

Part 4. What People Are Christians

The Basics of Salvation

- † **1 Corinthians 15** verse 1b "the gospel which I preached" (ASV), 15:2a "and by which you are saved" (NBV), 15:3b-5a "this was what was most important: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say, and that he showed himself to..." (ICB).
- † **1 Peter 2:24a** and **2 Corinthians 5:21** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (ESV) and "he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (ESV).
- † **Romans 1:17a** "The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself – that it begins and ends with faith" (NCV).

Believe:

1. **Acts 16:31b** "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (ASV|NASB).
2. **Acts 10:43b** "every one that believeth on him [receives] remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV).
3. **Romans 4:5**¹ "And to the one| who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."²
4. **Ephesians 2:8-10** "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may |boast himself. For |in Christ Jesus, God made us new people| unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV).

Repent:

1. **Luke 24:47b** "repentance |para = in-order-for| remission of sins should be preached in| His name" (ASV|RVA and translated| ASV|NBV).³
2. **Acts 3:19a** "Arrepentei-vos, pois, e convertei-vos para |serem cancelados os vuestros pecados" (ARC|ARA) = "You-people-must-repent-you, therefore, and you-people-must-convert-you in-order-for they-will-be canceled the your sins."

Make It Active – General and Specific

1. **Acts 26:20b** "they must repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance" (NBV).
2. **Acts 2:38b** "You-people-must-repent-you| -- |and so| let-s/he-get-self-baptized each one of you-people| in the name of Jesus Christ -- |in order to the remission of |you-people's sins"⁴
3. **1 Peter 3:20b-1** "water : which also after a |figure| doth now save you, even baptism,| not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience,| by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."⁵
4. **Romans 10:9** "That if you might confess in| your mouth Jesus as Lord, and |might trust| in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."⁶
5. **James 2:18b** and **2:26b** "I will show you my faith by my works" (NASB) and "faith without deeds is dead" (TNIV).
6. **Galatians 5:6** "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, |but only| the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB).
7. **Philippians 2:12b** "ocupaos en vuestra salvación" (RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA) = "You-busy-you in your salvation."

1 Corinthians 15:1-12, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and 1 Peter 2:24 describe how Christ died on the cross bearing our sins and then was resurrected. Romans 4:8 has "blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin" (ESV). We see salvation's mechanism: *Christ was resurrected after dying without sin for our sins, and in exchange for the latter, Christ's righteousness is imputed to us rather than our sins.*

Acts 16:31b says "Believe on the Lord Jesus |, and you will be saved" (ASV|NASB). To truly believe Jesus to be Lord, we submit our wills to His will = obedience. Hebrews 3:18b-9 has "to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were |not obedient|? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief" (NASB|BishB|ESV). "Believe" = be "obedient." Romans 10:16-7 says "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So |faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (ESV|TNIV). To 'obey the Gospel' is to believe it.

¹ Romans 4's example is Abraham from before the Judaic Law, so "work" here is general.

² ESV|A. Campbell et al, Living Oracles, page 290.

³ The oldest Greek manuscripts have equivalent for "for" rather than KJV "and" here.

-- Fitzmeyer, The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV, page 1520.

⁴ RVR 1909, 1960, 1995 "Arrepentios" translated| C. Williams, The New Testament in the Language of the People, page 261| a meaning of Greek και: Vine et al, Expository Dictionary, page 694 NT|RVR 1909, 1960, 1995 "bautícese cada uno de vosotros" translated| C. Williams, *ibid.*| A. Campbell et al, Living Oracles, page 234| RVA "vuestros pecados" translated.

⁵ ASV|BishB|ASV|NASB|RSV 1952|KJV; insight from "Baptism, which is symbolized by that water" (ISV).

⁶ McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576| NASB|McReynolds, *ibid.*| NASB, NBV.

Salvation is granted upon such faith, as seen most clearly in two passages:

Romans 4:5 "And to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."¹
Ephesians 2:8-10 "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast himself. For in Christ Jesus, God made us new people unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV).

The oldest manuscripts of "Ephesians" have no Greek for "at Ephesus"²; it was a general letter. These two passages are important, because they show that plural "works" do not cause salvation; other than faith, nothing we do, whether devised by mortals or ordained by God, causes salvation.

Greek πιστις/πιστεως "faith" is noun of a verb meaning "to place confidence in, to trust"³; Hebrews 11:1 describes "faith" as "an assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of unseen realities" (NBV). Faith is simply a disposition, but it is much more than a meaningless assent to truths. Per Romans 1:5, biblical faith has an "obedience of faith"⁴ within it. Such a "conviction" about Gospel truths is adequate to save Christians. Romans 1:17 has "how God makes people right with himself – that it begins and ends with faith" (NCV).

Biblical faith must include repentance. Mark 1:15 has "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (KJV); such faith will involve repentance from living wrongly.⁵ⁿ Luke 24:47b says "repentance |para = in-order-for| remission of sins should be preached" (ASV|RVA and translated|ASV). Acts 3:19 has "Arrependei-vos, pois, e convertei-vos para |serem cancelados os vuestros pecados" (ARC|ARA) = "You-people-must-repent-you, therefore, and you-people-must-convert-you in-order-for they-will-be canceled the your sins." "Repent" = "change your hearts" (PEB) = "turn from your sins" (NLT 1996); when we truly believe Jesus is Lord, obedience to Him against sin means repentance. *Biblical faith includes repentance and obedience.*

Biblical faith must include reliance. In John 6:68 a disciple told Jesus Christ why they followed Him: "thou hast the words of eternal life" (ASV). Salvation is not without Christ, per Acts 4:12 "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (ASV).⁶ⁿ Romans 10:13 has "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (ESV).⁷ⁿ Salvation relies on Jesus Christ, and we must rely on Him for salvation. At John 3:16-8 Jesus Christ said of Himself:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to [condemn] the world; but that the world should be saved through him. [Whoever] believeth on him is not [condemned]; he that believeth not hath been [condemned] already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" [ASV with [TNIV]]."

Repeat: "whoever believeth on him is not condemned." Peter preached of Jesus Christ at Acts 10:43 "every one that believeth on him |receives| remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV). Scripture makes clear that biblical faith on Jesus Christ secures salvation and eliminates any possibility of condemnation.

¹ ESV|A. Campbell et al, *Living Oracles*, page 290.

² In Hodges, Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, page 582.

³ Vine, et al, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, page 61 NT.

⁴ Pointed out in Sproul, *Reformation Study Bible*, page 1766.

⁶ In Hodges, Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, page 582.

⁵ Mark 1:15 shows that sometimes, biblical faith can sprout out from repentance.

⁶ There is debate among Christians about possibility for non-Christians to be saved. If there is, it cannot be without involvement of Jesus Christ. Both sides of this dispute have people who allege that any possibility of salvation for non-Christians eliminates merit to evangelism and missionary efforts. This is not true. Jesus Christ said at Matthew 28:19 "Go, therefore, and make disciples" (NBV). Whether or not Christ provides salvation among non-Christians is irrelevant to this.

⁷ It is not necessary for believers to have a good grasp about how salvation works. Jesus Christ takes care of it.

Another component of biblical faith is discipleship to Christ.¹ⁿ When people truly believe that Christ is Lord, they become obedient to Him and follow His precepts. Romans 6:17 has "ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching" (ASV) - "from the heart." Acts 6:7 has "the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith" (ESV). Priests among the "disciples" were "obedient to the faith" in Christ. Scripture uses "all that believed" (ASV) at Acts 2:44² and "believers" (NASB) in such places as at Acts 5:14, Acts 10:45, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, and 1 Timothy 6:2 to describe Christ's people. Scripture uses "disciples" (ESV) the same way in such places as Galatians 1:13+Acts 9:1, Acts 14:20-2, and Acts 11:26. "Christians" = "disciples" in "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB) per Acts 11:26; Greek μαθητας "disciples" is also translated "followers" (ICB) and plural for "one who follows one's teachings."³ A Christian is 'one who follows Christ's teachings.' To believe on Jesus Christ, we must meaningfully agree that His prescribed ways are right and should be adopted to follow.

We conclude, from this brief introductory study, that the basis of salvation is Jesus Christ, with His death and resurrection. The "gospel" (ASV) = "Good News" (NCV) is the account of what JESUS CHRIST did for us to secure salvation for us sin-infested mortals.⁴ⁿ Salvation is a gift granted by God in grace to mortals despite their doings, and grace covers Christians' imperfections in living out biblical faith toward Christ. Salvation is a gift accepted by biblical faith. *Biblical faith includes within it reliance, repentance, obedience, and discipleship.*

What Scripturally-Approved Faith Is NOT: 1) agreement with a religious group's institution-centered tenets, 2) mere assent to truths of the Gospel, 3) mere outward compliance, 4) faith-motivated works.

There is no biblical faith without a humble appeal to Jesus Christ and a commitment to live as He taught.

What Follows from Our Salvation

Acts 26:20 has "repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance" (NBV). Galatians 5:6 has "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, | but only | the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB). Normally, biblical faith shows by works.

Faith is not just a momentary decision, but a way of life.⁵ It motivates us to live in ways that are different from the ways of this world.⁶ Romans 1:17 has "the righteous shall live by faith" (ASV). Biblical faith should motivate a Christian to live righteously.

Romans 4:5 says "And to the one | who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."⁷ However, James 2:18 has "I will show you my faith by my works" (NASB) and James 2:24 explains that "a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (ESV). This is like Jesus' saying in Matthew 11:19 "wisdom is justified by her works" (ASV). Wisdom was already good and right, as seen in Proverbs, but it is shown to be thus by its results. Likewise, Christians justify their claims to be believers by what they do.

¹ We must not mistake assent to religious group tenets for biblical faith. Gnostic non-Christians viewing themselves as Christians in the New Testament era were opposed in 1 John and 2 John. Gnostic groups viewed salvation to be by some self-knowledge,* about which Jesus was sent to teach,** or in some cases Christ, and was thereby "Savior."

There is a warning to modern churchgoers. Gnostics thought their beliefs centered on themselves were most important in relation to the Divine -- so much they were not Christians. Churchgoers can do similar toward precepts centered on themselves as groups. We must meaningfully accept our duty to follow Jesus Christ.

* Funk, Hoover, et al, The Five Gospels, page 500.

** Clifton, Encyclopedia of Heresies and Heretics, page 50.

² Pointed out by Geisler, Howe, Big Book of Bible Difficulties, page 428.

³ Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 171 NT.

⁴ **The Gospel is NOT any prescription for a human role in salvation.** Any 'plan of salvation' involving human response and the ideal conversion experience are only related to the Gospel.

⁵ Pointed out in The Orthodox Study Bible, page 1529.

⁶ In Green, Willimon, The Wesley Study Bible, page 1500.

⁷ ESV|A. Campbell et al, Living Oracles, page 290.

Biblical faith is a disposition that motivates works. Jesus Christ said at Luke 6:46 "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (ASV); to show we truly believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, we should do daily as He taught. Jesus Christ taught a plethora of things we can do to please Him. Ideally, these two specific works¹ⁿ should be **among** works that biblical faith motivates:

1. Confession. Romans 10:9 says "That if you might confess in| your mouth Jesus as Lord, and |might trust| in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"² and 10:10 "And we |in mouth| say what we believe, and so we are saved."³ Ancient people often saw confession as belief/sentiment. Paul reflected this at Acts 23:8 "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees |confess| them all" (NASB|ASV|NASB); here "confess" meant 'believe' matching a custom.
2. Getting oneself water baptism. Acts 2:38 has "You-people-must-repent-you| - |and so| let-s/he-get-self-baptized each one of you| in the name of Jesus Christ - | in order to the remission of |you-people's sins."⁴ The group was told to repent for remission of their collective sins,⁵ⁿ and each individual was obligated by repentance to submit to baptism.⁶ⁿ Ancient Jews saw convert baptism as showing entrance to a new life⁷ and 'washing away' of prior life to match earlier conversion,⁸ so these Jews would have deduced need to first convert to following Christ, their due repentance per 2:36.⁹ⁿ 1 Peter 3:20-1 has "water: which also after a |figure| doth now save you, even baptism,| not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (ASV|Bish|BASV|NASB|RSV 1952) - not the bath,¹⁰ⁿ but the repentance-driven "appeal to God for a clear conscience"¹¹ⁿ that baptism represents. The "water" of baptism provides a "likeness" to "the resurrection of Jesus Christ" as we go under water and come back up. Romans 6:5 describes water baptism as being "na semelhança da" (ARA) = "in-the-similarity-of-the" Christ's death and resurrection. Christ's death and resurrection are what save us.

¹ Some Christians add speaking in tongues to this list, but tongues were never universal among Christians. Here is the relevant passage: 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (ASV).

Not every Christian was an apostle. James 3:1 says "Be not many of you teachers" (ASV), so not every Christian was a teacher. Likewise, not every Christian spoke in tongues, so speaking in tongues was/is not a distinguishing sign of salvation.

² McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576 | NASB | McReynolds, ibid. | NASB, NBV.

³ ICB | McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576 | ICB.

⁴ For sources, see lengthy source note over this passage on the first page of *Part 4*.

⁵ Unlike English, many languages are not word order-oriented. This is true of Greek. The Greek verb tenses between the two directives vary in force, with that beneath "repent" being stronger*; the Greek links repentance to the remission of sins.* Also, four of the five pre-500 C.E. Greek manuscripts have equivalent for "your."**

* In Zodhiates, Complete WordStudy New Testament, page 397.

** Metzger, Textual Commentary, page 301.

⁶ A natural understanding of "Arrependei-vos, e cada um de vós seja batizado em nome de Jesus Cristo, para remissão de vossos pecados" (VRA).* Verb forms show this to be a reference to Luke 24:47 "repentance for |remission of sins" (NASB|KJV), as does the plural-singular contrast of the "repentance" and "remission" clauses versus the middle.

English word-by-word of the VRA does a grievous injustice to the VRA's Portuguese grammar here: "You-must-repent-yourself, and each one of you let-s/he-be baptized in name of Jesus Christ, in-order-for remission of you-people's sins."

Portuguese is not a heavily word order-oriented language, but often uses varying forms of words to communicate meaning, so word-by-word English translation here does not accurately communicate what the Portuguese says; it is the same for the Greek here.

For more information, see second topic of *Part4/New Testament..Baptism in Water*.

⁷ E. J. Bicknell article in Gore, et al, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, New Testament page 335.

⁸ So That's Why! Bible, page 1287.

⁹ A likely reason why no narrated sermons to Gentiles tie baptism to salvation's causes. Gentiles would have been unfamiliar with how conversion baptism represents truths.

¹⁰ It is clear that Peter did not want to be misunderstood as denying the teaching of Ephesians 2:8-10. Peter was clear that the actual water bath of baptism does not save anyone. Rather, he was using figurative language: "likeness."

¹¹ Match: Romans 10:13b "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (ESV).

Both confession and getting baptism¹ⁿ should be specifics within a general pattern of life. James 2:26 says "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (TNIV). Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, |but only | the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB). Titus 2:14b says that Christ's people should be "zealous of good works" (ASV). Philippians 2:12b says "ocupaos en vuestra salvación" (RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA) = "You-busy-you in your salvation." The Bible is clear that *REAL genuine faith in the Gospel will motivate us to live our lives doing as Jesus Christ prescribed for us.*

'Credentials': Many people cite other 'credentials' in claims to be Christians. Unless we live according to Jesus Christ's teachings documented throughout the New Testament, any other alleged 'credentials' mean nothing.

¹ While popular, we cannot consider either of the two additions to Mark 16:8; modern translations note their highly probable inauthenticity, which the following testify to:

- 300's C.E. widely-traveled church authors Jerome and Eusebius indicate that nearly all the manuscripts they knew of lacked any such text.*
 - The two oldest manuscripts with Mark 16:8 and Luke have neither addition. These date to the 300's. One leaves a gap big enough for the longer embellishment[†] in case someone wanted to add it later, but the exclusion of actual text testifies that the yet older manuscript being copied did not have this text.
 - The Sinaitic Old Syriac translation manuscript of c.399/400^{††} has no such text.*
 - The Armenian translation was made either in the late 300's or early 400's,^{†††} and approximately 100 of those manuscripts have no such text.*
 - The Georgian translation, from south of Russia, was made before 440.^{†††} Its two oldest manuscripts have no such text.*
 - An alternative shorter ending of just a few lines appears in four Greek manuscripts of the 600's, 700's, and 800's alongside the traditional embellishment.* The inclusion of both endings shows uncertainty between them.
 - The existence of a competing ending shows that Mark 16:8 was the original end.
 - Several manuscripts of Coptic translations* and many manuscripts of the Ethiopic translation also have the alternative shorter ending alongside the traditional embellishment.* The translations originate from the 200's^{†††} and 300's^{†††} respectively. The inclusion of both endings shows uncertainty between them.
 - A c.399/400 manuscript of the Old Latin version,** which preceded the Latin Vulgate, has a translation of this alternative shorter ending instead of the longer traditional embellishment.*** It is the only textual witness to do so.*
 - The earliest church allusions to either embellishment is by Irenaeus and in the Diatessaron from the LATE 100's.* Earlier church writings outside of Scripture allude to the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus in the New Testament gospels -- but there are no allusions to embellishments after Mark 16:8.
 - The overwhelming absence of additional embellishments after Mark 16:8 in ancient times was so deep it influenced centuries beyond; there is an 1100's manuscript that lacked such embellishment,* and many manuscripts with an embellishment have notes from the scribes reporting older manuscripts without the embellishment.*
- Whether or not either embellishment is 'not contrary' to Scripture is not relevant, nor is 'liking it.' If neither embellishment was in Mark when God finished writing it for publication to the world, **it is not Scripture, and cannot be treated as Scripture.**

Treating words of mere mortals as God's Word is wrong and risks problems. Some like to use part of one sentence in the longer embellishment against Ephesians 2:8-10 to teach 'salvation by completed baptism,' but the rest of that sentence fits John 3:18 "Whoever| believeth on him is not condemned" (TNIV|KJV) and harmonizes with Ephesians 2:8-10. TREATING THIS EMBELLISHMENT AS GENUINE IS VERY DANGEROUS, BECAUSE PART OF THAT EMBELLISHMENT HAS CAUSED PEOPLE TO HANDLE UNTRAINED VENOMOUS SNAKES -- AND GET BIT.

* Metzger, Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, pages 122-4.

† in Green, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page viii.

†† Nestle, Aland, et al, Novum Testamentum Graece, page 66*.

††† H. Miller, General Biblical Introduction, page 25, 250, 252.

** Comfort, Essential Guide to Bible Versions, page 280.

*** Aland, Aland, The Text of the New Testament, page 292.

However, it is important to note the order specified in Ephesians 2:8-10 "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast himself. For in Christ Jesus, God made us new people unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV). We are saved "through faith" without "works," and then from that salvation, plural "works" follow.¹ⁿ

The Relationship of Works to Salvation

We have noted two specific response works to biblical faith: confession and getting baptism. However, human doings are the problem, and so cannot save us. At John 3:3-6 note the sequence:

- John 3:3b "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (NASB)
- John 3:5b "unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (NASB)
- John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (NASB).

Jesus taught necessity of two births at John 3:5.²ⁿ Ancient Hebrews used such words as "water" and "drop" to describe natural birth.³ Jesus meant 'unless one is born naturally and then spiritually, s/he cannot enter the kingdom of God' -- a person must be born of the Spirit. We go to Romans 8:2b-8

"through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful humanity to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in human flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind controlled by the sinful nature is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God. He refuses to obey God's law. And really he is not able to obey God's law. Those people who are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God" (TNIV|ICB).

Note that while in the sinful self we CANNOT please God. Continuing on, at Romans 8:9a we have "But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit" (ICB) and at Romans 8:10b "But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness" (TNIV). This means that *without the rebirth through the Holy Spirit, nothing we do will please God.* We cannot please God without rebirth and regeneration.

Continuing this thought, we turn to Titus 3:5 and combine that with Ephesians 1. Titus 3:5 says "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing |of the Holy Spirit" (NASB | ASV).⁴ⁿ We turn to Ephesians 1:13 which says "In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues "He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession" (HCSB). The word translated "listening" is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω⁵ and

¹ "Works": do not add 'of the Judaic Law'; Gentiles are free from it per Acts 21:24-5.
"Works": do not add 'of merit'; Christ's servants have no boast toward Him -- Luke 17:10.
"Works": do not add 'other than those of God'; this would mean we are saved 'unto works other than those of God.' The word "works" at Ephesians 2:8-10 is simply that.

² Many people see 'baptism' where it is not. This is one place. Hebrews 10:20-22 is an oft-misunderstood reference to priestly consecrations to approach God at Leviticus 16:3-4* and Numbers 8:5-9. Ephesians 5:25-7 also gets misunderstood; it refers to an ancient custom of pre-nuptial ceremonial baths to prepare for marriage.[†]

* in Radmacher, Nelson Study Bible, page 2093.

† Life Application Bible, page 2140.

³ In Hayford, Spirit-Filled Life Bible, page 1577.

⁴ This is a reference by Paul to what is described in Acts 10:34-48,+11:4-17,+15:8-9. There, Peter was preaching the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit came down on the audience when they "listened to the message" (NEV) -- Acts 10:43-4. Peter described this coming of the Holy Spirit with "cleansing their hearts by faith" (ASV) -- Acts 15:9.

⁵ Strong, Exhaustive Concordance, pages 583 and Greek Dictionary 4.

means "hearken, listen to," "heed, obey," "take in or admit to mental acceptance"¹ and regarding discipleship "follow, obey."² When we make the decision to heed the Gospel and to follow it, immediately the Holy Spirit is given to us. At Titus 3:5, this regenerates us. In John 3:3-6 and Romans 8:2-10, this gives us new birth and potential to please God. There is no pre-regeneration righteousness; only AFTER regeneration can we do anything that would please God.

Romans 10:16-7 says "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So |faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (ESV|TNIV). To 'obey the Gospel' is to believe it. Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as "an assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of unseen realities" (NBV). Faith is a disposition of strongly believing things not observed, but faith can be shown.

Confession is a prescribed response to the Gospel just like getting baptism. Romans 10:9 says "That if you might confess in | your mouth Jesus as Lord, and |might trust| in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" ³ and 10:10b says "And we |in mouth| say what we believe, and so we are saved."⁴ Greek translated "confess" means "speak the same thing," "assent, accord, agree with."⁵ Acts 23:8 has "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees |confess| them all" (NASB|ASV|NASB); "confess" meant 'believe.' At Romans 10:10, believing what is confessed means we have the faith to save us - confessing shows it.

Intelligible oral confession⁶ⁿ of the Lord Jesus is impossible underwater by natural means; baptism must be done separately. Which first? At Acts 10:46 new converts were "exalting God" (NASB) and so were baptized at 10:48. Acts 2:41a says of Peter's first sermon "They then that received his word were baptized" (ASV). Regarding a sermon of Philip "when they believed Philip preaching | the gospel | concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized"⁷ per Acts 8:12. Confession is a good way to know who believes, and whom to baptize, so confessing Who Jesus is likely preceded baptism. Now, if one stays unregenerate until after baptism is finished, then per Romans 8:2-8 the confession would not please God for Him to grant 'credit' - therefore, there cannot be multiple steps in regeneration. John 6:28-9 has "The people asked Jesus, 'What are the works God wants us to do?' Jesus answered 'The work God wants you to do is this: to believe |on him whom he hath sent" (ICB|ASV emphases mine); they sought plural "works" and Jesus corrected that. Romans 1:17 has "how God makes people right with himself - that it begins and ends with faith" (NCV) - one step. The faith motivating baptism and confession must regenerate us beforehand.

Ephesians 2:8-10 specifies "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may |boast himself. For |in Christ Jesus, God made us new people| unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV).⁸ⁿ Baptism and confession of Lord Jesus are certainly works "God hath before ordained" (KJV), which follow salvation via faith and "not of works" (ASV).

¹ In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 113.

² Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 40.

³ McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576| NASB | McReynolds, *ibid.*| NASB, NBV.

⁴ ICB | McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576 | ICB.

⁵ In Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 120 NT.

⁶ There is no passage that teaches that a failure to give oral confession guarantees no salvation, as is the case for water baptism. People unable to speak are a recurrent concern in the gospels; they were not extremely rare. Revelation 22:17 says "whoever wishes" (ICB) could partake of eternal life -- this must include those unable to speak. Hence, completed confession is not vital to salvation any more than is completed baptism. Salvation is about a person's attitude toward the Lord.

⁷ ASV|RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA "el evangelio" translated|ASV.

⁸ Some people have thought of salvation as a transaction.* Granting of salvation by God is a δωρον "gift" -- not a transaction; Mark 8:37 refers to transactions via ανταλλαγμα "exchange" (KJV, ASV, others) which is a different word. Salvation is not 'do these steps to get this,' but rather is simple reception of a gift.

*Ronald E. Osborn article in Lawrence, Classic Themes of Disciples Theology, page 147.

Salvation: God's Preference

Many think that God's 'default' is to not save sinners. In fact, many are quite uncomfortable with the concept that God genuinely desires to save people. However, Scripture shows that God was very willing to go to very great expenditure to save us – and did so.

First, let us remember that per Romans 5:10b "while we were God's enemies, |we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (ICB|NBV). Christians were at one time an enemy of God. Therefore, what Christ did for our salvation is all the more remarkable, because God did this for His enemies. If He had preferred to condemn us, He would have done nothing.

✠ Luke 24:46-7 says: "and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; repentance |para = in-order-for| remission of sins should be preached in| His name" (ASV|RVA and translated|ASV|NBV).

✠ 1 Timothy 2:3b-6a describes: "God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all people" (TNIV).

✠ John 3:16-8 says of Jesus Christ: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to |condemn| the world; but that the world should be saved through him. |Whoever| believeth on him is not |condemned|; he that believeth not hath been |condemned| already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (ASV with |TNIV|).

The truth is that Jesus Christ suffered greatly to secure "remission of sins."¹ⁿ He came for that purpose; He was sent here not "to condemn the world; but that the world should be saved through him." The last passage clarifies the other end: "Whoever believeth on him is not condemned."²ⁿ

Titus 2:14 says that Jesus Christ died "to| redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (ESV|ASV). People redeemed by Jesus Christ should be "zealous" to do the things Jesus Christ called us to do. Paul directed Christians at Ephesians 4:2 to "Be patient with each other, making allowances for each other's faults because of your love" (NLT 1996 emphasis mine). This means that Christians are not going to be faultless even when zealous to do what pleases God.

John 3:16-8 says Jesus Christ did not come "to condemn the world; but that the world should be saved through him." It also says "Whoever believes on him is not condemned." Therefore, when there is failure to do everything properly due to unfortunate circumstances or mistake, *the 'default setting' is that this believer/follower of Jesus Christ = Christian will be saved.*³ⁿ If we mortals perceive potential uncertainty, we should assume that the believer/follower⁴ⁿ of Jesus Christ is saved.

¹ Because of this enormous expenditure on God's part, God's wrath against people who reject what Jesus Christ did for them will be worsened. God's justice requires sin to be punished, and because they reject what Jesus Christ suffered on their behalf, they will have to endure the punishment themselves. In addition, they will also be guilty of despising this enormous sacrifice and provision of God.

JESUS CHRIST DID NOT DIE FOR NOTHING. Let no one go on like He did. Let mortals not:

1) refuse to accept His sacrifice for us and refuse to receive it by submitting to live under His Lordship, or

2) carry on as if condemnation is His 'default' and preference.

Both of these things are wrong to do.

² This is paralleled at Acts 10:43 "everyone that believeth on him |receives| remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV). There are works linked to the cause of salvation in various settings, but Scripture never states that failure to do those works results in condemnation. John 3:16-8 does universally state how one is "not condemned."

³ **We should oppose any teaching of the contrary that can cause worry about deceased believers/followers of Christ.** Acts 5:14 examples how "believers" were "added to the Lord" (ASV). Acts 10:43b says "everyone that believeth on him |receives| remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV).

⁴ Scripture uses "believers" synonymous with "Christians/disciples." Scripture does NOT use 'confessors' or 'the baptized' or 'speakers in tongues' in the same way.

The Nature of the New Covenant and of Conversion under It

At the start of the Old Testament, there are five books of the Bible written by God through Moses. Four of them are mostly giving a detailed worship code for the Jews. The New Testament, despite being roughly one-third the length of the Old Testament, has not a single similar book.

What made one a Jew? Answer: circumcision. Scripture examples abound. One instance is at Galatians 2:9b "that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision" (ASV). Whether one was circumcised or not was what distinguished a Jew from being a Gentile = non-Jew.

Ancient Jewish records agree. The Talmud at *Yebamoth* 47 a-b has potential male converts being given explanations of the significance of converting to Judaism. If he accepted: "he is circumcised forthwith"¹ and then an additional conversion ritual is described

"As soon as he is healed arrangements are made for [him to be baptized], when two learned men must stand by his side to acquaint him with some of the minor commandments and some of the major ones. When he comes up after his [baptism], he is deemed as an Israelite in all respects."²

This was an immersion ceremony just as Christianity has – a conversion baptism.³ⁿ Jewish conversion baptism accompanied prior conversion and was viewed as the making of a new person by 'washing away' prior life⁴ and representing entrance to a new life.⁵ Galatians 5:3 says of Judaism "every person who gets circumcised is obligated to observe the entire Law" (NBV), so one was a Jew at circumcision, but convert baptism⁶ⁿ was when people viewed a new Jew's conversion as complete.⁷ⁿ

Despite detailed worship precepts of the Judaic Law, God was looking forward to something different. In the Old Covenant era, God said Hosea 6:6a "I desire loving-kindness, and not sacrifice" (NBV) which Jesus quoted at both Matthew 9:13 and 12:7. God valued "loving-kindness" more than He valued the sacrifices prescribed in the Judaic Law. Hebrews 10:16 states that God was anticipating Christians in Jeremiah 31: "I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts" (NKJV).

Jesus noted imminence of this change when a Samaritan said to Him at John 4:20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship" (ICB). At John 4:21 Jesus said "The time is coming when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on this mountain to worship the Father" (ICB) and at 4:23 "The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (ICB). Worship was no longer to be ritualized ceremonies – it was to be from the heart and have a larger meaning, such as at Hosea 6:6a.

A New Covenant was on its way. At Luke 22:50 Jesus said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (ASV). Starting at Hebrews 7:22b "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (NASB) the passage continues to Hebrews 8:6-7: "But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second" (ASV).⁸ⁿ The New Testament has among Judaism and Christianity only two covenants: an Old Covenant and a "second covenant" = "new covenant" based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

¹ Slotki, The Soncino Talmud: Yebamoth.

² Slotki, The Soncino Talmud: Yebamoth with |Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings, page 233|.

³ The fact that baptism was for converts to Judaism gave 'shock value' to John's baptism: John called Jews to be baptized just like their converts! This would also have been a potential for objections to Gentiles being baptized at Acts 10:47-8.

⁴ So That's Why! Bible, page 1287.

⁵ E. J. Bicknell article in Gore, et al, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, New Testament page 335.

⁶ Modern Judaism has a ceremonial washing and it is before circumcision* instead.

* Renard, The Handy Religion Answer Book, page 102.

⁷ One could be a Jew without being fully acknowledged as one. Christians are not authorized to replicate such a class system, and Colossians 3:10-11 principles against such a thing among us, because among us "Christ is all and in all" (KJV, ASV).

⁸ One flaw: Romans 3:27 on salvation "by what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith" (NASB emphasis mine). No law of works is able to make us righteous.

At John 19:30 we have "when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (NASB). At Matthew 27:50-1 we read "when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom" (TNIV). The temple curtain separated the rest of the temple from the innermost part, which had the presence of God and could only be entered by one certain priest on stringent conditions. When that temple curtain tore, it marked the end of the Old Covenant; God ripped that barrier apart Himself from Heaven's direction down the moment Christ died while shedding blood. The Old Covenant was over; God had finished replacing it for the New Covenant.

This did not mean banning the Judaic Law. This did become an issue when Gentiles started becoming Christians. At Acts 15:1-2 some Jewish church people "began teaching the non-Jewish believers: 'You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised as Moses taught us'" (NCV). This prompted the Jerusalem Council, and at 15:5 "some of the believers who belonged to the Pharisee group came forward and said, 'The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. They must be told to obey the law of Moses'" (NCV). Per 15:24, this "troubled" (ASV) Gentile Christians. The "law of Moses" was the Judaic Law, the stringent Old Covenant worship code. The first part of Acts 15 describes the Jerusalem council which addressed Gentile Christians and the Judaic Law. After debate, there was a resolution. James said at Acts 15:19-20 "'So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish people who are turning to God. Instead, we should write a letter telling them these things: Stay away from food that has been offered to idols (which makes it unclean), any kind of sexual sin, eating animals that have been strangled, and blood" (NCV). The letter was then started at Acts 15:23 "From the apostles and elders" (NCV). Jewish-Christians continued to follow the Law of Moses. At Acts 21:20 James said to Paul "'Brother, you can see how many thousands of Jews have become believers. And they think it is very important to obey the law of Moses'" (NCV), and later "you follow the law of Moses in your own life" (NCV) at Acts 21:24. Hence, Jewish Christians would continue to live according to the Judaic Law, but Gentile Christians were not required to do so. Tellingly, no parallel worship code resembling the Judaic Law was ever 'en-Scriptured' for them.

What sort of New Covenant worship was expected? Let us note a hint of Jesus before it was instituted. At John 4:21 He said "Believe me, woman. The time is coming when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on this mountain to worship the Father" (ICB), and at 4:23 "The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (ICB). John 3:16-8 says of Jesus:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to [condemn] the world; but that the world should be saved through him. [Whoever] believeth on him is not [condemned]; he that believeth not hath been [condemned] already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" [ASV with [TNIV]].

Christ came so that believers on Him can be assured salvation. John 6:28-9 says "The people asked Jesus, 'What are the works God wants us to do?' Jesus answered 'The work God wants you to do is this: to believe |on him whom he hath sent" (ICB|ASV). When these people asked for a plurality of "works" to "do," Jesus had just one -- belief on Him. This is not some meaningless assent: it means to *genuinely* believe what Christ said about Himself in a way that affects our lives according to it.

Before the event of Acts 11:26, Christians were called "disciples" in that "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB). Greek μαθητας translated "disciples" is rendered "followers" in the ICB at Acts 11:26. The Greek word μαθητας is plural for a Greek word meaning "one who follows one's teachings"¹ meaning a Christian is 'one who follows Christ's teachings.'²ⁿ Therefore, the most basic Bible meaning of the Bible term "Christian" is simply a "follower" 'of Christ's teachings.'

¹ Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 171 NT.

² Many wish this meant other things than just this, such as agreement with group tenets. Nonetheless, despite however much many hate it, "Christian" just means this.

Used synonymously with "Christians" is "believers." 1 Thessalonians 1:7 commended the congregation of Christians at Thessalonica "so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia" (NASB). Acts 10:45 says "All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also" (NASB). Hence to be a follower of Christ is to be a believer, and to be a believer is to be a follower.

Acts 10:43b says of Jesus Christ "through his name every one that believeth on him | receives | remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV). This matches what Jesus said of Himself at John 3:18 "Whoever | believeth on him is not condemned" (TNIV|KJV). To "believe on" Jesus Christ is to be a follower of His teachings, and to "believe on" Jesus Christ makes one a saved Christian.

Unlike Judaic conversion baptisms, the baptism to close the conversion practice from the Heavenly perspective is done *instantly*. Per Mark 1:7-8, John the Baptist "preached, saying, 'After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you |in the Holy Spirit'" (ESV|ASV). Jesus Christ would actually be involved with baptizing in both – but would only do the latter Personally. John 3:22-3 says "After these things, Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized" (NASB). John 4:1 says "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John" (NASB) and clarifies "although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were" (NASB). After the New Covenant began, nowhere in Scripture is Jesus portrayed baptizing Christians in water; mortals are attributed the responsibility of baptizing in water throughout the New Testament. In the present New Covenant system, Christians baptize in water, while Jesus Himself does not. Jesus Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit, as anticipated at Mark 1:7-8. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (ASV). The effects of one incident of this are described: "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized | in the Holy Spirit'" (ESV|ASV) at Acts 11:16, and at Acts 15:8-9 "And God, who knoweth the heart, |gave them evidence|, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (ASV|NBV|ASV).¹ⁿ When God detects biblical faith in the heart, He acts accordingly, baptizing "in the Holy Spirit" and therewith "cleansing their hearts by faith." All Christians are baptized "in one Spirit," the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ does that, as anticipated at Mark 1:7-8.

Subsequent to becoming believers/Christians, Scripture ordains water baptism to close the conversion experience, just as ancient Jews required conversion water baptism to do the same.²ⁿ Jesus said at Matthew 28:19-20a "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you" (NASB|NCV). Greek rendered "baptize" means "completely submerge,"³ so we are to "completely submerge" people who are "disciples"/believers/Christians. Ancient Jewish conversion baptisms were viewed as showing a 'washing away' of earlier life and symbolically making new people⁴ and representing entrance into a new life.⁵ In Judaism, as we already saw, circumcision made one a Jew, but water baptism was required to have the conversion experience viewed as complete.

Christianity paralleled this, but biblical faith in Jesus Christ replaced circumcision. This is seen most clearly in two passages, both of which are in books where Paul was refuting the need for observance of Judaic Law practices for salvation. Colossians 2:11-13 says

¹ The event being recalled was narrated at Acts 10:34-48. After this Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10:43-5, Peter subsequently ordered water baptism in Acts 10:48.

² Converted Gentiles immersed themselves -- Chronological Study Bible, page 1099.

³ Stamatis, Catechetical Handbook of the Eastern Orthodox Church, page 191.

⁴ So That's Why! Bible, page 1287.

⁵ E. J. Bicknell article in Gore, et al, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, New Testament page 335.

"and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the | poder = power| of God who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the| lack of physical circumcision,...."¹

The "circumcision made without hands" is Christ, our circumcision. Romans 6:5 describes water baptism as being in "na semelhança da sua morte" (ARA) = "in-the similarity of-the his death" for how it parallels being buried as dead and then resurrecting new. Colossians 2:11-13 shows itself to be a picture lesson; we have never really removed our flesh, but Christians have disavowed living to the flesh's sinful urges. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 calls Christ's resurrection as a "most important" (ICB) truth of the saving Gospel; when we have "faith in the power of God" to save us through Christ and His resurrection, we get "circumcision made without hands." Just like in ancient conversions to Judaism, there should be a water baptism to 'wash away' prior life, but in our case to accompany "circumcision without hands" by biblical faith in Christ, and also to show our similarity to Christ as His followers.

In Galatians, Paul confronts a situation where Gentile Christians were paying too much heed to 'church Jews' telling them they needed to become Jews and follow the Judaic Law to get salvation. 1 Corinthians 10:2 calls the Exodus Israelites "batizados em Moisés" (ARC, AEC) = "baptized in Moses." They took the Judaic Law delivered by Moses for authority about God. Greek εις here and at Galatians 3:27 has for one meaning "in."² To correct Galatian misunderstandings, at Galatians 3:24 Paul calls the Judaic Law "child-conductor | vnto Christ" (NASB margin|BishB), then 3:25 "now that faith has come, we are no longer under a |child-conductor" (NASB| margin), 3:26b "ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (ASV), 3:27 "For as many of you as were baptized |em=in| Christ have put on Christ" (KJV|ARA/ARC/AEC/VRA and translated|KJV). In Roman society, a youth who had become an adult put aside childhood clothes for new clothes to commemorate the change.³ In ancient times, clothing was considered representative of the wearer's self.⁴ This passage is a case where knowledge of ancient culture assists right handling of Scripture.⁵ⁿ Galatians 3:24-7 teaches 'growing up.' This meant replacing the Judaic Law with biblical faith in Christ for salvation: identify oneself with Christ via baptism in His name, and "put on Christ" in the sense of "putting on" the clothes of an adult, to 'wear' Christ. Hence, again, biblical faith in Christ replaces circumcision to become Jews, and water baptism should follow just as in Judaism to complete the earthly conversion experience.

Now, to recap, upon biblical faith in the Gospel, we become Christians. Unlike Judaism where a baptism to complete the conversion experience had to be subsequent to the circumcision that made a Jew, in Christianity, the baptism to complete the conversion experience from God's perspective is taken care of immediately by Jesus' Holy Spirit baptism. On earth, human beings are to baptize the new believers in water to complete the earthly conversion experience, just as in Judaism.

What of after the conversion experience? At John 4:19-21, Jesus foretold a time with no ritualized/ceremonial worship code, and said at 4:23 "The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (ICB). Worship no longer centers on procedures - it is to be from the heart and have larger meaning. The Old Covenant had the Judaic Law, which was a worship code spelled out in detail. Tellingly, no parallel worship code to resemble the Judaic Law was ever 'en-Scriptured' for the New Covenant. Why? New Covenant worship is *entirely* different.

Before the event of Acts 11:26, Christians were called "disciples" in that "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB). Greek μαθητας translated "disciples" is rendered "followers" in the ICB at Acts 11:26 and is plural for "one who follows one's teachings."⁶ The Bible

¹ NASB|ARA and translated|NASB|NBV.

² Strong, Exhaustive Concordance, page *Greek Lexicon* 16.

³ Life Application Bible, page 2121.

⁴ Children's Resource Ministry Bible, page 458.

⁵ Similar: Amos 4:6 "cleanness of teeth" (KJV) seems good now, but at that time, it meant lack of food to dirty the teeth with, meaning starvation.

⁶ Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 171 NT.

meaning of the term "Christian" therefore means "follower" of Christ. After conversion, we are to follow Christ's teachings. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus taught profusely over the values His followers should have, and how we should live our regular lives according to God's values. For conscious worship-specific activity, He taught prayer. He also taught the Lord's Supper - notably in Luke 22, in 1 Corinthians 11, and others. At Matthew 28:19-20¹ⁿ Jesus said "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, | and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (NASB|NCV|NASB). Please note the "have told you"; what Jesus Christ most values is that His followers = Christians do the things He chronologically had taught *up to that time*.

In New Covenant worship, we follow Christ by living according to His teachings on daily life, and His smattering of teachings in religious life, such as the Lord's Supper, baptism, evangelism and prayer. Romans 12:1 has "I beg you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable | worship" (NBV|ESV). Romans 6:13 has "use your whole body as a tool to do what is | good" (NLT 1996|NCV). Unlike Old Covenant offerings, New Covenant offerings are our own selves as living people. Our worship as Christians is devoting ourselves to God to do what is good in our whole lives for Him.

Scripture gives information on good worship. Galatians 6:2 refers to "the law of Christ" (ASV), and to follow it here: "Help each other with your troubles" (ICB). James 1:27 agrees to Jewish Christians: "Pure religion and undefiled |in the sight of| our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (ASV|NBV|ASV); Greek translated "religion" literally is "religious service,"² so "pure religious service" is to serve people and avoid sin that pervades the world. James 2:8 mentions "the royal law according to Scripture, `You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (ESV). Galatians 5:6 states that "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, |but only| the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB). To worship rightly under the New Covenant, we put our biblical faith in Jesus Christ to work by following His teachings doing what is good.

New Testament Example of Faith – Baptism in Water

Water Baptism Essay Division #1 of 2: Early Baptism in Scripture

Ancient Judaism commonly assumed baptisms to accompany any conversion experience.³ Scripture shows circumcision made a Jew, as in Acts 10:45 and Galatians. The Talmud at *Yebamoth* 47 says after circumcision there was "immediate ablution" after which a convert was "deemed" a Jew.⁴ People who had converted to Judaism got baptism to show 'washing away' of earlier life and were seen as new people⁵ for this, as conversion baptism represented entrance into a new life.⁶ *Such meanings were inherent to the Bible meaning* of the Bible term.⁷ⁿ

We have two main records of John the Baptist: Scripture and first-century Jewish historian Josephus. We start with John's baptism of repentance in Scripture. Greek transliterated "baptism" and "baptize" means "completely submerge."⁸ In Matthew 3:11, John says "I baptize you with water for repentance" (NASB) and Luke 3:3b reports him "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (NASB). Greek under "for" is εἰς also translatable "because of,"⁹ proposing:

¹ Note: on new disciples, He said "baptize them" -- they are already disciples before this. Note: He places this between "make" and "teach," opposing withholding/delaying baptism.

² In Scofield, The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments. Authorized Version; with..., page 1242.

³ In Stamps, Adams, The Full Life Study Bible New Testament, page 249.

⁴ Slotki, The Soncino Talmud: Yebamoth; reference Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings, page 233.

⁵ So That's Why! Bible, page 1287.

⁶ E. J. Bicknell article in Gore, et al, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, New Testament page 335.

⁷ For more information, see *Part 4/The Nature of the New Covenant...*

⁸ Stamatis, Catechetical Handbook of the Eastern Orthodox Church, page 191.

⁹ Per Mark 1:4 NKJV margin.

Matthew 3:11a prospective: "As for me, I baptize you with water because-of repentance"

Luke 3:3b prospective: "preaching a baptism of repentance because-of the forgiveness of sins."

People would not likely be baptized if they had not repented, so it is "because of" in Matthew 3:11. William Tyndale's early English translation has "I Baptise you in water in token of repentaunce" (1526). The VRA has "na base do" = "in-the basis of-the" at this verse. However, for the other verse, there was necessity for repentance in order to get "forgiveness of sins" or "remission of sins" (KJV), suggesting "for" in Luke 3:3. We conclude:

Matthew 3:11a "I baptize you with water |in-the basis of-the| you amending to the repentance"¹

Luke 3:3b "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" [NASB].

Acts 19:4 has "John baptized |amb un baptisme de penediment" (NASB |TBS-Cat) = "with a baptism of penitence." The baptism was on condition of repentance, and the repentance + baptism pair was preached and done with purpose "for the forgiveness of sins." Regarding John preaching on it, the Greek word order has "baptism" before "of repentance" and then "forgiveness of sins" at both Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 as so: "βαπτισμα a baptism μετανοιας of repentance εις in-order-for αφεσιν pardon αμαρτιων of sins"² = "a baptism of repentance in-order-for pardon of sins." This baptism was because of "amending to" and showed conversion to "repentance for the remission of sins" (KJV).

Repentance is not changing belief structure; Scripture's emphasis is changing of actions. John preached "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" at Matthew 3:2 (NASB) and "Bring forth therefore fruits |befitting| to amendment of life"³ at 3:8. Luke 3:10-4 says

"`What should we do then?' the crowd asked. John answered, `Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.' Even tax collectors came to be baptized. `Teacher,' they asked, `what should we do?' `Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, `And what should we do?' He replied, `Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay'" (TNIV).

John's ministry of "baptism of repentance | for the remission of sins" (NASB |KJV) emphasized not baptism, but "amendment of life"⁴ⁿ and associated deeds.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus gives us more detail about how this combination worked, as well as giving the answer to the age-old riddle about why the sinless Christ was baptized. Josephus explains at *Antiquities* 18:5:2/18:117 that John the Baptist preached to

"the Jews to lead righteous lives, to practice justice toward their fellows and piety toward God, and so doing, to join in baptism. In his view, this was a necessary preliminary if baptism was to be acceptable to God. They must not employ it to gain pardon for what sins they committed, but as a consecration of the body [supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness."⁵

As a messenger of God, John commanded "the Jews" to be baptized as an act of "piety toward God," so Jesus was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness" (NBV) per Matthew 3:15. Jesus Christ later ordained that "repentance for |remission of sins should be preached in his name" (NASB |KJV) at Luke 24:47, which extends the conversion which John's baptism represented and adds Himself to it.

Josephus and the New Testament may seem contradictory. Mark 1:4b and Luke 3:3b say John preached "a baptism of repentance for| the remission of sins" (NASB |KJV), and we must always place the Word of God above all else. However, these are not contradictory. John preached at Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (NASB) and 3:8 "Bring forth therefore fruits |befitting| to amendment of life."⁶ Per 3:6, his practice was "Confessando os seus pecados,

¹ NASB| "na base do" VRA translated | "vous amener á la repentance" LSG translated.

² Lacueva, *Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español*, pages 137, 233: "βαπτισμα un baptismo μετανοιας de arrepentimiento εις para αφεσιν perdón αμαρτιων de pecados" translated by me.

³ KJV 1611 | Scofield, English, *New Scofield Reference Bible*, page 995 | KJV 1611 margin.

⁴ On salvation, Scripture talks most on biblical faith, as should every salvation sermon.

⁵ Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*, 484 | Hadas-Label, *Flavius Josephus*, page 33 | Whiston, *ibid.*; reference Stendahl, *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, page 40.

⁶ KJV 1611 | Scofield, English, *New Scofield Reference Bible*, page 995 | KJV 1611 margin.

eram batizados" (AEC) = "Confessing the their sins, they-were baptized." Per Matthew 3:6, John required people to acknowledge their sinfulness and need for repentance, and he preached that people must repent and do deeds fitting this amending of life. Among these deeds was to confirm "piety towards God" by submission to baptism. In baptism "of repentance" (KJV) or "of amendment of life" (GenB), repentance that led one to baptism caused "remission of sins" because they were "thoroughly justified beforehand by righteousness" per Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:5:2.

The baptism did not "put away" sins, because the righteousness of the repentant had already justified the soul. Anyone baptized due to "repentance" showed new submissiveness to God; anyone 'regretful' but refused baptism was not obedient to God and unrepentant. John's baptism, like Jewish baptism, was to show conversion. John practiced and preached a repentance + baptism combination intended "for the forgiveness of sins" with Luke 3:3 "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (NASB) and baptism showing conversion to Matthew 3:8 "amendment of life" (GenB) and identifying with it.

Scripture is silent about Jesus' death nullifying the effect of John's "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." At Acts 19:1-6 some of John's baptizees are called "disciples" (NASB),¹ⁿ and Paul asked them "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit, having believed?"² There is no indication that their salvations were revoked when Jesus died - they were baptized to obtain the Holy Spirit.³ⁿ At Acts 18:24-28 a baptizee of John was not given Christian baptism. In both cases, the "remission of sins" was due to the repentance that John's baptism was a response to and showed conversion to.

Unlike previous baptisms among Jews, John's baptism was not distinct from Christianity. At Acts 19:4 "Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance | saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus'" (TNIV | ASV).

Near the end of John's baptism ministry, Jesus had one too. John 3:22-3 has "Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized" (NASB). 4:1 has "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John" (NASB) and "although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were" (NASB).

This baptism did not rival John's. John 4:1 indicates that John was still baptizing when Jesus left His baptism ministry. When we recall that Jesus was baptized by John beforehand, and note that in Jewish culture baptism identified conversion,⁴ we infer that these two baptisms were the same.

At John 4:1a "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples" (NASB) -- note distinction between 'making disciples' and 'baptizing disciples.' At John 12:47b Jesus says "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (ASV), yet at John 4:2 Jesus' role in this ministry is clarified: "Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were" (NASB). Jesus came to save everyone, yet Himself baptized no one; we infer that in His baptism ministry, baptism was not part of getting people saved.

John 6:28-9 says "The people asked Jesus, 'What are the works God wants us to do?' Jesus answered 'The work God wants you to do is this: to believe | on him whom he hath sent'" (ICB | ASV). Recall that Jesus had been involved in a baptism ministry, but when they asked for a plurality of "works" to "do," Jesus had just one -- belief on Him. Hence, when Jesus said at 6:29 that the singular "work" "believe" and that ONE "work" only is what "God wants" us "to do," this excluded baptism.

The Gospel of John was written to New Covenant Christians so "by believing you may have life in His name" (HCSB) per John 20:31. In New Covenant Gospel salvation, the baptism action is still distinct from salvation by faith itself, but is an obligated follow-up to any genuine biblical faith.

¹ In Acts, generic "disciples" means "Christians"; only people who are already Christians get Christian baptism.

² Scofield, English, *The New Scofield Study Bible*, page 1397 emphasis mine.

³ Romans 8:9 has "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (ASV). Acts 4:12 teaches that salvation is only through Jesus Christ, so even if John's baptizees were not His direct followers, He got salvation for John's baptizees. Scripture gives no specifics of how, nor do we need to know -- we trust it.

⁴ In Stamps, Adams, *The Full Life Study Bible New Testament*, page 249.

Water Baptism Essay Division #2 of 2: Christian Baptism Both Jew and Gentile

Christians were to continue such conversion baptism: in Matthew 28:19-20a Jesus said "make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you" (NASB|NCV). In ancient times, a person's name represented not just physical identification but the whole person.¹ Two lessons arise from this. First, Jesus Christ told us to baptize "disciples."²ⁿ Second, Jesus Christ expects His followers to be baptized in His Name - and all that His Name represents - just as He expects them to obey Him.³ⁿ

Jesus Christ was to do baptism in the Holy Spirit per Mark 1:7-8,⁴ⁿ as John the Baptist taught "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you |in the Holy Spirit" (ESV|ASV). Still, Matthew 28:19-20 shows that Christians were to baptize "disciples." An example is at Acts 10:34-48. About this event, Peter recalled that when tongues were spoken, "I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized | in the Holy Spirit'" (ESV|ASV) per Acts 11:16. These new believers had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, were therefore Christians, and were now fitting recipients of baptism in water. In response to this truth, Peter said "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" and then "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (ASV) per Acts 10:47-8.

We see that Jesus Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit, and mortals are to baptize Christ's "disciples" in water. At Matthew 28:19 Jesus said "make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them" (NASB|NCV). The baptism we are commanded to do is to baptize "disciples" in water. Per Acts 11:26, Christians is a rename of "disciples": "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB). Hence, Matthew 28:19-20a tells us to baptize "Christians"/"disciples" in water.

This means mortal Christians are responsible for administering water baptism. It also means Christians have as much obligation to get baptized as they do to obey Christ's teachings as a whole.

¹ In Barker, NASB Study Bible, page 1519.

² Per Acts 11:26, "Christians" renamed "disciples." Greek transliterated "baptize" means "completely submerge."* Matthew 28:19 tells us to "completely submerge" "disciples" of Jesus Christ. To be totally right as we follow this, we must acknowledge Christians we baptize to be Christians. Some people think no one is a Christian until after s/he comes up from baptism; this would mean that when s/he is brought under, s/he is 'not a disciple' -- we would not be baptizing "disciples," but non-disciples. We see that "disciples" are "disciples"/Christians before baptism and extensive instruction.

* Stamatis, Catechetical Handbook of the Eastern Orthodox Church, page 391.

³ It is unrealistic to think that any person who knows fully and rightly of baptism, yet desires and chooses to remain knowingly unbaptized, is a follower of Christ.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:13a says "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" plus "were all made to drink of one Spirit" (ASV). All Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ does that, as anticipated at Mark 1:7-8.

The statement that "there is...one baptism" (KJV, ASV, others) at Ephesians 4:4-5 gets used to prohibit water baptism,* or to deny existence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The narration of the event described at Acts 10:34-48,+11:4-17,+15:8-9 shows that Peter knew and accepted both baptisms. The right meaning of "there is...one baptism" should be understood from the culture of ancient initiation rites.

Ephesians 3:3-9 refers to "mystery" (ASV) in Christianity. Mystery religions were about an entity who had overcome death,** as Christ did. The competing ancient popular mystery religion Mithraism had multiple levels of initiation.^* All involved water and each represented rank† There are not multiple initiation rites assigned to Christians so that we can create a rank system among ourselves; we have only one.

It is sad that any part of Ephesians 3:21-4:6, written to urge Christian mutual acceptance, gets misused in factious activity as grounds to reject Christians based on 'unacceptable' conversion experiences. This use is contrary to its purpose.

* Dandelion, An Introduction to Quakerism, pages 212-3.

** Bell, Exploring the New Testament World, page 142.

^* Sarah Iles Johnston in Johnston, Religions of the Ancient World, page 104.

† E. Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, pages 276-7.

At Acts 26:18 Paul recalled when Christ told him of his mission to the Gentiles "para que reciban, por la fe que es en mí, remisión de pecados y suerte entre los santificados" (RVR 1909) = "in-order-for that they-might-receive, by the faith that is in me, remission of sins and lot among the sanctified." During Paul's conversion experience at Acts 22:16,¹ⁿ Ananias gave these instructions²ⁿ:

1. a modern Spanish translation: "Levánte y sé bautizado, y lava tus pecados invocando su nombre" (LBLA) = "Let-you-rise and you-be baptized, and wash your sins invoking His name."
2. the 1560 English Geneva Bible in its 1602 revision: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sinnes, in calling on the Name of the Lord" (GenB).
3. the 1568 English Bishops' Bible: "aryse, & be baptized, & wasshe away thy sinnes, in calling on the name of the Lorde" (BishB).
4. the 1855 edition of the French Version Martin: "Lève-toi, et sois baptisé, et purifié de tes péchés, en invoquant le nom du Seigneur" (VM) = "Raise-you, and let-you-be baptized, and you-purify of your sins, in invoking the name of-the Lord."
5. a modern French translation: "Lève-toi, sois baptisé, et lavé de tes péchés, en invoquant le nom du Seigneur" (NVSFR) = "Raise-you, let-you-be baptized, and wash your sins, in invoking the name of-the Lord."

Acts 22:16b³ⁿ is literally "Levantandote, bautízate" = "Rising-you, make-you-baptized" then Greek και = "y" = "and," then "sé lavado" = "be washed" or 'make-you-washed'⁴; και translated "and" links two distinct items,⁵ⁿ which are two double-directives. The second double-directive was that Paul would 'make washed away' his sins by "calling on the name of the Lord," a reference⁶ to Joel 2:32 quoted in Romans 10:13 "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (ASV). Paul knew Jesus Christ to be Lord, but not as Savior; he was to "call on the name of the Lord," appealing to Him to purify him of his sins, and then as a new convert to full faith, was to be baptized.

This passage also tied in ancient Judaic views of what convert baptism meant - part of the *Bible meaning of a Bible term*. Ancient Jewish conversion baptism matched prior conversion and was seen as showing 'washing away' prior life and as symbolically making new people,⁷ representing entrance into a new life.⁸ Baptism had symbolic meanings which were transferred, adapted and expanded in Christianity.⁹ⁿ They are referred to in Scripture, where they support and enhance *larger main points*. Here, a secondary point was that Paul was to show 'washing away' his prior life of sin.

Romans 6:3-5 is part of a passage explaining a picture representation of how Christians are to relate to sin: Romans 6:2b "We are those who have died to sin" (TNIV). This must be a picture because reality is that Christians still face the sin problem per 1 John 1:8-10. Romans 6:2-11 gives a picture of the Christian's viewed relationship to sin, and also explains Colossians 2:11-3. Behold:

¹ The early 1800's United States saw a unity movement known as the Restoration begin. After it began, some people within it started to teach that salvation depends on completed biblical water baptism -- no exceptions. Despite faith on Jesus Christ as Lord, unbaptized Christians were 'unsaved' and so 'not Christian.' The error lasted.

Opposing these mistaken inferences is NOT to downplay or denigrate the duty of baptism. Please recall this document is a Christian unity study. These errors cause some Christians to not be acknowledged. **Given this study's purpose, errors that prevent church unity must be corrected.**

² Due to misinterpretation of some Bible passages, many people think completed water baptism is cause of salvation for believers -- not biblical faith. Water baptism was a formal closing 'conversion supplement' of Judaism. The New Covenant shifted away from ceremonial activity and towards faith. It would be inconsistent with this for a ceremonial act that was not primary in Judaism to become so in Christianity.

³ We have seen Scripture's statements that biblical faith assures salvation. When a baptism passage can be understood multiple ways, the right way/s harmonize with this.

⁴ Lacueva, Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español, page 571; Spanish->English translations mine.

⁵ Scripture attributes administering of water baptism solely to mortals. If water baptism washes away sin, then the mortal baptizer would be removing sin. However, removal of sins is a role solely the Lord's, so baptism and removing sin are distinct.

⁶ Reference from Lacueva, Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español, page 571.

⁷ So That's Why! Bible, page 1287.

⁸ E. J. Bicknell article in Gore, et al, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, *New Testament* page 335.

⁹ It is important not to take references to these symbolic meanings as literal.

Romans 6:3-5

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized |in| Christ Jesus have been baptized |in-the| His death? |Of result that| we have been buried with Him through baptism |in-the| death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united |in-the| likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be |in-the| likeness of His resurrection"¹

Colossians 2:11-3a

"in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the |poder = power| of God who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the| lack of physical circumcision" (NASB|ARA and translated|NASB|NBV).

Both use the cultural view of conversion baptism making 'new people' by 'washing away' prior life to picture lessons on other themes. Colossians 2:11-3 pictures our flesh removed via "the circumcision of Christ" = "circumcision made **without hands**,"²ⁿ applied to us by faith in God's power to save us via Christ's resurrection, which per 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 is a "first" truth (ASV) of the Gospel. Romans 6:5 says baptism is "in-the likeness" to Christ's burial and resurrection, like Colossians 2:11-3. Romans 6:6 has figurative "our old self was crucified" (TNIV) in likeness to Christ's death, and 6:11 "Likewise | consider yourselves dead to sin" (KJV | ESV). Colossians 2:11-3 and Romans 6:2-11 show that we imitate Christ's death and new life in baptism; matching cultural views of the era on conversion baptism, we 'wash away' prior life and start life anew with a perspective of being a new person. The points of Romans 6:2-11 and Colossians 2:11-3 are these³ⁿ: we forsake lives of sin at conversion, and Christ is our circumcision that removed our prior uncleanness = sinful lives.

Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ identifies with Him and His authority. 1 Corinthians 10:2 describes the Exodus Israelites as "batizados em Moisés" (ARC, AEC) = "baptized in Moses." They took the Judaic Law delivered by Moses for authority about God. Greek εἰς here and at Galatians 3:27 has for one meaning "in."⁴ Galatians 3:24 calls the Judaic Law "child-conductor | vnto Christ" (NASB margin|BishB), then 3:25 "now that faith has come, we are no longer under a |child-conductor" (NASB| margin), then 3:26b "ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (ASV), and 3:27 "For as many of you as were baptized |em=in| Christ have put on Christ" (KJV|ARA/ARC/AEC/VRA and translated| KJV). In Roman society, a youth who had become an adult put aside childhood clothes for new clothes to commemorate the change.⁵ In ancient times, clothing was seen as representative of the wearer's self.⁶ This passage is a case where knowledge of ancient culture assists right handling of Scripture.⁷ⁿ Galatians 3:24-7⁸ⁿ teaches 'growing up.' They were to replace the "child-conductor" Judaic Law with biblical faith in Christ for salvation, identify oneself with Christ via baptism in His name, "put on Christ" to signify move into spiritual adulthood, and should be 'wearing' the attributes of Christ.

Romans 6:2-11 and Galatians 3:24-7 assume each Christian baptized as they teach. Colossians 2:11-3 parallels ancient Judaism, where circumcision made one a Jew and baptism followed promptly; in Christianity, baptism follows-up faith that makes one a Christian.⁹ⁿ It should be just as prompt.

¹ NASB with |"in" = ARA "em" translated, "in-the" = ARA "na" translated, "Of result that" = AEC "De sorte que" translated|.

² Some people think this is baptism; water baptism is not administered "without hands."

³ Sadly, some focus so narrowly on the baptism sub-passages that they miss these points.

⁴ Strong, Exhaustive Concordance, page *Greek Lexicon* 16.

⁵ Life Application Bible, page 2121.

⁶ Children's Resource Ministry Bible, page 458.

⁷ Similar: Amos 4:6 "cleanness of teeth" (KJV) seems good now, but at that time, it meant a lack of food to dirty the teeth with, meaning starvation.

⁸ Per Colossians 1:18, the church is the body of Christ. At Acts 5:14+2:47, it is God who adds people to the Lord. Scripture attributes administering/receiving water baptism solely to mortals, so if water baptism puts persons into Christ, then mortals would take on a role Scripture attributes to God. Such teaching is unauthorized.

⁹ **This distinction matters because** evangelism should NOT happen only near water, so conversion should not happen only near water. Not every believer can get baptized right away.

Besides Matthew 28:19-20 discussed to start this essay,¹ⁿ there are two other passages which show that Christians should get themselves baptized in obedience to Christ – a rightly-knowing and willful rejection of baptism is not an option to a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.

One of these is Acts 2:38, specifically part of Peter’s sentence. Acts 2:38b is below:

- “You-people-must-repent-you| – [and so] let-s/he-get-self-baptized each one of you| in the name of Jesus Christ – | in order to the remission of |you-people’s sins.”²
- “Arrependei-vos, e cada um de vós seja batizado em nome de Jesus Cristo, para remissão de vossos pecados” (VRA).³ⁿ
- “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Iesus Christ, for the remission of sinnes” [KJV 1611].⁴ⁿ

Greek is not word-order oriented like English. In English, what a clause means is usually seen from the words in it and their order. In some languages, including Greek, this is not so: what a clause means is often seen from the words in it and what forms those words take within it.

Hyphenation of clauses was not used in the early 1600’s; other punctuation was used. With the 1611 King James Version punctuated like it was, and like in printings up to before the 1769 edition of the KJV, it was not inconsistent with the Portuguese translation quoted. The 1611 KJV, using English, does not have the variety of verb forms needed to convey the Greek here with precision.

The Portuguese translation cited is similar to the original 1681 translation of João Ferreira D’Almeida which has at the start “Arrependeivos, e bautizeze cada hum de vosoutros em nome de Jesus Christo, pera” which is quoted up to the equivalent of modern “para.” That second comma is exactly where the second comma was in the KJV before 1769. This translation had “bautizeze” meaning “let-s/he-get-self-baptized.” Unlike English, which has only one verb tense for directives, Portuguese and Spanish have more than one, and more than one is used in the translation here. The 1611 King James Version, using English, was not capable of matching that level of precision.

New Testament Greek also has more than one verb tense for directives. New Testament Greek is so precise that it has multiple ways to say “the” depending upon the circumstances. Two different verb tenses are used in the Greek here; the stronger verb tense being upon the equivalent to KJV “Repent,” and the verb tense beneath KJV “be baptized” does not carry the same force.⁵

The Portuguese translations represent that situation very well: the strong imperative is used for “Arrependeivos” = “Arrependei-vos” = “You-people-must-repent-you” while the obligatory subjunctive is used for “seja batizado” = “let-s/he-be baptized” and “bautizeze” = “let-s/he-get-self-baptized.” The Portuguese VRA, ARA, ARC, AEC have for the two directives this:

¹ It has been said of baptism that if someone “is fully a Christian without it, why insist on the ordinance, or even practice it?”* Answer: because Christ said so.

* Hayden, Fifty Years of Digression and Disturbance, page twelve.

² For sources, see lengthy source note over this passage on the first page of *Part 4*.

³ English word-by-word of the VRA does a grievous injustice to the VRA’s grammar here: “You-must-repent-yourself, and each one of you let-s/he-be baptized in name of Jesus Christ, in-order-for remission of you-people’s sins.”

Portuguese is not a heavily word order-oriented language, but often uses varying forms of words to communicate meaning, so word-by-word English translation here does not accurately communicate what the Portuguese says; it is the same for the Greek here.

⁴ Notice a comma present in the 1611 KJV that is not present in contemporary printings of the KJV. That comma was present in editions and printings of the KJV up to 1768. A 1768 printing had for the whole verse “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Iesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost.”

Modern printings of the KJV are of the 1769 edition, which was done by one man named Benjamin Blayney.* Its handling of this verse has led people to wrongly think the verse negates the rest of Scripture on salvation by biblical faith. Of course, it is better to adopt a translation here that does not conflict with the rest of Scripture.

* in J. Williams, Shaylor, From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man, page 159-60.

⁵ In Zodhiates, Complete WordStudy New Testament, page 397.

"Arrependei-vos, e cada um de vós seja batizado" = "You-people-must-repent-you, and each one of you-people let-s/he-be baptized." In all of these, the strong imperative is used for the directive to repent, and the obligatory subjunctive is used for the directive of baptism.

The same is done for Spanish translations. The 1569 C. de Reyna/Reina Bible had "Hazed penitência, y baptizese" = "You-must-do penitence, and let-s/he-get-self-baptized." The 1602 C. de Valera Bible had "Hazed penitencia, y baptizese" which translates exactly the same. The Reina-Valera Revisiónes of 1862, 1909, 1960, and 1995 all say "Arrepentíos, y bautícese" which translates "You-people-must-repent-you, and let-s/he-get-self-baptized." Like the Portuguese translations quoted, these used the strong imperative for equivalent of KJV "Repent" and the obligatory subjunctive for equivalent of KJV "be baptized" - precisely reflecting the difference in force between Greek verbs.

Ancient Greek is not as based on word order as English is. The Greek of Peter's two directives, when translated precisely, show it is 'Repent for the remission of your sins' with 'get-self-baptized' being obligated by such repentance. The Greek connects repentance and salvation.¹

This is enhanced by the quantities of each directive. The directive "Repent ye"²ⁿ (ASV) or "Arrependei-vos" (ARA, ARC, AEC, VRA) or "Arrepentíos" (RVR 1909/1960/1995) is plural. The "for the remission |of your sins" (KJV | ASV)³ⁿ is plural. The directive "bautícese" (RVR 1909/1960/1995) = "let-s/he-get-self-baptized" is singular. Greek grammar enabled the obligation to get oneself baptized to be made a side directive⁴ⁿ inserted within the command to 'repent for the remission of your sins.'

Acts 2:38 resumes and adds Christ to pre-Christian Mark 1:4+Luke 3:3 baptisms of conversion to "repentance for |remission of sins" (NASB|ASV) and fulfills Christ's mandate at Luke 24:47 "repentance for |remission of sins should be preached in his name" (NASB |KJV). The first time this

was obeyed, at Acts 2:38, **an obligation to get oneself baptized was presented in the middle of it.** If a person has truly repented to follow Jesus Christ, then s/he should be baptized in His Name.

'What about those unbaptized due to a mistake or lack of known opportunity?' John 3:18 about Christ makes it clear: "Whoever | believeth on him is not condemned" (TNIV | KJV).

This brings us to 1 Peter 3:21, which starts by describing the "water" mentioned in 1 Peter 3:20. About that "water": "which also after a |figure| doth now save you, even baptism, | not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience,| by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."⁵ Peter does make clear that when he says "save you, even baptism" he means "not the removal of dirt from the flesh," in other words, 'not the washing.'⁶ⁿ He clarifies that what he means is "an appeal to God for a clear conscience." Baptism in water represents our recognition of guilt and calling upon the Lord, both of which compose repentance and faith. As Romans 6:3-5 states, baptism is in "likeness" to Christ's death and resurrection. Per 1 Corinthians 15:1-17, those events are what save us. 1 Peter 3:20b-1 shows that the water of baptism represents our repentance, and baptism is a likeness to Christ's death and resurrection, which are the causes of our salvation.

Romans 10:13 says "for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (ASV). This is true, and baptism is held as a representation of 'calling' at 1 Peter 3:20b-1. It follows that such repentance and such a calling upon the Lord should be represented by baptism.

Let us look at Acts 8:26-39. At Acts 8:27 we meet the Ethiopian eunuch. He is reading the Book of Isaiah. Philip, a Christian of the Jerusalem congregation, is sent to meet him. At Acts 8:35

¹ In Zodhiates, Complete WordStudy New Testament, page 397.

² In Elizabethan English, "y-" pronouns were plural, and "th-" pronouns were singular.

³ The KJV does not have "your." Four of the five pre-500 C.E. Greek manuscripts have equivalent for "your" -- Metzger, Textual Commentary, page 301.

⁴ In Acts 3:19, there is a twin command "Arrependei-vos, pois, e converteí-vos" (ARA, ARC, AEC, VRA) = "You-people-must-repent-you, therefore, and you-people-must-convert-you." This time, the underlying Greek verb tenses are exactly the same.*

*In Zodhiates, Complete WordStudy New Testament, page 400.

⁵ ASV|BishB|ASV|NASB|RSV 1952|KJV; insight from "Baptism, which is symbolized by that water" (ISV).

⁶ Peter did not want to be misunderstood as going against Ephesians 2:8-10's teaching.

Philip "told him the good news about Jesus" (NBV). The Scriptures' first report of his accepting the Gospel is at Acts 8:36 "See, here is water. What is to prevent my being baptized" (NBV). That request was how he showed acceptance. It did not take 'have to'-type compulsion; he *wanted* it.

At Acts 16:30 a jailer asked Paul and Silas "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (ASV) upon which they replied at Acts 16:31 solely "Believe on the Lord Jesus |, and you will be saved, you and all your household" (ASV|NASB). At 16:32 the jailer's family was preached to with unspecified words, then 16:33 "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, him and all his, immediately" (ASV). The matter of baptism was not of such urgency that it precluded medical treatment; the wounds of Paul and Silas were washed, and afterward baptism was done. Spiritual salvation is a more urgent matter than physical health. Therefore, it is evident that completed baptism was not seen as the deciding factor of eternity -- the belief specified was.

Despite this, at Acts 16:34 it was only after baptisms were finished that food was put out for all. On this conversion experience, completed baptisms were taken care of before eating. The comfort of food was delayed to address the high priority of new converts being baptized.

Water baptism promptly on conversion was the common New Testament-era practice repeatedly exemplified in Scripture, as reflected in the priority shown above, and in the baptism accounts in Acts -- 2:41, 8:12, 8:36-9, 9:18+22:16, 10:47-8, 16:15, 16:33-4, 18:8, 19:4-5. Nowhere in Scripture is water baptism withheld or delayed, nor should it be.

A Thought on Significance of Water Baptism

Rightly-knowing Gospel assenters who wish to avoid obeying a simple command doable privately in minutes should wonder:

- 1) if they truly value how Christ suffered to save them, and
- 2) how they expect to serve Jesus Christ **for life**.

Debating such people into water does not fix their unbelief, of which this is a symptom. 'Baptism' of unbelievers is not baptism. To 'baptize' rebels against Christ in Christ's Name is not right. They should instead be urged to come to biblical faith in Christ.

Factionism Note: 'But they did not get baptized right.'

Water baptism is but one command of Christ. 1 John 1:8-10 tells us ALL to acknowledge our sins. This means none of us has obeyed Christ rightly. We best not rally factions thinking 'We have obeyed rightly, but they have not' to any degree.

Salvation Same for Jew and Gentile? YES. Peter the Jew stated of Gentile believers that God "made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (ASV) at Acts 15:9 and "we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (ASV) at Acts 15:11.

New Testament Example of Faith – Group Healing

Some believe that God would never do anything for us without us first completing some act to verify acceptance of the gift. However, notice Luke 17:12-9

"Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' So when He saw them, He said to them, '| Go show yourselves| to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well'" (NKJV|RSV 1952, NLT 1996|NKJV).

The 10 lepers were all healed: "as they went, they were cleansed" (NKJV). God knows all; they had not completed their one command to get to the priests and show themselves, yet He knew they believed and were obeying accordingly, so they were healed. This shows that God has given something when He was obeyed but no commanded act had been fully completed for Him. Further, this is in the New Testament period, and like salvation, was intended for more than a specific person.

Does God Need Signs? NO! Acts 15:8 has "And God, who knows all hearts, gave them evidence by granting them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us" (NBV) and 15:9b "cleansing their hearts by faith" (ASV). God does not need us to complete acts to be external signs for Him to know faith; He knows the heart and acts on it. In fact, in this case it was He Who gave the evidence for others.

Salvation is not done on basis of when humans observe signs. Mortals do not have this importance.

New Testament Example of Faith – Abraham

Galatians 5:6 says "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only | the kind of faith that works through love" (ESV|ICB). James 2:14-26 explains how our works show us to be believers,¹ⁿ culminating with "faith apart from works is dead" (ESV). We must take notice of one of the examples of how faith must be active: the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham mentioned at James 2:21-3, how "faith was active along with his works" (ESV), narrated at Genesis 22. Per Genesis 22:2, God commanded "a burnt offering" (JPS 1985). Coming to the end of the narration, Genesis 22:9 says "They arrived at the place where God had told him" (JPS 1985), then 22:10 says "And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son" (JPS 1985) -- but at 22:12 God says to Abraham "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, nor |do anything to him" (JPS 1917|JPS 1985). Later, Genesis 25:8-9 tells us "And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him" (JPS 1985). It is necessary to conclude that Abraham's "burnt offering" sacrifice of Isaac was NOT COMPLETED, yet James 2:14-26 shows it a positive example of a faith that did work.

New Testament Example of Faith – When Christ Died

At Luke 22:50 we read Jesus saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (ASV) announcing a New Covenant. Starting at Hebrews 7:22b "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (NASB) the passage continues to Hebrews 8:6-7: "But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second" (ASV). The New Testament recognizes between Judaism and Christianity only two covenants: an Old Covenant and a "second covenant" = "New Covenant" in Christ's blood.

Matthew 27:50-1a has "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom" (TNIV). This curtain separated the rest of the temple from the innermost part, which had the presence of God and could only be entered by one certain priest on stringent conditions. When this curtain tore, it marked the end of the Old Covenant; God ripped that barrier apart Himself from Heaven's direction down. This is important, because it shows the relevance of one of the first people saved under the New Covenant.

Some people personally scorn the Thief on the Cross for the story's implications in baptism disputes. This ought not be; Christ accepted him as eternal companionship when he believed.²ⁿ

Originally, he mocked the Lord Jesus on the cross per Matthew 27:44 "And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way" (ESV). The end of the thief's words are at Luke 23:41-3 "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he was saying, 'Jesus,³ⁿ remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise'" (NASB). Although this thief was originally antagonistic to Jesus, upon this thief's repentance, Jesus assured the man of being in the same place as righteous Jesus Himself after death!

When we read more, we see that after Jesus died, those on crosses next to Him remained alive:

¹ James 2:24 "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (ESV). This is like Jesus' saying in Matthew 11:19 "wisdom is justified by her works" (ASV). Wisdom was already good, as seen in Proverbs, but it is shown to be thus by its results.

² Even if he had done John the Baptist's ritual, it would not have been valid because he had not met the conditions "repentance" and Acts 19:4 "should believe on |Him who was coming after him" (ASV|NASB); the thief was a thief and a scorner of Christ.

³ Of seven Greek manuscripts from before 500 C.E., only three have the reading rendered in the KJV "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me..."; the three oldest manuscripts and a fourth have the ancient reading which is followed in the NASB.

--Scrivener, Bezae, page 257; Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, pages xvii, 283; Aland et al, Novum Testamentum Graece, page 240.

- At John 19:30 Jesus Christ dies
- At John 19:31 the Jewish leaders asked that those on the crosses would have their legs broken to speed up their deaths so that the crosses would be vacant the next day, and
- At John 19:32 both of Jesus' neighbors had their legs broken.

Recall that at the very moment of Jesus' death, the Old Covenant was literally ripped from top to bottom, but the penitent thief was still alive. Jesus knows all things per John 16:30-3. Jesus knew when the penitent thief would die. The penitent thief, however, was promised a place with righteous Jesus by Jesus Himself. Hence, when the penitent thief died after Jesus' death, he was not saved by anything other than the New Covenant that all Christians are saved under, and Jesus expected this.

This event gives valuable insights into how we are saved. Romans 4:5 says "And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (ESV). The penitent thief had no opportunity to do anything to confirm his new faith. While Romans 10:9 requires willingness to confess Jesus as Lord, Luke 23:41-3 as originally written¹ⁿ shows not even this action -- the thief recognized Jesus' authority over a kingdom, so no doubt would have confessed Him as Lord. The only recorded things the thief did here was show realization that his sins deserved punishment and call on Jesus to treat him with mercy -- and Jesus gave him salvation.

Simplicity: A Detailed Narration of Conversion

2 Corinthians 11:3 refers to "the **simplicity** and the purity that is toward Christ" (ASV). To illustrate this simplicity, consider a detailed conversion in Acts 8:26-39. The Ethiopian official was puzzled over Isaiah 53. Philip, having been sent by God to him, "began to speak and, starting from that same Scripture, told him the |Good News about Jesus" (NBV|ICB). Another translation: "began to speak and, starting with that same Scripture, |preached unto him Jesus" (NBV|ASV). The Bible text has at Acts 8:35 what is translatable "told him the Good News about Jesus" or "preached unto him Jesus."²ⁿ

The Ethiopian responded as so: "See, here is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?" (NBV) at Acts 8:36. Philip promptly did so in the next authentic verse³ⁿ: Acts 8:38 "both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him" (NBV). Philip got no opportunity to teach him anything else: "But when they came up from the water, the Lord's Spirit took Philip away and the eunuch did not see him anymore; he went joyfully on his way" (NBV) back to Ethiopia per Acts 8:39.

¹ Of seven Greek manuscripts from before 500 C.E., only three have the reading rendered in the King James Version "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me..."; the three oldest manuscripts and a fourth have the ancient reading which is followed in the NASB "And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me...'"

--Scrivener, Bezae, page 257; Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, pages xvii, 283; Aland et al, Novum Testamentum Graece, page 240.

² The Bible text has at Acts 8:35 what is translatable "told him the Good News about Jesus" or "preached unto him Jesus." It does NOT have any text translatable

- 1) 'preached unto him a collection of beliefs on details of academic religion,'
- 2) 'preached unto him pre-emptive stands to take in potential future disputes,'
- 3) 'preached unto him the precepts and procedures of good congregations.'

The Bible text has at Acts 8:35 what is translatable "told him the Good News about Jesus" or "preached unto him Jesus."

³ Most Greek manuscripts with what is now Acts 8 do not have what is now versified as "Acts 8:37."* Some of those with such text do not include all of it (AmerV margin). Further, it is not present in any of the ancient Greek manuscripts from before the year 500.** Both the evidences of quantity and age testify to the fact that what is now versified as "Acts 8:37" was not in Acts when Acts was written.

* J. White, The King James Only Controversy, page 63;
Hills, The King James Version Defended, page 154.

** In Sayão, Novo Testamento Trilíngüe: Grego, Português, Inglês, page 415.

In Acts 8:26-39, the Ethiopian official was taught "the Good News about Jesus" (ICB). To show acceptance of the Good News about Jesus Christ, he requested baptism. It was promptly given. Immediately afterward, Philip was taken away. The Lord then allowed the Ethiopian official to continue on his way back to regular life. Enough had been done.

We should not under-appreciate the significance of this. Philip did not get to teach him anything else besides "the Good News about Jesus" (ICB). As far as God Himself was concerned, this itself was enough – and God Himself acted accordingly after the request was granted.

Furthermore, when the Ethiopian eunuch had been given the privilege of water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, enough had been done. He was not directed to stay in Palestine or Egypt so that he could attend a church congregation. He was not given further instruction on a plethora of details. This happened instead: "he went joyfully on his way" (NBV) back to Ethiopia per Acts 8:39 so that he could live out his Christian faith in regular life. God's direct activity enabled this.

When it comes to Christian conversion, when a person accepts "the Good News about Jesus" (ICB), this is sufficient. What it takes for a person to be a Christian is that simple.

Distinguishing Faith and Response Works

Remember that what we call "Ephesians" was originally a general letter because KJV "at Ephesus" was not in the oldest manuscripts containing 1:1.¹ Ephesians 2:8-10 says "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast himself. For in Christ Jesus, God made us new people unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV). We are saved "through faith" and "not a result of works." Ephesians 4:5 in the same epistle has "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (NBV). James 2:17 shows that faith is impersonal "it" and "itself" (ASV), but the Lord is a Person, so just as faith is not the Lord, Ephesians 4:5 shows baptism is distinct from faith²ⁿ; when Ephesians 2:8-10 says we are saved "through faith" and "not a result of" plural "works," baptism is excluded, but is one of those works referred to as coming from salvation.

Paul had a similar separation in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23 records Paul writing "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. | And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof" (TNIV|ASV). Paul wanted to do anything right to get people salvation. It is very informative that he wrote at 1 Corinthians 1:14 "I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except" (TNIV) a few

¹ Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 582.

² Those who believe in salvation only upon completed baptism often use notions absent from Scripture, such as 'God meets us in baptism' or 'In baptism we contact the blood of Jesus.' Of course, these non-Scriptural notions imply that even as unregenerate, by our own actions we move ourselves toward salvation, contrary to Romans 8:2b-8 and Ephesians 2:8-10.

THIS IS A PERIL OF ADVANCING NON-BIBLICAL DOCTRINES: THEY ARE POTENTIALLY ANTI-BIBLICAL.
Likewise, if salvation is 'through faith upon baptism' and a baptizee has the same faith
1) before baptism which motivates confirmation of that faith by baptism, and
2) which s/he is acknowledged to have after coming up from baptism,
then s/he would not be saved because of the faith but rather because of the baptism.
Why? In this viewpoint, the person had such faith, yet was not saved. In this
viewpoint, that person with such faith remained unsaved until completed baptism.
Hence, 'salvation by faith through baptism' is simply 'salvation by baptism.'

It is not possible for a believer to remain unsaved. Acts 10:43 expressly says "everyone that believeth on him |receives| remission of sins" (ASV|ESV|ASV). Because baptism is motivated by faith, completed water baptism is at a separate moment from belief. Therefore, if salvation is 'by faith through baptism,' then there are people who "believeth on him" who have not received "remission of sins" -- a direct contradiction to this passage.

Therefore, salvation 'through faith by baptism' must be contrary to Scripture.

people, and at 1:17a he writes "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (ASV). It follows that if Paul wanted "by all possible means" to "save," yet saw no need to baptize, then baptism must not have been part of the means for people to be saved.

Paul was not sent by Jesus Christ to baptize per 1 Corinthians 1:17, but he did write this to the same audience at 1 Corinthians 3:5-6: "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (ASV). Paul takes credit for planting the seeds of their salvation, yet baptized only a few of them. Paul clearly did not consider the act of baptism to be part of the means of attaining salvation.

At John 4:1-2 Jesus was involved in baptizing, but "Jesus himself did not baptize. His followers did" (ICB). At 12:47 He said "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (ICB); He came to "save" but "did not baptize," showing distinction. John 6:28-9 says "The people asked Jesus, 'What are the works God wants us to do?' Jesus answered 'The work God wants you to do is this: to believe | on him whom he hath sent'" (ICB | ASV). They asked for a plurality of "works" to "do," but Jesus had just one -- belief on Him. The underlying Greek is JOHN'S USAGE¹ⁿ to convey exactly what Jesus communicated either in Greek or Aramaic. When Jesus said at 6:29 that the single "work" "believe" and that ONE "work" only is what "God wants" us "to do," baptism was excluded. At John 4:1-2 and 12:47, Jesus separated saving and baptizing; we earlier saw that Paul did likewise.

The term "work of faith" appears in the KJV and ASV of a few passages: 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11, although the underlying Greek differs for both. In both cases, it refers to a faith that already exists and is active and doing good things in general. The term is never used to describe a specific work that makes "faith" into "faith" only upon completion of it. In other words, "work of faith" in Scripture is never shown to be a specific work with the following significance: "'Faith' is NOT 'faith' until that work is completed -- only upon completion of that work is 'faith' made 'faith.'" This definition of "work of faith" is not a definition found in Scripture -- the Scriptures mean it as general activity motivated by already existing faith among people who are identified as already-saved Christians. In studying Bible teachings, let us insist on Bible meanings for Bible terms.

The Moment of Salvation

Acts 10:34-48, 11:4-17, and 15:8-9 all describe one event: a Jewish-Christian apostle converted a group of Gentiles for the first time. This is after Peter's first sermon to Jews in Acts 2, and it was of such significance that it is gone over *THREE* times in Acts and was a basis for a major decision²ⁿ at Acts 15. A recounting in Acts 11:14 has lead-up where Cornelius was told that Peter had "a message though which you and all your household will be saved" (TNIV). During the event, Peter said in Acts 10:43b-4 "through his name every one that believeth on him | receives | remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word" (ASV|ESV|ASV). This was before the converts said anything, and before Peter "commanded them to be baptized" (ESV) in Acts 10:48. The passage says that to "believeth on" Jesus Christ brings "remission of sins."³ⁿ

When they "heard" this, the Holy Spirit fell on them. The word translated "heard" is ακουοντας a form of the word ακουω⁴ and means "hearken, listen to," "heed, obey," "take in or admit to mental acceptance"⁵ and regarding discipleship "follow, obey."⁶ When they listened to this teaching in such a way to it as to intend to do what it said, the Holy Spirit came down on them.

¹ In writing the Bible, God authorized His human secretary-authors to use their distinct personal styles. This does not negate that every word is what God directed written. These personal styles complement each other and should not be used against each other.

² **The New Testament-era church clearly did NOT consider the event an exception.**

³ This occurs upon such belief whether or not a convert is aware of this or a decision.

⁴ Strong, Exhaustive Concordance, pages 583 and Greek Dictionary 4.

⁵ In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 113.

⁶ Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 40.

The general epistle of Paul now called "Ephesians" shows this was a universal phenomenon. Ephesians 1:13 says "In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues "He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession" (HCSB). Greek translated "listening" is ακουοντες a form of ακουω¹ and means "hearken, listen to," "heed, obey," "take in or admit to mental acceptance"² and about discipleship "follow, obey."³ When we decide to heed the Gospel and follow it, the Holy Spirit is delivered to us.

This event was gone over *THREE* times in Scripture. When Peter recalled the occasion at Acts 15:8-9, he said "And God, who knoweth the heart, | gave them evidence |, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (ASV|NBV|ASV). Titus 3:5 by Paul has "él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia sino por su misericordia. Nos salvó mediante el lavamiento de la regeneración y de la renovación | of the Holy Spirit" (NVI|ASV) = "He us He-saved, not by our own works of righteousness but by His mercy. Us He-saved through the washing of the regeneration and of the renovation/renewal of the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5 and Acts 10:34-48+11:4-17+15:8-9 describe the same phenomenon⁴ⁿ: upon acceptance of the Gospel by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and gives us a washing that regenerates us.

Only *AFTER* this happened did any convert say anything that might have been a confession of Jesus as Lord as at Acts 10:45-6 "magnify God" (ASV), or be baptized as happened at Acts 10:48.

After the Moment of Salvation

The birth of a Christian life is only the beginning. Ephesians 2:8-10 specifies "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may | boast himself. For | in Christ Jesus, God made us new people | unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV|GenB|ICB|KJV).

Galatians 5:6 describes faith: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, | but only | the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB). Romans 1:17 has "the righteous shall live by faith" (ASV) and Romans 2:7 mentions the attribute "perseverance in doing good" (NASB). We are saved by faith, but that faith must be one that motivates good works. Philippians 2:12b says "ocupaos en vuestra salvación" (RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA) = "You-busy-you in your salvation." We are saved by faith, but our faith must be one that motivates us to act on it.

Galatians 6:2 refers to "the law of Christ" (ASV), and to follow it here: "Help each other with your troubles" (ICB). Romans 7:22 says "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being" (ESV). The Lord wants us doing what is good, and our faith should make us desire this from the inside.

Hebrews 6:1-2a says "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us | press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from | acts that lead to death | and of faith toward God" (NKJV|NASB|ICB|NASB). A foundation of being Christian includes turning from sins which unbelievers of any religious background or lack thereof would do. If any professing Christian does not show having done this, IF s/he ever was a Christian, s/he has not matured.

James 1:27 says that "Pure religion and undefiled | in the sight of | our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (ASV|NBV|ASV). *PURE* "religion," the underlying Greek literally meaning "religious service,"⁵ is to serve people and to stay away from sin that pervades the world outside church assembly.

James 2:18b says "I will show you my faith by my works" (NASB); works show pre-existing faith, and faith is shown by works. At Matthew 25:31b-46, the Lord Jesus preached that we will be judged by whether or not our faith motivated us to do good things to people for Him. Behold:

¹ Strong, Exhaustive Concordance, pages 583 and Greek Dictionary 4.

² In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 113.

³ Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 40.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:11 refers to this phenomenon "ye were washed" (ASV).

⁵ In Scofield, The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments. Authorized Version; with..., page 1242.

"then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (ASV).

Neither here nor anywhere else is there a mention of a test of what our meeting-time doctrines were, how we worshiped during meeting-time, etc. – recall the 1 Corinthians 4:6 New Testament church maxim. *Our test will be whether or not our faith motivated us to go out and obey Him by serving.*

Jesus had much to say to us in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. He said in Matthew 5:23-4 "if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (NASB). Jesus meant that if we have done something wrong to someone, we are to forego specific worship entirely until we try to make it right. God cares nothing of our worship services if we are not doing what is good outside of worship in everyday life.

Jesus warned about false prophets at Matthew 7:15-6, and at 7:17 extended this to people as a whole; Matthew 3:8/Luke 3:10-4 indicate "fruit" (ASV) refers to deeds done, and Matthew 7:18-21 has

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 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 who is in heaven" [ASV emphasis mine].

Notice again Matthew 7:20, also translated "*Similarly, you will know people by the deeds they do*" (NBV). Our status as Christians is known by what our faith motivates us to do. If we meet a group who seems to 'talk the right talk,' but we see most of the people including those 'of good standing' do regularly without even a twinge of conscience actions contrary to Scripture which 'decent' people in secular society would disdain,¹ⁿ we are likely *NOT* looking at Christians. At Luke 6:46 Christ pointed out "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (ASV).

¹ For example, there are groups of buildings where Scripture's proper authority is best spoken of among all church-related groups, but they often engage in tricks of deception and false slander/reviling in religious matters and esteem it a skill of 'furthering the truth.' Belief that deception supports truth is contra-Scriptural: "no lie is of the truth" (ASV) per 1 John 2:21. Christians in real churches that affiliate themselves with such buildings are commonly desensitized to dishonesty.

Some groups gladly treat people with malice *inside* their buildings for religious motives. Some groups go out to gleefully harass people with hateful vitriol. A lot of people abuse 'the Holy Spirit' to justify doing things that they should not. The "elementary principles" (NKJV) include "repentance from [acts that lead to death]" (NASB|ICB) in Hebrews 6:1-2, and this has been entirely missed. If people routinely disregard what Jesus Christ taught us to do and not do, then it does not matter what 'credentials' they appeal to -- they are not Christians.

ACTIONS THAT ARE SINS OUT IN THE WORLD ARE ALSO SINS IN RELIGIOUS SETTINGS.
DOING WHAT THE LORD TAUGHT AGAINST UNDER GUISE OF 'SERVING THE LORD' ACTUALLY BLASPHEMES HIM.

Addressing Common Misconceptions about Faith

Miscellaneous Common Misconception #1 of 4

As seen throughout *Part 4*, New Testament instances of "faith"/"believe" for salvation mean much more than just intellectual assent. Many abuse 'I believe in Jesus' to only mean His existence, but do not believe what He said of Himself, and have no real intent to live obediently to Him as their Lord. People who would twist Scripture's teaching of 'salvation by grace through faith' to self-excuse lives of willful disobedience do so to their own destruction in the pattern of 2 Peter 3:16b, which says "which the ignorant and unstedfast | twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (ASV | ESV). All of time will have sinners who twist Scripture to justify lives of willful disobedience.

Despite this, we are called to be "speaking the truth" (ESV) per Ephesians 4:15, and should obey the New Testament churches' Greek maxim at 1 Corinthians 4:6 quoted in the footer below. We should not tarnish our messages on salvation to accommodate for abuses by the disobedient.¹ⁿ We are not authorized to teach that salvation is completed by acts of obedience 'to be on the safe side.' Rather, we must teach salvation "by faith" and explain the Bible meaning of the Bible term.

Miscellaneous Common Misconception #2 of 4

Some people think 'faith' means 'rightness.' James 2:19 rhetorically has "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons | believe that too, | and shudder" (ESV | ICB | ASV). Despite the importance of this religious fact, believing it is not valid faith. This is true of any other religious fact.

Some people think that 'faith' is a proper detailed understanding/knowledge about some subject/s. 1 Corinthians shows this to be untrue. The Corinthian congregation had a slogan translated "I have a right to do anything" (TNIV) or "I am allowed to do anything" (NLT 1996) mentioned at 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23; Paul had to address this bad doctrine. Still, they were greeted as a "church of God" (ASV) at 1 Corinthians 1:2. After rebuke after rebuke over error and sin, 1 Corinthians 15:58 says "So my dear brothers, stand strong. Do not let anything change you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. You know that your work in the Lord is never wasted" (ICB). 1 Corinthians 15:1-2a says "Now brothers, I want you to remember the Good News I brought to you. You received this Good News, and you continue strong in it. And you are saved by this Good News" (ICB). Despite big error, those people were still saved Christians.

Christ said at Matthew 7:20 "by their fruits ye shall know them" (ASV) = "you will know people by the deeds they do" (NBV). It is NEVER said 'you will know them by what they think.' Christ said we would recognize His followers by what they do.

After the apostles died, the only words of the apostles that could be referred to were the New Testament Scriptures. Printing did not exit until the mid-1400's. Before that, Scripture had to be copied by hand. Hand-copying documents is still drudgery, and it was worse in ancient and medieval conditions. That a copy of Scripture took months and even years of taxing manual labor made widespread availability of Scripture impossible. Common ancient and medieval Christians could not have possibly spent hours every day poring over their own private copies of Scripture²ⁿ to ensure that the finest details of their beliefs were absolutely in line with what was in Scripture, because in all but rare exceptions, they had no private copies. Absolute 'doctrinal correctness' was not possible. It would have been impossible to be saved that way; 'saving faith' cannot entail that.

¹ Similarly, many church people hate teachings on grace. They claim that 'teaching grace' promotes sin. Their reasoning: 'If God would forgive failure to serve rightly, there is no reason to bother with an effort.' They show that they would prefer to sin, and refrain mainly to avoid Hell.

Paul wrote at Romans 5:20 and 3:8b "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (ASV) and so "we are being slandered and charged with saying, 'Let us do evil, so that good may result'" (NBV). Of those: "their condemnation is just" (NASB). The unbelievers in those texts claimed 'teaching grace' promotes sin; people who claim that 'teaching grace promotes sin' should notice their unholy company.

² As noted by numerous Orthodox and Catholic apologists, but for another reason.

God "hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (ASV) per 2 Peter 1:3. For centuries after Scripture's completion, most Christians did not have private copies to pore over for pristine accuracy, and this was so even as the New Covenant began. 'Saving faith' cannot be pristine rightness on Scripture's teachings on any subject. 1 Corinthians 1:17 reports Paul was sent "to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void" (ASV). We should not presume that we get ourselves saved by any kind of perfection on our part, including in intellect.

Miscellaneous Common Misconception #3 of 4

Some confuse faith with works that faith motivates.¹ⁿ Some think doing specific "works of faith" has itself made them 'faithful.' Some use the term "work of faith" to mean this: 'only after this work is completed is there any faith.' The term "work of faith" appears in the KJV, ASV, and others at 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11, although the underlying Greek differs for both. In neither case does it convey the errant meaning; in both cases, it refers to acknowledged Christians, whose faith already existed, and was active doing good deeds in general. James 2:18b says "I will show you my faith by my works" (NASB); works are not faith, because works show pre-existent faith.

The work most deemed 'faith' is baptism, which has been much trifled with. Some who urge baptism say one could hypothetically refuse baptism yet be a believer; we have already studied how this is wrong.²ⁿ Others so focus on baptism that they are unsure of or reject salvations of believers without completed baptism *despite* Acts 16:31/Romans 4:5 faith. 1830's Alexander Campbell wrote

*"We can not tell with certainty. But I am of the opinion that when a neglect proceeds from a simple mistake or sheer ignorance, and when there is no aversion, but a will to do everything the Lord commands, the Lord will admit into the everlasting kingdom those who by reason of this mistake never..."*³

This extreme esteem of baptism causes doubt in discord with Jesus Christ's teachings of Himself at John 3:16-8, most notably "Whoever | believeth on him is not condemned" (ESV|ASV).

To baptize or to do a related ceremony, or to accept a baptism as valid, some Christians and church-associated persons require conditions beyond biblical faith, such as:

- requiring converts to make the baptizer's congregation their home congregation;
- deliberate delays, such as multiple instruction classes, or waiting periods to verify genuine conversion;
- an audience to witness the baptism publicly;
- a baptizer with specific status beyond simply being a Christian;
- religious group-centered dispositions having little-to-nothing to do with Christ Himself;
- trivialities, such as wordings more specific than simply involving some designation of Jesus, or agreement with them about specific function of baptism, or direction into the water, or number of dips in the water.

People ought not hijack baptism for themselves, or obstruct obeying Christ in baptism, but it happens.

Matthew 28:19 tells us to baptize Christ's followers; as much or for as long as any refuses to baptize a Christian, s/he is at discord with the command of Christ. Note the 1 Corinthians 4:6 maxim; we are not authorized to withhold baptism from Christians. Any Christians not baptized due to any unauthorized condition should seek Christians who would baptize them as soon as feasible without unauthorized conditions.⁴ⁿ Other people may need to notice that baptism is a mandated follow-up of biblical faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, but not the main event. Also, it is no substitute for following Christ's ways - without a decision to follow His ways, a 'baptism' ceremony is not a baptism.

¹ Also, some people mistake repentance for works it causes. Acts 26:20 has "repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance" (NBV). Works are not repentance.

² This is why arguing knowingly-unbaptized people into baptism pools is wrong. Baptism is authorized and fitting only for Christians, so only after a Gospel assenter becomes a believer is it proper to move for baptism. For more, see the *Baptism in Water* essay.

³ A. Campbell, *The Christian System*, page 175.

⁴ Congregations self-named "_____ Christian church" commonly baptize on request, and do so regardless of person's home congregation or other unauthorized non-Scripture conditions. Also, contrary to many congregation norms, ANY Christian can baptize.

Some wrongly call ceremonies that are not baptism to be "baptism," such as for non-converts and/or without immersion. Any person not having done the Bible meaning of the Bible term βαπτισμα "baptism" is not baptized, and ideally would disregard any substitute ritual to get baptized. Still, some victims wrongly think they are baptized, and think a wrongly-called 'rebaptism' would be a sin. Even worse, some Christians think water baptism is currently prohibited. In both such cases, the people's biblical faith is no less genuine, so their status as Christians should be fully accepted.

The overall conversion experience has been mutilated; it is sad, but the effects are lasting. Therefore, we must remember that it is biblical faith, not response works, which makes a Christian.

Miscellaneous Common Misconception #4 of 4

Some people think that 'being faithful' means 'faithful' attendance and support of a 'church with sound doctrine.'¹ⁿ 'Being faithful' means agreeing with the 'right' distinctly-religious tenets²ⁿ and supporting a group whose people agree with and enforce the same. Some non-Christian groups³ⁿ imitating churches⁴ⁿ have a parallel belief – plus that salvation comes from this. They encourage a belief that someone is a 'faithful Christian' if s/he supports 'the right group.'

Such belief systems too often call for no personal transformation to follow Christ's ways in overall life; the main way or sole way to "be faithful" is unrelated to this. Adherents are too often expected to oppose Christian groups -- where such transformation would be a priority. Adherents too often face reduced chance of conversion, or damaged transformation if they become Christians.

Many people among them see no need for inner change, and so do not adopt Christ's values. They fixate on acts of external compliance, for they notice no increase in willingness to serve Christ. Many such people refuse to adopt Christ's prescribed ways and values. Like other unbelievers, some continue to do as they wish when it suits their utmost interests – in their case, the interests of their religious groups. Often, wickedness to promote group interests is condoned or encouraged.

Jesus Christ faced a similar religious society. It eventually obtained perjury at Matthew 26:59-61 and murdered Him; while doing this wickedness, they took great care to religious doings at John 18:28 and 19:31. They paid great attention to religious precepts and assumed God would 'okay' their evil. At Matthew 23:15, He said to them "you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves" (ESV).

Diverting faith is dangerous. Assent to group religious precepts which have no direct focus on Jesus Christ, and which focus on the group's religion, cannot be substituted for biblical faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. The extreme of actually making this substitution can be highly corrosive.

Biblical faith is not shown by showing devotion to religious tenets or showing oneself 'right' about them. Rather, biblical faith is shown by following Christ's values and ways in our whole lives.

Summary of Salvation

A marvel of salvation is that it takes disobedient unregenerate people unable to please God, regenerates them by faith, after which they can and want to serve Him. Christ died "to | redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, *zealous of good works*" (ESV|ASV emphases mine) per Titus 2:14. Romans 12:1-2 has "I beg you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable | worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of

¹ Self-attachment to a church congregation or imitation is worthless without biblical faith. Congregations do not 'federate' to make the church. Per Acts 2:47/5:14, people "being saved" (NASB) "believers" (ESV) get "added to" (ASV) the whole church by the Lord.

² Some such people think 'strong faith' is shown by being personally nasty to people holding tenets they disagree with.

³ This is not to say that there are no Christians among them.

⁴ Often, such groups mesh in among a denomination/'fellowship'/'brotherhood.' However, regardless of similarity of group tenets, non-followers of Christ are not Christians.

your mind" (NBV | ESV). Salvation affects our minds so that we should be "zealous" to please God in the earnest desires of our hearts – *NOT* 'we must or else' semi-fearful compulsion-motivation.

We are saved by biblical faith in the Gospel, including to truly recognize Jesus Christ to be Lord and to resolve to act on that. Biblical faith involves a realization that Christ's prescribed ways are right and should be followed. It involves repentance from sin and obedience from the heart outward. At the moment this happens, a convert is given God's free gift of salvation without works.

With normal opportunity and circumstances, a new Christian will earnestly seek and do good deeds. S/he will confess Jesus as Lord and get baptism when knowing rightly and opportunity is not withheld. S/he will do these things as specifics within an overall lifestyle of general good works.

To 'obey the Gospel' means much more than any worship-specific conversion deed.¹ⁿ It calls us to appeal to Christ, submit our wills to the will of Jesus Christ as Lord in obedience, turn from sin in repentance, adopt His prescribed ways in discipleship, and begin doing good deeds of service to Him in every aspect of our lives. For example, if a person with a profanity problem accepts the Gospel at home, calls a church official to meet at a baptistery, and then on the way there 'bites the tongue' on a profanity because s/he has resolved to serve the Lord, the convert has completed an act of obedience. Of course, s/he was saved beforehand by the faith that motivated 'biting the tongue.'

Salvation is by biblical faith; biblical faith motivates action. Let us now review the following:

† **1 Corinthians 15** verse 1b "the gospel" (ASV) - "the Good News" (ICB), 15:2a "by which you are saved" (NBV), 15:3b-5a "this was what was most important: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say, and that he showed himself to..." (ICB).

† **1 Peter 2:24a and Corinthians 5:21** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (ESV) and "he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (ESV).

† **Romans 1:17a** "The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself – that it begins and ends with faith" (NCV). *Believe:* *Repent:*

† **Acts 16:31b** "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (ASV | NASB).

† **Luke 24:47b** "repentance |para = in-order-for| remission of sins should be preached in| His name" (ASV | RVA and translated |ASV | NBV).

† **Acts 10:43b** "every one that believeth on him |receives| remission of sins" (ASV | ESV | ASV)

† **Acts 3:19a** "Arrependedei-vos, pois, e converteí-vos para |serem cancelados os vuestros pecados" (ARC | ARA) = "You-people-must-repent-you, therefore, and you-people-must-convert-you in-order-for they-will-be canceled the your sins."

† **Romans 4:5** "And to the one| who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."²

† **Ephesians 2:8-10** "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may |boast himselfe. For |in Christ Jesus, God made us new people| unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (ESV | GenB | ICB | KJV).

Make It Active -- General And Specific :

† **Acts 26:20b** "they must repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance" (NBV).

† **Acts 2:38a** "You-people-must-repent-you -- |and so| let-s/he-get-self-baptized each one of you| in the name of Jesus Christ -- | in order to the remission of |you-people's sins"³

† **1 Peter 3:20b-1** "water: which also after a |figure| doth now save you, even baptism,| not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience,| by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"⁴

† **Romans 10:9** "That if you might confess in| your mouth Jesus as Lord, and |might trust| in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."⁵

† **James 2:18 and 2:26** "I will show you my faith by my works" (NASB) and "faith without deeds is dead" (TNIV).

† **Galatians 5:6** "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, |but only| the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB | ESV | ICB).

† **Philippians 2:12b** "ocupaos en vuestra salvación" (RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA) = "You-busy-you in your salvation."

¹ Romans 10:16 has "they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?'" (ESV). 'Obey the Gospel' = 'believe.'

² ESV | A. Campbell et al, Living Oracles, page 290.

³ For sources of this translation, please see the lengthy source note on the first page of *Part 4*.

⁴ ASV | BishB | ASV | NASB | RSV 1952 | KJV; insight from "Baptism, which is symbolized by that water" (ISV).

⁵ McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 576 | NASB | McReynolds, *ibid.* | NASB, NBV.

What All This Means

We are saved by Christ through biblical faith in the Gospel. We are not saved by any other means on our part.¹ⁿ There would be less occasion to bicker about conversion experience and validity of each other's conversion experiences if New Testament procedures were followed by all and deviations avoided when feasible. Salvation of people was the whole point for the Son of God to leave Heaven and endure life and agonizing death as a human being while bearing the divine penalty for people's sins. Therefore, I wish more believed that the experience of the conversion linked to salvation should *NEVER* be trifled with in *any* way by the churches in normal practice: this includes timing, order, or any other matter.²ⁿ

However, this is not happening, and so in our imperfect world, when we consider Christian unity and who is a Christian, let us all heed how little we have to do with our own salvations. Human doings during conversion experiences do not make people into Christians. Before any of us alive in the natural universe was even conceived, Jesus Christ died in agony on a cross after saying "Todo ha terminado" (NTV) = "All has-been finished" at John 19:30. He did ALL the work and paid the whole price by Himself³ⁿ; all that is left for us is to accept it by biblical faith,⁴ⁿ upon which we become Christians.

In John 6:68 a disciple told Jesus why they followed Him: "thou hast the words of eternal life" (ASV). Before the time of Acts 11:26, Christians were called "disciples" in that "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB). Greek

Two Bases of Christian Fellowship

1 John 1:9a commends us "if we acknowledge our sinnes" (GenB); every Christian sins, and needs forgiveness. Colossians 3:13 has "if one has| a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye" (ESV|ASV); this includes dislikes of how others serve the Lord.

Romans 14:4 has "That servant's master decides whether he is a good or bad servant, not you" (PEB). As this is solely God's business, we should do as Colossians 3:13 says in such dislikes.

Paul's letter to the general church is now called "Ephesians" because a scribe added Greek equivalent to "At Ephesus" (KJV); this text is not in any pre-400 C.E. manuscripts,⁵ and without the addition, the translation differs slightly and the letter is simply to all "the saints."

In the general epistle now titled "Ephesians," Paul wrote about God the Father at modern verse 1:5a "having foreordained us unto adoption as |his own children| through Jesus Christ" (ASV|ICB|ASV). All Christians are adopted by God because of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2:11 says of God "He made Jesus a perfect Savior through Jesus' suffering. Jesus, who makes people holy, and those who are made holy are from the same family. So he is not ashamed to call them his |brethren" (ICB|ASV).

Christians are saved by biblical faith. When thus saved they compose *ONE FAMILY* and are all fully accepted as family by Jesus Christ.

Before Acts 11:26, Christians were called "disciples": "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB); "disciples" = "followers" (ICB). Christians are followers of Christ.

No mortal is in a position to second-guess whom Jesus Christ has accepted because Jesus Christ is Lord. Further, as followers of Jesus Christ, when Jesus Christ adopts people into His family, we should accept them fully as the same. Our attitude should also be "Anyone who serves Jesus Christ is a friend of mine."

¹ No works -- all week INCLUDING any weekend hours -- and no non-simple **knowledge/understanding**.

² For instance, the "sinner's prayer" should not usurp the role Scripture gives baptism.

³ Christians who implicitly argue over who 'deserves' salvation more because of the distinctives of their congregation or group of congregations forget how little they had to do with their salvations. Romans 8:2-8b shows that the unregenerate are incapable of even pleasing God. Ephesians 2:8-9 calls salvation "gift of God" and "not of works, lest any man should |boast himself" (KJV|GenB). There are those who boast that they ought to get this GIFT but not someone else due to meeting place. One tempted to boast as so should think about this: how might God react to people bickering over who 'deserves' His salvation GIFT more and whose squabble centers on

1) where they assemble, which is something they do, and

2) things that have no *REAL* bearing on how Christians live outside the handful of hours per week that Christians meet?

Thought on this question should prompt at the very least some hesitation.

⁴ In Scripture, when discussing salvation, most speech and text is spent on the subject of faith, not response works. That was New Testament-era church practice.

⁵ In Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 582.

μαθητας translated "disciples" here is plural for "one who follows one's teachings"¹ and is rendered "followers" in the ICB here at Acts 11:26. Hence, in a basic biblical meaning of "Christian," a Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ. Salvation is granted simply upon genuine decision to turn to Christ in reliance and live as His follower. Our biblical faith in Jesus Christ will cause us to

1. recognize Him as the Savior we depend on for salvation, and
2. recognize Him as Lord, and therefore be obedient to Him and serve Him;

the fruits of biblical faith are good deeds that Jesus Christ taught us to do -- biblical faith²ⁿ makes people followers of Jesus Christ, and that *ALONE* makes any person a Christian. All persons with biblical faith are Christians.

An Implication of Biblical Faith on Unity

Hebrews 11 examples how biblical faith should involve believing **simply because God so says it.*** This is important to accept regarding Christian unity.

★ No matter how much someone agrees with us on valued religious tenets, if s/he does not show in overall life the signs prescribed by Jesus Himself to recognize His real followers, such as Matthew 5-7 culminating at Matthew 7:20-3, we simply cannot regard that person as a Christian.

★ We **MUST** recognize and fully accept as fellow sibling and fellow servant of Christ *any* person who is His follower. It does not matter if s/he 'fails' to agree with any of us on valued religious tenets. It does not matter what 'dangers' any of us think we see in accepting -- without 'family feud'/mitigation -- such fellow servants as fellow **family of Christ**.

Biblical faith is believing the Lord and submitting obediently *simply because the LORD says so.*

*As described in Breneman, Biblia de Estudio HarperCaribe, page 1258 -- "simplemente porque Dios así lo dice."

¹ Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 171 NT.

² Biblical faith involves believing **simply because God so says it**,* and it involves obedience. Two associated attributes of biblical faith toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ often get overlooked, but they are two things Jesus Christ wanted to accompany it. These are childlikeness and love.

Matthew 18:1-4 narrates the following:

"Jesus called a little child to him. He stood the child before the followers. Then he said, 'I tell you the truth. You must change and become like little children. If you don't do this, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'" (ICB).

Jesus Christ wants childlike followers. A typical child will obey an adult whom s/he loves just because of trust in and love for that adult. A child should obey God out of trust in and love for God in the same way.** If we are to be like children, we should be motivated by trust in and love for the Lord to serve Him.

At Luke 10:27-8, we have:

"And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' | 'Right!' Jesus told him. 'Do this and you will live!'" (ESV | NLT 1996).

The following verses, Luke 10:29-37, show the conversant looking for an exception,[†] prompting Jesus to tell a parable to show how we should think like this: "everyone I meet is my neighbor."^{††} Any person whose path meets with our paths is our neighbor.

At 2 John verse 6 we see "And God's command is this: that you live a life of love. You have had this command from the beginning" (ICB). If what God commands of us is to be summarized into one command, it is that our lives should be pervaded by love. At John 15:14, Jesus said "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (ICB). If we really want to be friends of Jesus, then love needs to pervade our lives including our dealings toward God and towards people. Loving only when interacting with God, or interacting only with Him and Christians, or only with Him and 'sound Christians,' or 'sound Christians' and 'potential converts,' is *NOT* enough; our entire lives should be pervaded by love.

To obey the Lord the way He wishes, it must be motivated by love -- just as a typical child's best obedience is motivated by love. Our obedience should be motivated by love for the Lord. If we want to love the Lord as His friends, we need to seek to have every aspect of our lives be pervaded with love as well.

* As described in Breneman, Biblia de Estudio HarperCaribe, page 1258.

** Pointed out in MacArthur, John MacArthur's A Faith to Grow On Bible, page 1414.

† Noted in Hayford, New Spirit-Filled Life Bible, page 1408.

†† Quoted from Living Faith Bible, page 1168.

The term "Christian" is a Bible term from the New Testament-era. To rightly understand a New Testament-era term, we cannot do so based on disputes from any time afterward, whether from the earliest centuries or from the 16th-20th centuries. Let us have Bible meanings for Bible terms.

The root of "Christian" is "Christ."¹ⁿ Scripture uses "believers" (NASB) for servants of Christ in such places as Acts 2:47+5:14, Acts 10:45, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, and 1 Timothy 6:2; likewise, Scripture uses "disciples" (ESV) for servants of Christ in such places as Galatians 1:13+Acts 9:1, Acts 14:20-2, and Acts 11:26. Acts 11:26 has "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB); Greek μαθητας translated "disciples" is plural for "one who follows one's teachings."² A Christian is simply someone who believes on Jesus Christ so as to be a follower of His teachings.

At Matthew 16:18, Jesus Christ said "I will build My church" (NBV); "church" translates εκκλησιαν a form of εκκλησια; in ancient Greek culture, the word was used similarly about the community of followers of Pythagoras.³ Greek εκκλησια in this context was to mean the community of Jesus Christ's followers.⁴ⁿ Acts 2:47 examples how "the Lord added to them day by day those | who were being saved" (ASV | NASB); the church is built of people added to it. In Scripture, Jesus Christ's εκκλησια "church" simply means the community of people who believe on Jesus Christ so as to be followers of His teachings - nothing more, and not one person less.

When we consider church unity, we are discussing unity of the people who compose it: Christians. 2 Corinthians 11:3 refers to "the **simplicity** and the purity that is toward Christ" (ASV)⁵ⁿ; we know that whatever makes a person into a Christian is simple.⁶ⁿ Christians are simply people who believe on Jesus Christ so as to be followers of His teachings; all such people are Christians. When we are considering church unity, we must mean the unity of all such persons. ■

¹ "Christian" is not directly nor primarily defined by whom a person disagrees with.

² Vine, et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 171 NT.

³ Arndt, Gingrich, et al, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 240.

⁴ For details, please see *Part 5/The Bible Meaning of "Church"*.

⁵ To illustrate this simplicity, consider a detailed conversion in Acts 8:26-39. The Ethiopian official was puzzled over Isaiah 53. Philip, sent by God to him, "began to speak and, starting from that same Scripture, told him the |Good News about Jesus" (NBV|ICB). Another translation: "began to speak and, starting with that same Scripture, |preached unto him Jesus" (NBV|ASV). The text does NOT have 'preached unto him Jesus and the precepts and practices of good congregations.' The Bible text has what is translated "told him the Good News about Jesus" or "preached unto him Jesus."

The Ethiopian official responded as so: "See, here is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?" (NBV) at Acts 8:36. Philip promptly granted his request at Acts 8:38 "both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him" (NBV). Philip got no opportunity to teach him anything else: "But when they came up from the water, the Lord's Spirit took Philip away and the eunuch did not see him anymore; he went joyfully on his way" (NBV) back to Ethiopia per Acts 8:39.

The Ethiopian official was taught about Jesus. Upon showing he had accepted the Good News about Him and was now a Christian, his request for baptism was granted. The Lord then allowed him to continue on to regular life. Enough had been done.

⁶ It cannot take an elaborate process for a person to become a Christian. Likewise, to **BE** a Christian, it cannot require a lengthy instruction and learning process

- 1) in theology, and/or
- 2) of Bible study, and/or
- 3) of what inferences people 'should' have from Scripture, and/or
- 4) of a collection of 'stands' to take in disputes, and/or
- 5) of a collection of precepts that center on the operations of a group, and/or
- 6) of a collection of beliefs on details of academic religion, and/or
- 7) about narrow topics such as the Holy Spirit, water baptism, etc., and/or
- 8) about any other subject.

Anything requiring a lengthy instruction and learning process is not "simplicity." What is needed to become and **BE** a Christian must befit "simplicity."