Let's talk about those things for awhile.

CHAPTER II

BEING JUSTIFIED

All human beings without Christ are enemies to God. But when we repent and confess Christ, then we are reconciled to God. It is only through Jesus that we are reconciled to God, or brought back into a proper relationship with Him as His children.

"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 5:10)

"For Christ 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.." (1Peter3:18)

As W.A. Criswell wrote in His book "Great Doctrines of the Bible," Vol. 2, Page 145,

"We are saved by His resurrected, regenerating life, by the power of Christ to enter our human hearts, lives, homes, and world in order to remake, regenerate, and recreate."

As Paul put it in Romans 4:25, Jesus was sacrificed for our sins and was resurrected so that we might be justified. In a book called "Ephesians: Wealth of the Believer" (Eds.: Truman Dollar, Jerry Falwell, A.V. Henderson), there is this statement on page 19:

"Another doctrine of significance here is "positional holiness." In this life, we are not (and never will be) without sin. Yet, in Christ, our soul and spirit, the eternal part of an individual, is cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ forever, declaring us "holy and without blame" in Christ. Realize and understand also that God, in Christ, has done for man what man would not have done for himself even if he had the opportunity (Romans 5:1)."

We could not come to God every day and be in a right relationship with Him unless Jesus lived in us and opened the way for us. But

because of His indwelling presence, we are justified to approach the Holy God.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:16)

Because of the indwelling presence of Christ in us we have the privilege and honor of being able to go to God at any time with our heart's desires and make them known to Him. (Of course, He already knows them!) And even though a saved person is still a sinner, he can go to God and ask for help, just as a child could to his parents.

"Justified" (Greek - dikaiōo) is a verb used to mean "declare one righteous." When this verb is used of God declaring man righteous it is in the present continual mode, and literally means that God (through Jesus) declares a believer in Christ "justified" as a son. And that person who is "justified" can come before God without condemnation and be declared in a right relationship with God.

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remissions of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26)

Since Jesus has paid the price for our sins (all of them), and He is perfectly just, God accepts the believer on the basis of what Jesus has done. God's acceptance of the believer is not based upon the person's righteousness, but upon Christ's righteousness. It is by "forbearance" that God looks beyond the believer's sin to the blood of Christ, and God accepts the person who comes believing in Christ. Again, it is an act of God. It is not based upon how good a person is, but upon WHO JESUS is.

At the time a person surrendered to Jesus as Lord of his life, then God justified that person. He, by the "forbearance" of God, for Christ's sake, receives full acquittal of all his sins. This is a doctrine that is true throughout the Bible. That means it is not just since Christ came that man has been able to be justified. Paul, the apostle, talks about this in Romans, chapter three, and then gives an example from the Old

Testament in Romans, chapter four. The example is of Abraham. Paul reiterates the Scripture from Genesis 15:6 which says that Abraham "believed" God, and God counted that belief as righteousness. In other words, Abraham believed that what God had promised, God could deliver (Romans 4:21). Because Abraham believed God, the act of justification was an act of God upon Abraham's sole response in faith. Again, it is not an act of man, but an act of God. It is not based upon man's works, but God's forbearance and mercy.

Now the word justification can be used in another sense also. That is when man says that man is justified. This would be based upon the works of man. We deem a person in a right relationship with God, when we see that he is active in obedience to God. James, the apostle, approaches this subject. In James 2:21 he also refers to Abraham.

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

Then James says in a sort of conclusion to using the above example,
"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24)

It is important that we understand the difference between the two discussions. Paul was discussing being justified before God through Christ, and therefore being afforded the privilege of going to God at any time. James was talking about how IF a person really believes God, he will act in works of faith.

You see, God told Abraham to offer Isaac upon the altar of sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). Abraham, acting UPON his faith, responded in a WORK of faith -- obedience. Because of Abraham's obedience, Isaac was spared. God was in fact testing Abraham to see if he loved His son more than he did God. Actually God was letting Abraham know that his faith in God was more important than his love for the son.

Now, let's get back to the apostle James' argument. He started off his argument with the fact that men justify men by seeing acts of obedience with this statement:

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:18-19)

The discussion that James is having is different from the discussion that Paul was having in Romans, chapters three and four. James is speaking of faith that is dead - not active. He argues that faith in the Living God cannot possibly be dead! Faith in the Living God will show up in acts of obedience to God just as Abraham's did when he offered Isaac on the altar of sacrifice.

When a person HAS faith, and is justified before God, then that person WILL DEMONSTRATE his faith in acts toward God - acts of obedience to God.

One of the most important recurrent themes in the Old Testament is Israel's infidelity to God. They were unfaithful to God, and God was JUST when He disciplined them because of their infidelity. But God JUSTIFIED them in the sense that they could come to him, and beg forgiveness and be restored in a right relationship with Him.

When Moses and the Israelites made the tabernacle in the wilderness, God promised to reside with the people. His presence was visibly displayed by the Shekinah glory cloud which first covered, and then hovered above the tabernacle. God had JUSTIFIED His people, and He would stay with them. And He offered them the privilege of coming before Him at any time through the sacrifice of obedience.

But the people constantly sinned by murmuring against God. They complained because they had no water, they complained because they had to eat manna every day. And when they came to the entrance of the Promised Land, and God said, "Go take it," they complained because there were giants in the land. God JUSTIFIED them even though they were sinners. He had saved them out of the slavery of Egypt, and had guaranteed them His presence and protection and provision. And He did not go back on His Word, even though they didn't keep their end of the bargain.

Believers are justified before God in a similar fashion. If a person has truly trusted Jesus, repented, and surrendered His life to Christ; then sins - God is STILL THERE! In fact God will convict of the sin and call for repentance and renewal.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1John 1:9)

You see, God seals a believer in His Holy Spirit. From that day forward there is no escaping His Presence. And when we sin, He will convict us and call us to repentance. Then, when we repent, God forgives.

Now let me speak a word of caution here. It is possible to continue in sin even with the conviction of God's Spirit upon us. That's what happened to Israel the first time God brought them to the "Promised Land." They continued in the sin of unbelief of God's power to deliver the land to them. However, just because we CAN, doesn't mean we should. To continue in sin

when God's Holy Spirit is convicting and calling for repentance is to look for God's DISCIPLINE! Justification is NOT a license for sin!

The condition for forgiveness is the same condition we faced as lost sinners in need of forgiveness -- repentance. Turn around and to toward God.

The foundation of salvation is repentance toward Jesus Christ. To believe Him, and surrender to Him as Lord of our lives is to receive Him and the sealing of His Holy Spirit. After this, no man can lay any other foundation for salvation. That's because no man is righteous in himself. But living in Christ requires obedience. And when we obey, we receive rewards both in earth and in heaven. When we disobey, we also receive rewards on earth and in heaven.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1Corinthians 3:11-15)

If a person goes out and drinks all night, he receives an immediate reward -- a HANGOVER! And if that person is a believer in Christ, he receives another reward - his work will be burned up in the fiery eyes of the Lord Jesus' judgment, and he will lose rewards. But, the Bible says he "shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Be careful to understand here, that we are talking about a person who had had a genuine salvation experience.

Man is a sinner without the Lord, Jesus, and man in the flesh is STILL a sinner even with the Lord, Jesus. That's why God seals the believer in His Holy Spirit; so He can convict and call us to repentance when we sin.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1Corinthians 3:16-17)

A believer is JUSTIFIED before God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore the believer has access to God through Christ. God seals that believer in His Holy Spirit, and He remains within us all our lives. Part of His duty is to teach us the Word of God, and help us recall the Word while we are living our lives.

CHAPTER III

BEING SANCTIFIED

When you *sanctify* something, you usually clean it and then set it apart for some special use. That's exactly what God has done for Christians.

My wife has a couple of beautiful bowls which belonged to her mother. Those dishes are very special to her. She keeps them clean and in a very safe place so they won't be broken. And she only uses them on very special occasions.

The Greek word for sanctification is Hagiasmos. In 1Thessalonians 4:1-6 Paul makes the following statement.

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified."

Now let me say this: the matter of sanctification is a serious matter. Yes, it is a wonderful blessing, but it is also a

serious warning. God has **SAVED** Christians by His volition and their surrender. God has **JUSTIFIED** Christians with the blood of Jesus. And God **IS SANCTIFYING** Christians every day. That means He is cleansing us with the power of His Holy Spirit, and He desires to use us in a very special way. Sanctification is a process. Salvation itself is a process. I am saved because of what Jesus did for me when I surrendered to Him and begged His forgiveness. I will be saved and be given eternal life with Jesus forever in heaven; again because of what he did for me when I surrendered to Him and begged His forgiveness. But right now, I am being saved from the sinfulness of this world and being used for the purpose of God. And it is this stage of the salvation process where sanctification comes in. Again, this is the result of what God is doing in me because of His own volition. When I surrendered to him and begged his forgiveness, he *began* the process of salvation and the process of sanctification. And throughout this life, I am called daily by His Holy Spirit to be different, and to live as HE desires, and not as I desire. Sanctification is a process that begins with the initial act of cleansing believers in the blood of Christ.

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10)

Sanctification continues throughout the life of the believer by God's Holy Spirit Who indwells. He acts upon the Word of God which He has given believers.

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours...." (1Corinthians 1:2)

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;

but whatsoever he shall hear shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John 16:15)

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

My grandmother was raised in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana as the only child of Philip and Lela Fisher. Now "Miss Ada," as most folk called my grandmother, was a very special lady. And I know that she was special because of her faith in Jesus Christ. She believed in sanctification. She believe that God was actively working in her life every day, helping her to grow and become what He wanted her to be.

Miss Ada raised eight children during the roaring 20's, the depression of the 30's, and the boom-time of the war-torn 40's. Now you just stop and think a moment about raising EIGHT children! In today's world, that would be enough to reduce a mother to being a stuttering, muttering, nervous wreck! But not Miss Ada.

She was a calm, gentle, loving lady who exhibited solidity and durability all her life. Of course back then she didn't have to worry about pre-school, kindergarten, pee-wee baseball and braces, etc. SHE was the pre-school and kindergarten teacher, and the activities coach. And however teeth grew, that was God's business. ADVERSITY was the name of the game when Miss Ada was raising children. She had hogs to slop, children to feed, cows to milk, gardening and canning to do, and clothes to was (on a rub-board). She cooked on a wood-heated stove (and chopped some wood for it), and ironed clothes with an old metal iron that was heated on the cook stove or in the fire place. There were no *convenienc*es back then. Kids were bathed in a number 3 washtub, on the kitchen floor, which was filled by drawing water from the well and heating it in buckets. And her "restroom" was a hundred yards downhill from the house. Now when Miss Ada was 42 years old, she gave birth to her fifth son, and last child. Someone asked what she thought about having a child so late in life. She said, "What a blessing from God! I just pray that I'll be able to live long enough to see him graduate high school." She

did. And lived another 18 years too.

Here was a woman who lived with great adversity (so did MOST women of that day). But she was always STEADY. Where did she get her strength? She would quote this passage of Scripture over and over.

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:12-13)

You see, Miss Ada, was a believer who relied on God's Holy Spirit indwelling. She relied upon Him to *correct* her when she was wrong, *teach* her what was right, be her *Comforter* in troubles and her *Strength* in weakness.

And THAT'S the position of sanctification!

Being sanctified in Christianity means being set aside for the Master's USE.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2Corinthians 4:6-7)

God has shown Christians "light" or TRUTH in Jesus Christ. He has revealed His true person in Jesus.

And God has, by His Holy Spirit indwelling believers, put the "treasure" of the gospel in our lives. He reveals more, teaches more, encourages, and yes, even convicts at times.

But gradually God is changing Christians from "glory to glory" (2Corinthians 3:18), and making us into perfect vessels for His use. And THAT is the *purpose* of sanctification.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

You must admit, "there's a ton of trouble in this ole world," as one person said. Trouble, adversity, sinfulness, unrighteousness and even persecution of the righteous blankets the world. And it would sure be easy to just bend to the pressure and do like the rest of the world. But the Christian (the really "born-again" Christian) CAN NOT be like the rest of the world. WHY? Because he is SEALED IN THE SPIRIT, and he is BEING SANCTIFIED!

Christians are sanctified TO God upon conversion, and sanctified FOR God all during their lives.

God *begins* sanctification through the blood of Christ when a person confesses sin, begs forgiveness and surrenders to Jesus as Lord of his life.

*"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."
(1Peter 1:2)*

Christians are called to be *saints* and continue in the work of glorifying God and sharing the gospel with others.

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours...." (1Corinthians 1:2)

The word saint in the Greek is *hagios* which means HOLY. All believers are holy to God because the blood of Christ has washed them, and believers are presented to God in the righteousness of Christ. Some saints may live holier lives than others, but ALL are holy to God.

*"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
(2Thessalonians 2:13-14)*

God also *continues* the process of keeping his people holy. His Holy Spirit works in us and through us.

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

God's Holy Spirit is constantly calling to Christians and working in them to demonstrate character traits which are born of Christ.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Galatians 5:22-25)

Believers are cautioned not to continue in sin, but to live according to Christ.

"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? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized unto death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:1-4)

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)

The crux of the matter of sanctification is perhaps this: believers are treated as holy instruments because of Christ's blood; and believers are taught, encouraged, comforted, and even chastised in order to continue as holy instruments.

Sanctification follows confession of sin, surrender to Christ and receiving God's Holy Spirit. We might liken this process to the process of parents rearing a child. Our goal as parents is to raise a child to adulthood where they can use right reasoning in making proper decisions. God's goal for Christians, while much *higher*, is similar.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.." (1Peter 2:9-10)

The purpose of sanctification as a process is to keep the believer holy before God, and to produce God's message in the world. Again, this is an act of God. While it requires some response on the part of the believer, it is still an act of God upon, in and through the believer. Just as my wife cleaned those special bowls and set them aside for very special use, God cleans the believer through the blood of Christ. And just as my wife protects those bowls keeping them in a safe place, so does God treat His saints with tender love and care (see Job. 1:6-10, Psalm 91:3-4). And when my wife wants to USE those bowls, she cleans them first. So does God continue to purify His saints so they will be worthy vessels in the world.

God, by His matchless grace, has provided for the believer's *cleansing* (Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 1:3). He has provided a *Comforter* in His Holy Spirit Who indwells all born-again believers (John 14:16-17, Acts 2:38). And God's Holy Spirit also, by the mandate of our Savior, "purges" our conscience (Hebrews 9:14).

The Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17), and God's Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to teach, direct, and correct His saints (Hebrews 4:12).

Therefore, Paul encourages Christians in 1Corinthians 6:19-20.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Yes Sir! Sanctification is a *serious* matter! Once a person gives his life over to Jesus Christ and is SEALED IN THE SPIRIT, he must remember God WILL sanctify His vessels!

CHAPTER IV

BEING GLORIFIED

One wonderful day all God's saints will be *glorified*. What does that mean? The Greek word for glorified is *edoxasen*, and means to be exalted or lifted up. (See Matthew 9:8, 15:32, Luke 17:15, John 12:23, etc.)

Perhaps the main understanding we should have is that God will *change* Christians and lift them above the present life.

He will transform present-day bodies to be like CHRIST in His resurrected state, and will grant us a place in heaven forever.

Lots of songs have been written about this act of God for His people. And some of the most joyous times in a Christian's life is when we *glorify* God because He will one day glorify His children. When we sing those songs, God is glorified in Christians and through them; and one day we'll sing greater in Heaven to glorify God. But that will be after He brings us to glory.

When Jesus was resurrected His body was the same, but it was *different*. He was recognizable, but He could also appear and disappear as He saw fit (Mark 16:9, 12, Luke 24:36). That means Jesus was *glorified* above His former physical state. And one day he will make us like Him.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as he is." (1John 3:2)

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them also he called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:30)

Let us understand early though, that heaven and all it's glory is not the *reason* for the Christian hope. The *reason* is JESUS HIMSELF! One will not be glorified in heaven unless he first has glorified Jesus Christ on earth.

This *was* a mystery, but now has been revealed by God: that ANY person can come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and be *glorified* from his sinful state to a position of KNOWING Christ.

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." (Colossians 1:26-29)

Actually Christians are immediately glorified (lifted up) when they are first "born-again." They exit a position of deadness to God, and enter a right relationship with Him! That's when we REALLY begin to LIVE!

Therefore, in a sense, we ARE glorified. But one day we will be further glorified.

In the Old Testament we are told that God *glorified* Israel in the world.

"Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee." (Isaiah 55:5)

God's purpose was that the nation of Israel would be lifted above other nations and testify to the fact that Jehovah only is God. And they were to give a message of hope, that anyone could be saved by turning to God, because he would provide Messiah, Who would pay for their sins.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Isaiah 53:11)

God's plan for the church today is basically the same as it was for Israel then. We are to suffer for Christ now, but one day be glorified (Romans 8:17).

One part of suffering is to remain living in a sinful world, yet to live above the ways of the world. See the parable of the "wheat and the tares" in Matthew 13:34-43.

The disciples didn't realize or understand all that Jesus taught until He was *glorified*.

"These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." (John 12:16)

Today, people cannot begin to comprehend the teachings of Jesus until He is *glorified* (lifted up) in their lives.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:6-7)

The hope of heaven propels Christians to live righteous lives in a sinful world and to publicize the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." (Colossians 1:5-8)

Now here's something to consider: the *reason* Christians do good works is because God the Holy Spirit is working in them, not because they want to get to heaven. Good works are not a way to *attain* heaven, but are a *product* of the fact of glorification. It is the joy of knowing Christ Jesus and that He will one day glorify us that we desire to serve Him.

*"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already made perfect: but I follow after, if That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 3:8-14)*

Being glorified is not something we attain, it is an act of God bestowed upon believers. Can you realize one day living in a place where there is no sin, no sickness, no sorrow, and no death? What a THOUGHT! Read a part of John the revelator's description of heaven.

*"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
(Revelation 21:2-5)*

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27)

Man has tried to create utopia through communes, dictatorships, democracy, communism you name it. But man is sinful by nature and choice. Therefore no utopia will be found short of God's gift of heaven.

Heaven is indeed going to be beautiful. It will be beautiful because there will be no sin, no sorrow, no sickness, no death. But it will also be a real place with a beauty and glory that can only be created by God. Revelation 21 tells of a city which is pure as gold (verse 18), and with streets like pure gold (verse 21). A city with twelve foundations and twelve gates of beautiful stones. The city is built "foursquare" (verse 16) and the four sides have three gates each (verse 13). This says to people that the way is open for ANYONE!

Oh Yes! Heaven will be wonderfully, gloriously, beautiful. But the REAL beauty of heaven will be GOD!

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride for her husband." (Revelation 21:2)

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Revelation 21:9)

Heaven is the place where God will dwell with forgiven people for ever and ever. And it is the place which Christians earnestly yearn to be every day of their lives.

"For we know that if our earthy house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that morality might be swallowed up of life." (2Corinthians 5:1-5)

Christians have that yearning because they are SEALED IN THE SPIRIT.

Once a man who hardly ever went to church came to a worship hour. The message of the pastor that day was about heaven. After the pastor had spoken very eloquently of heaven for about 30 minutes, he made an impassioned plea. He said, "All who want to go to heaven raise your hand." This one man didn't raise his hand. After the worship hour, the pastor approached the man and asked, "Why didn't you raise your hand in the service? Don't you WANT to go to heaven?" The man answered, "Why, of course! But I thought you were getting up a group to go RIGHT AWAY!"

In other words, the man certainly wanted to receive the joys of heaven, but he wasn't prepared to live the life required of him. Well, the truth of the matter is that we're ALL a little like that guy. Heaven, as it is called, sounds good; but most people don't want to live a life of complete servitude to God. We'd rather have things our own way. That's another reason why we are SEALED IN HIS SPIRIT. God has never called a person to be saved that He didn't JUSTIFY. God has never justified a sinner that He didn't begun the process of SANCTIFICATION in that person. And God has never begin the process of sanctification in someone that He didn't have JOB for them to do!

Once we are saved, we become *different*. We are blood-bought, Bible-taught, Holy Spirit-led, and directed by God into a MISSION. That mission is to stand in for Jesus and lead other people to Him.

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a newcreature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2Corinthians 5:17-21)

One day, Christians will be fully glorified and given a place to live with God eternally. god will change and transform us at that time so that we will be "like Christ."

But right now, God is using Christians to tell the world about Jesus and that anyone can be saved and receive the joy of His forgiveness and the promise of eternity with Him.

Now I've said before that a person CAN continue in sin even with the conviction of God's Spirit upon him (Chapter 2, "Being Justified").

With that statement let me conclude with two thoughts.

One of the purposes of this book is to remind us that we are "bought with a price" and that we are to "glorify God" in our bodies and hearts because they belong to God (1Corinthians 6:20). Therefore, let us not continue in the sin of failing to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with other people. Let us, as a church and body of Christ, follow the Great Commission and teach the gospel to the lost in every corner of the world. And let us as individual Christians remember to teach the gospel to the lost in OUR corner of the world.

*"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
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" (Matthew 28:18-20)*

This brings us to the second and final conclusion which is that of the original purpose of this book. Once a person is truly and gloriously saved by the power of God Almighty, that person can never be lost again! He is SEALED IN HIS SPIRIT!

My good friend and evangelist, Oda W. "Tuck" Roberts, once preached a sermon which really dealt with my heart about this very matter. The sermon came from the text of 2Peter 3:9-17.

The following is a *loose* quote of what Bro. Tuck said in his conclusion to that sermon (I didn't have a pen in hand, and didn't write his exact words.)

"God will:

- 1) Never Let You Go,**
- 2) Never Let You Down, and**
- 3) Never Let You OFF!"**

The blessing and joy of being saved for eternity comes with an awesome responsibility. God, Who is gracious and merciful, saves us and seals us in His Spirit. God continues to go with us and guide us all our lives. And on judgment day, when we stand before our Lord, Jesus Christ, we will answer for the lives we lived under the inspiration of His Holy Spirit and teaching of His Holy Word.

I pray that God has spoken to you through His Word and this meager effort to share a meaningful message. I close with a statement from one of God's greatest apostles, and a statement I know to be inspired of God Himself.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." (2Peter 3:18)

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