

Guaranteed Salvation

The Permanence of Salvation

No Bars Held

# THE SOWER

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## Guaranteed Salvation

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# Our Salvation is a Guarantee

## John W. Schoenheit

I am very excited about the theme for Spirit & Truth Fellowship International in 2008, "Truth Matters." I am especially blessed about this issue of *The Sower*, because we are focusing on the Christian's guarantee of salvation. When one is born again of God's spirit, from that point on he or she never has to be in doubt about everlasting life. It is guaranteed.

The Church Epistles, Romans through Thessalonians, open with the salutation, "grace and peace." That should give us a glimpse into the astounding and most wonderful grace of God that has been given to the Christian Church. Think about it: there are 39 books in the Old Testament, and none of them open with even one of those two words, "grace" or "peace." In fact, sometimes the message to "God's people" was a burden to deliver, which is why Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah (9:1, 12:1), and Malachi open with the "burden" of the Word of Yahweh (cp. *King James Version*, *American Standard Version*, *Young's Literal Translation*, etc.).

Each member of the Christian Church has been given grace and peace from God. Peace is one of the greatest blessings a person can have. Anyone who is in doubt, afraid, or confused has very real pain. God does not want us to be in doubt or have any confusion when it concerns our everlasting life. He has given us a guarantee of everlasting life, and He wants us to know that and believe it.

Life is uncertain, and many things can go wrong. Many people who were once strong Christians have turned away from the faith. Of course there are those who teach that a Christian must stay faithful to Christ in order to be saved. How could a Christian have true peace in the depth of his heart if he really believed that? I would be constantly worried about falling away, because better men than I have turned from Christ.

As we will see from the articles in this issue, believers in the Old Testament did not have a guarantee of salvation. David sinned greatly, and what did he pray, as recorded in Psalm 51? "Restore to me the joy of your salvation..." (Ps. 51:12a). After his egregious sin, David was in doubt about his everlasting life, and that caused him great emotional pain. In contrast, when a Christian knows that he will one day receive everlasting life, it brings him great joy and peace.

It is our hope that this issue of *The Sower* will bring clarity, joy, and freedom both to those who have thought they could lose their guarantee of salvation and to those who have been unsure about their salvation. "Grace" and "peace" are not hollow words, representing things given to us only if we are worthy of them. Christ died for us when we were still hostile to him, and now, because of God's amazing grace, our Christian salvation is guaranteed.

Living in Grace,

*John*

# The Permanence of Salvation - How Permanent is Permanent?

## by Dan Gallagher

The other day as I was reflecting on the permanence of salvation theme in this issue of *The Sower*, I was thinking about things in life that are permanent, and things that aren't. It occurred to me that if our salvation really is permanent, which I believe the Bible says it is, then thinking about other things in life that are permanent should help me comprehend God's promise in a bigger way.

We believe that at the very moment a person confesses Jesus as Lord and believes God raised him from the dead, he is "born again" and receives the gift of the holy spirit, which is the guarantee of everlasting life.<sup>1</sup> Our New Birth via the spirit of God is just as irreversible as our first birth was. It cannot be undone. This is why the Scriptures say that each Christian has Christ's seal of ownership, which is a deposit, or a guarantee, of what is to come.<sup>2</sup> In other words, our salvation is permanent.

So what in life is permanent? I own some shirts and pants that are said to be "permanent press" but, unfortunately, they seem to wrinkle when I wear them, and sometimes when I don't take them out of the dryer fast enough! If salvation is like that, it certainly isn't very permanent. So how about one of those felt tip pens, the ones they call "permanent markers." They do seem pretty permanent, but I recall times when I've used them on outdoor things, and they eventually faded with exposure to the elements. Not so with our salvation, according to God's Word.<sup>3</sup>

So what in my life is permanent? How about a scar? Surely that is permanent. When I was a little boy, I had my appendix removed, and I was really proud of that four-inch scar. When I first got it, I loved to show off that long purple mark to my siblings and schoolyard friends. I thought of it as some kind of battle trophy that demonstrated my toughness to the other kids. Oops, I just looked, and it appears that after forty-some years it has faded so much that I have trouble even finding it.

There must be something I can think of that really is permanent. I know—my tattoos! How much more permanent than that can you get? I've gotten quite a few tattoos in my lifetime, and they are *permanent*. Wait a minute; no they aren't, because nowadays people can get tattoos removed with lasers. If marks, scars, and tattoos fade or can be removed, then they are not permanent.

It seems there really isn't much in life that is permanent. My wife tells me that "permanent" hair dye has to be redone once a month. My sister once got divorced, but then remarried the same man five years later. People get all kinds of sickness, even so-called "terminal" diseases, but many are healed. Many years ago I committed some crimes, was arrested, pled guilty to the felony charges, and served five years of probation. At the time I thought it would mean that I would have a "permanent" criminal record. But even that, because of God's great mercy and grace, was reversed and dismissed.<sup>4</sup>

There are only two things in life that are permanent: birth and death. A person "taking his last breath" sounds about as permanent as it gets. However, for Christians, that is not the case, for we know that the Lord Jesus will raise us up. Some Christians won't even die, but will be transformed from mortal to immortal at Christ's appearing.<sup>5</sup> And then too the Bible says that every person who has ever died will be raised from the grave and be judged, so it again seems that not even that our physical death is permanent. God tells us that it is the "second death," for wicked people, in the Lake of Fire, that is permanent.

The one and only thing that is permanent in our lives is our birth. No baby has ever come from the womb and been able to go back in there again (mothers all over the world rejoice at this scientific fact). It is no wonder God has chosen the language of birth to communicate the truth of what He does for us when we receive

salvation. Our salvation, via New Birth, is as irreversible, irrevocable, enduring, lasting, unchangeable, immutable, inalterable, invariable, fixed, and established as our first birth. Our salvation cannot fade, deteriorate, wane, decline, decay, crumble, or be lost. When God says we are born of His spirit, He means it. When it comes to salvation, permanent is *permanent*.

**Endnotes:**

1. Romans 10:9 and 10.

2. 2 Corinthians 1:22.

3. See 1 Peter 1:4 and 5:4.

4. On October 6, 1993 Dan was granted five years probation after pleading guilty to two felony charges. Then on March 31, 1999 the guilty verdicts were set aside.

5. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

## Is Salvation Secure for Christians?

*When the rich young man asked Jesus how to be saved, Jesus told him to keep God's commandments (Matt. 19:17), and in Matthew 24:13 he said that to be saved one must endure in his faith to the end of his life. Given these clear statements, how can you teach a Christian he has secure salvation from the time he is born again?*

To understand the Bible, one must understand what Scripture refers to as “administrations.” We today live in the Administration of Grace, during which those people who are born again receive a guarantee of salvation.

Throughout history, for the accomplishment of His purposes and the benefit of His people, God has changed the “rules” by which He wants people to live. Many theologians call the time period covered by a given set of rules an “administration” or “dispensation.” The systematic theology that recognizes these different administrations or dispensations is referred to as “Dispensationalism.”

Examples of God changing the rules from administration to administration are plentiful. In the Garden of Eden, He told Adam and Eve to eat plants only (Gen. 1:29), but after the Flood, God changed the rules and allowed man to eat meat also (Gen. 9:3), and He still allows us to eat meat today. Another clear example concerns the Sabbath. Before the Mosaic Law, there was no specific law concerning the Sabbath. When God gave the Law to Moses, He changed the rules, and commanded that anyone who worked on the Sabbath should be put to death (Exod. 31:14). Today, in the Administration of Grace, God has changed the rules again, and it is not a sin to work on the Sabbath (Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16 and 17). When Christians do not recognize or understand the administrations in the Bible, the Bible abounds with apparent contradictions.

We believe God's Word shows eight administrations. Knowing exactly when they begin and end, and the rules distinctly associated with each, is vital if we are to understand the Bible. The eight administrations are:

**1)** Original Paradise (Creation to the Fall), **2)** Conscience (the Fall to the Flood), **3)** Civil Government (the Flood to the Mosaic Law), **4)** The Mosaic Law (the Mosaic Law to Pentecost), **5)** the Administration of the Grace of God, also called the Administration of the Sacred Secret (Pentecost to the Rapture), **6)** Tribulation (the Rapture to the end of the Battle of Armageddon), **7)** Paradise, or Christ's Millennial Kingdom (1,000 years), **8)** Everlasting Kingdom (after the Millennial Kingdom it will last forever)

The Grace Administration, in which we live today, began on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the gift of holy spirit was given via New Birth to everyone who believed. It is called the “administration of God's grace” in Ephesians 3:2, but we usually call it “the Administration of Grace” because now, by God's amazing grace, salvation is guaranteed to every Christian. That guarantee did not exist in the Old Testament or Gospels, so Jesus did not mention it. Jesus taught according to God's rules for the administration in which he lived, the administration of the Law.

Today, by God's grace each Christian has the guarantee of salvation that was given to him when he got born again, and that guarantee stands whether or not a Christian is faithful to live a godly life.

# **The Vine Step Out of the Box**

Pleasanton, California Fellowship Seeks New Ways to Reach Neighbors  
by Dan Gallagher

Recently, John Lydon of Alameda, California wrote to inform the Home Office of a new initiative that his fellowship is employing to reach others in the neighborhoods surrounding the home of Dave and Carol DeMars, where their group of about a dozen saints gets together each week. Desiring a way to reach everyone in their immediate area, they have designed a plastic door hanger like the DO NOT DISTURB sign in hotel rooms, and are diligently working to get one to every home. It advertises the TruthOrTradition.com web site.

John writes: “We designed a door hanger and ordered 2500 of them. In the last two days AJ and I have hung a little more than 400. Our plan is to target the area around the DeMars house (zip 94588). Hopefully you will see an increase in web traffic from that area. I’ll be sending some out in the mail tomorrow for you to pass around the office. We could use your prayers as we endeavor to ‘Spread the Word’ in Northern California.”

Remember, there is no one best way to reach others. Seek the Lord’s leading on how to reach those in your community. He knows who they are, where they are, and how to find them.

## **News From Vancouver, British Columbia**

[Following Teens & 20s Camp in 2007, Jackson Trigg and Katherine Backlund returned home to Canada with a great desire to start a fellowship that promoted the truth of God's Word in their city and country. Since then, they have continued to move forward with much excitement.] Jackson recently wrote the following:

Hey guys, our first fellowship meeting since the holidays kicked in, and it was great. There were only a few of us, but we all totally connected and it was a powerful time. We discussed the purpose of our fellowship and what it is supposed to achieve, e.g., creating disciples, etc. God has provided us with a firm foundation of committed people for what we want to do here, and we came up with a mission statement last night, as follows:

To live the truth in love and build up dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ who are committed to having an impact on their community and the world.

I'm really excited for what's in store for the future here, and I can't stop thanking you all for your love and support.

God bless you, Jackson Trigg

# **The Contender**

## **Guaranteed Salvation**

**by John W. Schoenheit**

Through the centuries of the Christian era, there has been a huge debate about whether Christians can lose their salvation. In this article, we hope to show that once a person is born again of God's holy spirit, his salvation is guaranteed, and that he is not in danger of the "Second Death," which is when everyone who is not allowed into God's Everlasting Kingdom will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and burned up (Rev. 20:12-15).

### **New Administration**

Before we can meaningfully examine verses that refer to our guaranteed salvation, it is imperative to understand that Scripture makes it clear that only in the Church Age, the Administration of Grace, is salvation guaranteed. One of the greatest truths of Scripture is that God has dealt with people differently at various times through history. These times, or ages, are called "administrations" or "dispensations." We of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International recognize eight different administrations (See TruthorTradition.com/chart or page 16) in the history of mankind: four of them are in the past; we live in the fifth Administration (the Administration of Grace, also referred to as the Administration of the Sacred Secret), and three of them are foretold in the Bible and will be fulfilled in the future.

Knowing the different administrations, when they begin and end, and the rules distinctly associated with each one, is indispensable if one is to explain many of the apparent contradictions in the Bible. It is also indispensable in understanding how we Christians must live in order to obey God. A person who does not understand the Administrations can become very confused if he thinks that all of God's commands should be followed, because they are different in different administrations, and can even contradict one another. Almost 100 years ago, Bible scholar Martin Anstey wrote: "...the golden rule is, 'Distinguish the dispensations and the difficulties will disappear.'"<sup>1</sup> Never is that more true than in regard to the permanence of our salvation. If one does not understand what parts of Scripture are written to whom, he will never grasp the truth of God's Word about salvation, its most vital subject.

Throughout the years, the majority of scholars have believed that salvation is not guaranteed for Christians. One reason for that is that they read the Old Testament, the Four Gospels, and the book of Revelation, see that salvation is not guaranteed during those administrations, and therefore think that salvation is not guaranteed for Christians. We agree that salvation is not guaranteed during those administrations, however, we assert that on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) God started a new administration, one so dominated by an outpouring of God's grace that He refers to it as "...the administration of God's grace..." (Eph. 3:2), and that during that administration salvation is guaranteed to those who believe.

Our study of guaranteed salvation will take us into a cascade of logic that in large part presents the process of salvation in the Age of Grace as akin to giving birth. This brings up a very important point: God expects us to believe what He says and use the reasoning He gave us to arrive at accurate conclusions. That is certainly the case in the study of guaranteed salvation.

### **New Seed and New Birth**

When a person confesses both that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9), God puts a spiritual seed into that individual. That "seed," like any seed contributed by a father, grows into a baby, which is then birthed. The epistle of 1 Peter tells us about both the seed and the birth.

#### **1 Peter 1:23**

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

God's use of "birth" to communicate what happens in Christian salvation is amazingly clear. Of course, there are some differences between human birth and birth from God. For example, human birth takes nine months, while divine birth is instantaneous. The very second, God puts His imperishable, spiritual seed in a person, he is born again.

Now what is unique about this New Birth? First, there is no mention of God's spiritual seed outside the Epistles to the Christian Church. It cannot be found in the Old Testament, Gospels, or Revelation. Only Christians have spiritual seed. This should immediately alert us that God is doing something for Christians that He never did before.

Second, God calls the seed He puts inside Christians "imperishable," because it does not die or go away. It stays in us forever, so its effect, our salvation, is "imperishable" too. Third, there is no New Birth outside the Administration of Grace. It began on the Day of Pentecost, and will end with the Rapture of the Church.<sup>2</sup> Since the New Birth is the hallmark of this Administration of Grace, it makes sense that He would clearly tell us about it. God does exactly that by using three different words that refer to a New Birth, and each of them appears only in Epistles to the Church, and nowhere else in the Bible.

*Anagennao* (Strong's number 313; ἀναγεννάω) from the Greek prefix *ana*, "again" or "up," and *gennao*, "to give birth." It means to be given birth to again, or to be born again, and it occurs in 1 Peter 1:3 and 23, "...In his great mercy he has given us new birth..." (1 Pet. 1:3).

*Paliggenesisia* (pronounced pa-lin-ge-ne-sia; the gg is pronounced as an "ng;" Strong's number 3824; παλιγγενεσία) from *palin*, "again" and *genesis*, "genesis" or "origin." It means to have an origin again, a new genesis, and it occurs in Titus 3:5, "...He saved us through the washing of rebirth..." *apokueo* (Strong's number 616; ἀποκυέω) from the Greek prefix *apo*, "away from," and *kueo*, "to be pregnant." It means "to give birth to," and it occurs in James 1:18, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth..."

As every parent knows, the predominant truth about a birth is the presence of a baby, who is "permanent." Surely God would not use three different words for "birth" if there were not an actual birth, or if we could not apply the concepts of birth, such as permanence, to what happens when a Christian is "born again." "Birth" is permanent, both in the flesh and in the spirit.<sup>3</sup>

## New Holy Spirit

In birth, the nature of the parent is passed down to the offspring, and so in the New Birth the nature of God is passed to believers. The "seed" of God is His nature. God is "holy" and God is "spirit," so we should expect to see something in the Church Epistles about His nature, also called "holy spirit," being in, or part of, the Christian, and we do.

### Ephesians 1:13

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

This verse contains some significant truths. First, we received holy spirit at the time we believed. Second, each believer is "sealed" with holy spirit.<sup>4</sup> This is new! No one in the Old Testament, Gospels, or Revelation is said to be "sealed." Quite the opposite! God took His holy spirit from King Saul when he sinned (1 Sam. 16:14), and David had to ask God not to take holy spirit from him (Ps. 51:11).

Third, the word "sealed" indicates that we are permanently sealed with holy spirit. Someone might say, "Well, if you sin, God breaks the seal and takes holy spirit away." If that were the case, why say we are "sealed" at all? Why not just continue the terminology of the Old Testament and Gospels and say that holy spirit is "upon" us? Logic demands that if God uses a totally different vocabulary that is unique to the Administration of Grace, He must be letting us know that something is new and different. Fourth, the holy spirit we receive is the "promised" holy spirit. It was promised in the Old Testament for the Millennial Kingdom, the 1000-year reign of Christ, but given to us now as a surprise by God's grace.<sup>5</sup> The very fact that it was promised in the Old Testament and Gospels means that the people of those times did not yet have it.

## New: A Guarantee

If we have spiritual seed, holy spirit, are born again, and have been sealed by God, then our salvation is guaranteed. Scripture says exactly that.

### 2 Corinthians 1:22

[God via Christ] set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit [spirit] in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

That verse, 2 Corinthians 5:5, and Ephesians 1:14, all say that our future salvation is guaranteed. There are none like them in the Old Testament, Four Gospels, or Revelation. There are versions of the Bible that do not translate the Greek word *arrhabon* as “guarantee,” but instead use “earnest,” “pledge,” “deposit,” or something similar. However, the Greek word *arrhabon* means a deposit in advance that guarantees the full payment to come. For Christians, that means we have a guarantee of salvation.

## **New Nature: A Divine One**

Because the Christian is uniquely born again of God’s imperishable spiritual seed, sealed with holy spirit, and therefore guaranteed salvation, the very presence of holy spirit permanently born in us gives us a divine nature, as Scripture verifies:

### **2 Peter 1:4 (KJV)**

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature...”

At the risk of seeming repetitious, no one in the Old Testament, Gospels, or Revelation is ever said to receive, or “partake of,” a divine nature, not even the prophets, who had God’s gift of holy spirit upon them.

Christians have a divine nature, so the Bible refers to us as “saints,” although a better translation would be “holy ones” (Rom. 1:7). A quick study of the Greek and Hebrew words translated “saints” will show that “holy ones,” God’s holy people, are all through the Bible (cp. Ps. 16:3; Dan. 7:18; Rev. 13:7). However, from what God says about what makes one “holy,” believers in the Old Testament, Gospels, and Revelation were holy only if they obeyed God. In contrast, the Church Epistles make it clear that anyone who is a Christian is holy because of the divine nature within him, regardless of how he behaves in the flesh.

## **New Creations**

God created His nature in us, so we are new creations in Christ.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...!

The phrase “new creation” is literal, and is 100% accurate because the new nature, our holy spirit, was created in us by God. Although some translations say “new creatures,” the Greek word is “creations.” Our first birth was not a creation, but our New Birth is, because when we believed, God “created” new life within us. People in the Old Testament and Gospels believed God, but they were never “created” anew. Other verses, such as Colossians 3:10, also indicate we are new creations.

## **New Body: the Body of Christ**

Christians not only become new creations individually, but also collectively, as part of a spiritual body called, “the Body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27; cp. Rom. 12:4 and 5; 1 Cor. 10:16, 12:12-20; Eph. 1:23, 3:6, 4:4; Col. 1:18, 3:15). Like our physical body, this spiritual body is comprised of many members, and Jesus Christ is its head (Eph. 5:23).

The Body of Christ is unique to the Grace Administration, not mentioned before or after it. It is made up of all those who believe, no matter what their gender or nationality. Galatians 3:28 makes it clear that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female in Christ. This is a shift from the Old Testament and Gospels, in which people are distinctly counted as being either a Jew or a Gentile. Also, after the Rapture, God again separates the Jewish believer from the Gentile believer (Rev. 7:1-17).

## **New Life**

Before we were born again, we had only our old sin nature and were destined to the Second Death, so God referred to us as “dead in your transgressions and sins” (Eph. 2:1). When we got born again, we were given spiritual life, and God promised that He would raise us from physical death.

Our being raised from the dead (or changed from mortal to immortal at the Rapture) is so certain to occur that God refers to it with the idiom that linguists refer to as the “prophetic perfect.” The prophetic perfect is used to emphasize the certainty of a future event by speaking of it as if it has already happened.<sup>6</sup> Thus, even though dead Christians are still physically dead, God says they have already been raised to life (Eph. 2:6). This promise of resurrection to everlasting life is worded without the idiom in Romans 6:5 by using the future tense, “...we will certainly also be united with him....”

## **New Language**

If we are new creations, newly born again and partakers of the divine nature, we should have a new language, a language unique to the Administration of Grace—and we do. The Bible refers to it as “speaking in tongues.” Speaking in tongues first happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), and it will cease to exist after the Rapture of the Church (1 Cor. 13:8). Speaking in tongues is prayer and praise, it edifies the one speaking, and God says He would like every Christian to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14:5).<sup>7</sup>

If a person could lose his guarantee of salvation, he would therefore lose his holy spirit, like king Saul did in the Old Testament. That would mean he could no longer speak in tongues, because holy spirit is what enables him to speak in tongues. A good test, then, to see if salvation really is guaranteed, is to ask people who have greatly sinned if they can still speak in tongues. What do we find in Christendom? Some of the most flagrant sinners speak in tongues fluently. In fact, many Christians hide their sin very effectively, going to churches and speaking in tongues in the service, while secretly sinning. The fact that these sinners, and the rest of us Christians who also sin, can speak in tongues is exactly what we would expect if, as Scripture declares, the holy spirit is sealed in us and the New Birth is permanent.

## **New Citizenship**

As new creations, we now belong to God’s heavenly kingdom, and Scripture makes this clear. The Bible says “...our citizenship is in heaven...” (Phil. 3:20). Once again we see the uniqueness of the Christian Church. Many people in the Old Testament and Gospels believed, but none were referred to as citizens of heaven. In contrast, because our salvation is guaranteed, we can legitimately be called citizens of heaven.

## **New Location**

When we got saved, we were guaranteed to be in heaven with Christ for the years from the Rapture to when Jesus comes to earth and fights the Battle of Armageddon. That guarantee is so sure that God says we are “seated” in heaven (Eph. 2:6). Of course we are not literally in heaven now, but our place there is so secure that God uses the idiom of the prophetic perfect to refer to it. As we have already seen, the prophetic perfect is speaking of something that will occur in the future as if it had already happened, giving the strongest assurance that it will happen.

## **New Relationship with God**

The bond that exists between parents and their birth children is well known. Parents usually love and support their own seed, no matter what. If each Christian is born of God, we should see a shift in how God expresses His love relationship with Christians, as opposed to what He said about Israel in the Old Testament. That shift is clearly recorded in Romans 8:35-39, which expresses two facts: first, that nothing “...will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39), and second, that this is a change from the Old Testament (Rom. 8:36).

Quite a few Old Testament verses refer to God’s having had enough of “His people,” even to the point of saying, “...I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them” (Hosea 1:6), and “...you are not my people, and I am not your God” (Hosea 1:9). Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8 speak of God divorcing Israel and sending her away. There is no such threat to the Church. We are God’s birth children, and even when we behave despicably, He tells us He will always love us. Believers before Pentecost had no such promise, so if they rebelled against God and died in that condition, they were lost. In stark contrast, the Christian is guaranteed everlasting life.

## **New Glory**

The Grace Administration, with its guarantee of salvation, is glorious in the extreme. The Law was glorious in that it gave light and justice where there had been confusion and darkness, but the Church Epistles say that the Law had “no glory” in comparison with the glory of the Administration of Grace. We know that the Law of Moses was indescribably valuable, so for

God to say that it had “no glory” in comparison to what we now have, we Christians must have something incredibly valuable indeed. We do. The fact that everyone who gets saved during the Grace Administration is guaranteed everlasting life makes our administration have “surpassing glory.”

## **New Way of Salvation**

Ever notice that Romans 10:9 is in one of the epistles to the Christian Church? It contains simple and straightforward instructions on how to be saved.

### **Romans 10:9**

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

This verse agrees with the others in the Church Epistles, such as Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:15 and 16, and Ephesians 2:8, which all say our salvation comes through faith in Christ. Faith has always been the way to salvation, but before the Administration of Grace there was no guarantee of salvation, so a person’s works were important to demonstrate his faith, which had to continue throughout his life (Ezek. 33:11-20). That is why Moses said that righteousness came by being careful to obey the Law (Deut. 6:25).

Jesus and the Apostle Paul both taught the way of salvation, and both were asked the basic question, “What must I do to be saved? Jesus answered: “...If you want to enter life, obey the commandments” (Matt. 19:17). During the Law of Moses, when Jesus answered the question, there was no guarantee of salvation available, so a person had to maintain his faith and righteousness throughout his life. Thus Jesus told the man to obey the commandments. In contrast, Paul answered: “...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...” (Acts 16:31). When Paul answered the question, the Administration of Grace had begun, in which the moment a person believes, he is born again and has the guarantee of everlasting life.

## **New Ending**

The Administration of Grace will end with the Rapture, when dead Christians are raised, living Christians are changed, and both groups are taken to heaven in new bodies that are like Christ’s glorious body (Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). The Rapture is a new concept, occurring only in the Church Epistles.<sup>8</sup> In fact, because the Rapture occurs only in the Church Epistles, many scholars deny that it ever occurs. That, however, is exactly our point: only Christians are in the Rapture. It is unique to God’s children by birth, so it is not found outside the Church Epistles.

The righteous people who lived and died during the Old Testament or Gospels will be resurrected in the Resurrection of the Just, also called the “first resurrection” and the “resurrection of life” (Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:5).<sup>9</sup> They come out of their graves and live on earth (Ezek. 37:11-14). In contrast, Christians are taken into heaven at the Rapture, and come back down to earth with Christ as part of his army, fighting in the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21). After Armageddon and the Resurrection of the Just, both Old Testament believers and Christians will live with Christ in his Millennial Kingdom on earth.<sup>10</sup>

## **Conclusion**

As we saw above, the evidence that Christians are guaranteed everlasting life is overwhelming, and it is unique to the Christian Church. For a Christian to lose his guarantee of salvation, God’s “imperishable” seed would perish; birth would not be permanent; God’s seal on us would not actually “seal” anything; it would be clear that our “divine nature” was not part of our nature at all; the “guarantee” we had from God would guarantee absolutely nothing; we would have to become uncreated; the member in particular that we are would have to be amputated from the Body of Christ; our new spiritual life would have to be killed; our new language would have to be taken from us; our heavenly citizenship would have to be revoked; God’s promise that we were already with Him in heaven would be shown to be worthless; the “surpassing glory” we are said to have would be shown to be no different from the glory of the Law; and the promise that nothing would separate us from God’s love would be shown to be false.

With all the evidence in the Church Epistles for our guarantee of salvation, why would anyone think a Christian’s salvation was not secure? Most Christians are taught to believe and live by “the whole Bible.” They are not taught to discern what applies to Christians (the Church) and what does not. There are clear verses that salvation is not guaranteed in the Old

Testament, Gospels, and Revelation, and so people apply these to Christians as well. Another reason people do not believe that Christian salvation is guaranteed is that, at the expense of the far greater number of clear verses about salvation being permanent, they cling to the few unclear verses in the Church Epistles that might be interpreted otherwise. Every subject has both clear and unclear verses, and secure salvation is one of them. A cardinal rule of Bible study is that the unclear verses must be interpreted in light of the clear verses.

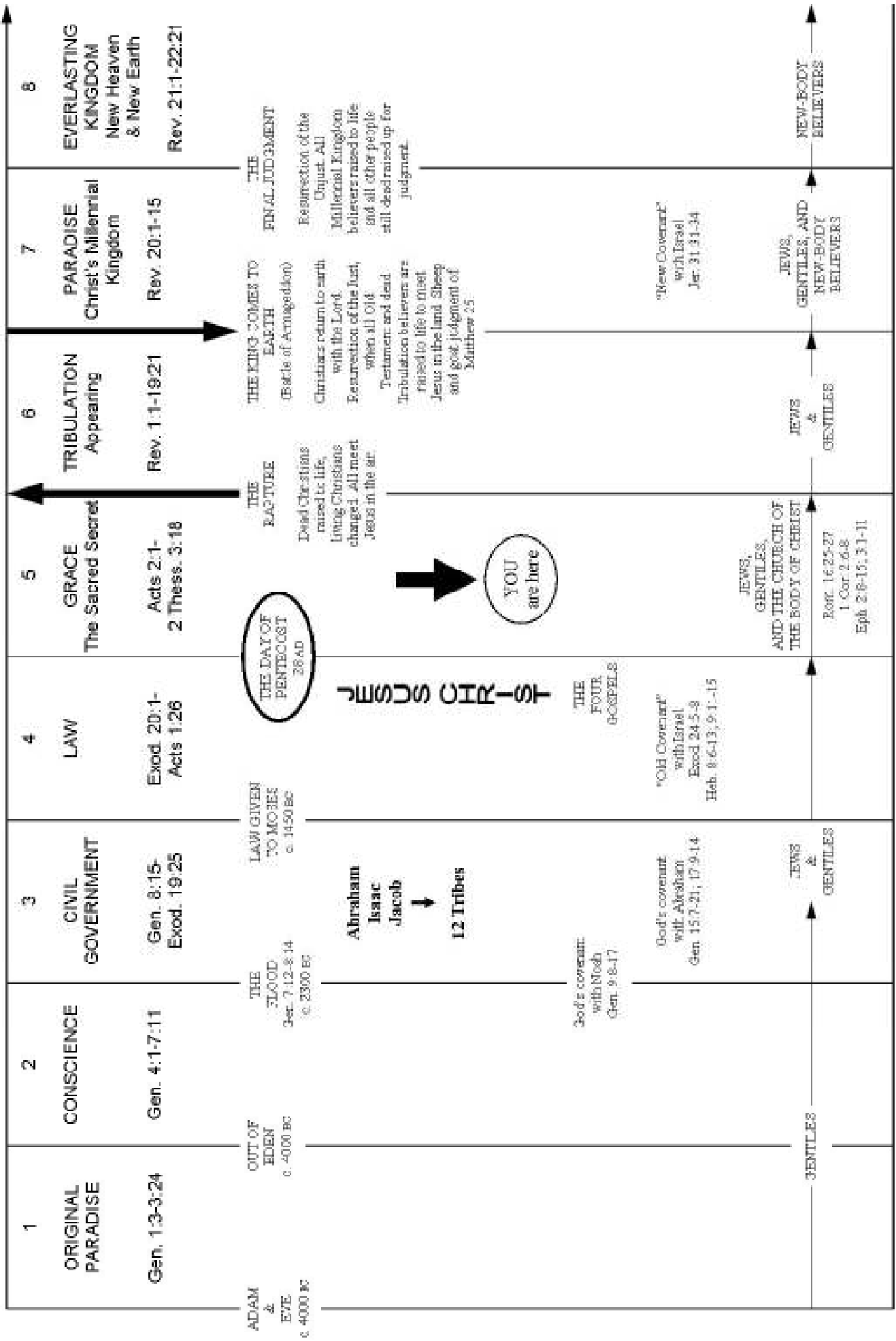
Lastly, some people believe that Christians can lose their salvation is because they work hard to live a godly life and are scandalized by the thought that someone who once confessed Christ but who is now living an ungodly lifestyle is also going to have everlasting life. If there is one thing we should learn from Scripture, it is not to let our feelings dictate our theology. Adam and Eve did, and look where we are today. The Pharisees did, and they missed the whole point of the Law. Are we really going to grade people's sins and keep them from everlasting life because their sins scandalize us? Scripture says we have all sinned. Paul did not ask the jailor at Philippi what kind of man he was—he just said believe in Jesus to have everlasting life. Scripture is clear: If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, by the grace of God you have the guarantee of salvation.

**Endnotes:**

1. Martin Anstey, *How to Master the Bible* (Pickering & Inglis, London), p. 23.
2. At this point the astute reader will say, "Wait a minute. Jesus spoke of being born again in John 3 when he was speaking to Nicodemus." The phrase "born again" in John 3 is a mistranslation. The Greek is totally different in John 3:3 and 7, and 1 Peter 1:23. 1 Peter 1:23 is properly translated "born again," while John 3:3 and 7, should be translated "born from above" as the *New Revised Standard Version* and *Young's Literal Translation* do. For a full explanation of what Jesus was referring to, which was the resurrection out of the grave, see our book, *The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, pp. 257-266. Available on page 3 of the enclosed price list or by going to [STFonline.org/store](http://STFonline.org/store)
3. Not only are we born into God's family, we are also said to be "adopted" into it, whereby God emphasizes that we are permanent members of His family. See our article, "Adopted by God," at [TruthOrTradition.com/adopted](http://TruthOrTradition.com/adopted) and our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, pp. 212 and 213. Available on page 3 of the enclosed price list or by going to [STFonline.org/store](http://STFonline.org/store)
4. In the Greek text, the word "sealed" is a verb, and the "holy spirit" referred to is the gift of God, not God, so the proper translation is, "sealed with the promised holy spirit." For more on God the Giver, and the gift of holy spirit, see our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, pp. 5-23. You can read this section of our book online by going to [TruthOrTradition.com/giver](http://TruthOrTradition.com/giver).
5. For a full explanation of Christians receiving the gift of holy spirit that God promised to give in the Millennial Kingdom, see our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, pp. 237-247.
6. For an explanation of the prophetic perfect, see our book, *The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, pp. 223-240. For further study we have posted this section of our book online at [TruthOrTradition.com/pp](http://TruthOrTradition.com/pp)
7. For a detailed explanation of speaking in tongues, as well as direction on how to do it, see our book, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, pp. 137-158. Also, visit [TruthOrTradition.com/tongues](http://TruthOrTradition.com/tongues)
8. Some people believe that Matthew 24:37-41 is also about the Rapture, but it is about Christ's coming to earth as a conqueror, and it compares the Judgment of the wicked of Noah's day with the Judgment of the wicked when Christ comes back to earth. For a full explanation, see our book, *The Christian's Hope*, pp. 25-28. To learn more about the Rapture, visit [TruthOrTradition.com/rapture](http://TruthOrTradition.com/rapture)
9. Those who believe in Christ during the Millennial Kingdom will be raised at the final judgment.
10. Details of life on earth during the Millennial Kingdom are in our book, *The Christian's Hope*, pp. 35-82. Key sections of the book can be read online by going to [TruthOrTradition.com/hope](http://TruthOrTradition.com/hope)

# THE ADMINISTRATIONS IN SCRIPTURE

## TIME (THE AGES)



## Why doesn't the Bible just say, "You can't lose your salvation"?

Although both the Bible and Christians speak of being "saved," no one is actually "saved" yet (don't panic...keep reading). A quick look at Scripture shows that there are some verses that say we have salvation, and some that say it is future. Ephesians 2:8 is an example of a verse that says we have already been saved: "...you have been saved, through faith..." As for verses stating that our salvation is still in the future, Romans 13:11 says, "...our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Likewise, Romans 5:10 says, "we" (not unbelievers) "...shall be saved by his life" (KJV), with the verb "saved" being in the future tense. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 calls the Christian's helmet the "hope of salvation." We hope for it because it is still future.

So, which is it? Are we saved now, or is salvation something we have to wait for? It is clear that we are not saved now in the sense that we have been rescued from the possibility of death or the consequences of sin in this fallen world. Christians still wrestle with sin, and many die each year. When we are actually "saved," which means "rescued" from sin and death, there will be no more sin or death, and we will have new, perfect bodies. At that point, our salvation will be fully realized. Until then, what we have is the **guarantee** of salvation.

It is important to know why God sometimes says we are saved now. There is an idiom in both the Hebrew and Greek language of the Bible that when something will absolutely happen in the future, it can be spoken of in the past tense, as if it has already happened. Scholars refer to that idiom as the "prophetic perfect."<sup>1</sup> For example, in the New International Version, Jude 14 says, "...See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones." However, other versions, such as the more literal *New American Standard Bible* or *English Standard Version*, read the Lord already "came" with his holy ones, and the Greek text does in fact read "came." The future coming of the Lord will absolutely happen, so via the biblical idiom it is spoken of in Jude as if it has already happened. Similarly, our being seated in heaven with Christ is so certain that Ephesians 2:6 says we are already there with him even though other verses and our experience teach us that we are still on earth. When it comes to being rescued from sin and death, our salvation is so certain that many verses idiomatically say it has already happened. Other verses are literal and speak of it as being in the future. We are not "saved," rescued, from this world yet, but we will be.

Knowing the above information, we can rightly answer the question posed above as to why God never says a Christian cannot lose his salvation. The answer is that **no one already has salvation to lose**. Nevertheless, our future salvation is not in danger, and God tells us that very clearly and decisively. One way is by telling us that it is guaranteed. The presence of God's gift of holy spirit born inside us is "...a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..." (Eph. 1:14; cp. 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, which also say our future is guaranteed).

A guarantee is a guarantee. We may not be saved now, but we have the absolute guarantee that we will be. God also gives us that same message in other ways, such as by using the word "birth," which communicates that something new and permanent came into being. By the way, the fact that the reality of our salvation is still future is also why God says our redemption is future (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14, 4:30), our adoption into God's family is future (Rom. 8:23), and our glorification is future (Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:27)

One last point. If we are not saved now, should we speak of ourselves as being saved? The Bible refers to Christians as being saved and so we can also, as long as we understand the truth of what we are actually saying and do our best to communicate that truth to others.

### Endnote:

1. We have written extensively about the prophetic perfect in our book: *The Christian's Hope, the Anchor of the Soul*, pp. 223-240. For further study we have posted this section of our book online at [TruthOrTradition.com/pp](http://TruthOrTradition.com/pp)

# **Partner Profile**

## **Frank & Joan Rutkowski**

Greetings and blessings from beautiful Scranton, PA.

We are very blessed to be partners with Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. I (Frank) have been a Christian for more than 30 years. I had been a part of a ministry before coming to Spirit & Truth, but I didn't feel the kind of personal commitment I feel now. I have a desire to do those things that please God rather than trying to please men.

Because of what this ministry teaches, we are learning to have a real relationship with God and the Lord Jesus. We feel that this ministry has helped us go farther than we have ever gone before.

The people in this ministry have been great examples to us of the love of God. We have learned the importance of relationships, first with God and Jesus, but also with our brethren in the Lord. It's important to realize just how much we need each other as members of the Body. It's great to be a part of a ministry that makes us feel important and equal with everyone else who is involved.

We are also very blessed with the websites ([TruthOrTradition.com](http://TruthOrTradition.com) and [BiblicalUnitarian.com](http://BiblicalUnitarian.com)) and how they are reaching people all over the world. What an awesome thing that God is doing via that avenue. It is great to have the websites available, with so much information, and we hand out many of the website business cards. How wonderful to make so much of the Word available to people for free. When I first met Joan, she was attending a denominational church, and I shared some Word with her. For a time, she felt at a loss to discuss much Bible with me, but the teachings on the websites changed that for her. She learned a lot from them, and as they say, "the rest is history."

We are very blessed to partner with this ministry for more reasons that we can name here. We truly believe we are doing what God has called us to do. We have a desire above all things to please God, and that has to include being actively involved with other Christians and helping to make the Word available to people all over the world. In our small way, we feel we are doing that.

We thank God for the privilege of being involved in the movement of His Word.

God bless you all!

Frank & Joan Rutkowski  
Scranton, PA

# Freedom Behind Bars

## by Grady B. Rogers

[This is the fourth in a series of columns written by Grady, an inmate at an Indiana correctional institution. He was a member of John Lynn's weekly prison fellowship until he was moved to another facility.]

### **Matthew 25:35-40**

(35) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

(36) I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

(37) "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?'

(38) When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?'

(39) When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

(40) "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

It was not until my early thirties that I was taught the available fullness of the Christian life. I grew up attending churches that taught combinations of erroneous doctrines. Some said that each time you sinned, you had to get saved again. Others said once saved, always saved, but did not emphasize righteous living, and were very critical of one another. None taught me the importance of loving my brethren, how to disciple others, how to develop my giftings, the importance of the deposit of holy spirit I have, or how to walk in the joy and freedom Christ offers us.

At about age 32, I realized that something was missing, and I went on a search for the truth. I went to a different church nearly every Sunday morning and evening. A couple at one church took an interest in me and invited me to go with them to a home Bible study. There I was instantaneously healed of a knee injury and my fiancée received hearing in her deaf ear. Furthermore, they told me I could speak in tongues, which I did that very night. I was never the same after that. [If you would like to know more about speaking in tongues, visit [TruthOrTradition.com/tongues](http://TruthOrTradition.com/tongues)]

That evening was the first of what would be four times in the next five years (1992-1997) that the following prophecy was spoken to me: "God is going to bless you with 100 times more than you have ever had, and you are going to work with couples who are in trouble in their marriages and with their finances." The next three times were by a visiting evangelist, a Christian lobbyist from Washington D.C., and the lead singer of Higher Ground. I did not know then that some of those I would help would be prison inmates. [To be continued...]

Side note: During my first few months at this new facility I have begun to spread the truth. I shared who Jesus is and gave the Administrations chart to a fellow inmate who later told me, "The chart provided me with a new way to study the Bible. It showed me that part of the Bible is about the past, part about today, and part about what is yet to come. The more I understand God's Word, the more it makes sense. Give my thanks to Spirit & Truth Fellowship International for their commitment to make known the truth." [To view a chart on the Administrations in Scripture, visit [TruthOrTradition.com/chart](http://TruthOrTradition.com/chart).]

## Welcome Back

Greetings and God bless you! My name is Rachel Darr.

I previously worked for Spirit & Truth Fellowship International from June of 2005 through October of 2006. In mid-October of 2006, I married Billy Darr in a beautiful ceremony held at our own Camp Vision. The first 15 months of our marriage have been amazing, and we are excited to expand our family.

This coming May of 2008 we are expecting our first child, a little girl! We would be blessed by your prayers for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy little girl.

I have been absent from the Home Office since just after our wedding in 2006, but am very blessed to be back and once again serving the Body of Christ!

I will be answering your phone calls, taking your bookstore orders, and registering you for conferences! I look forward to talking to you soon!

God bless you,  
Rachel

# **Fuel for the Fire**

## **Worldly Possessions**

### **by Austin Williams**

[This article is a school paper that was submitted by Austin Williams. Austin is 17 years old and works part time in our shipping department. If you have ordered material from our bookstore, you may have seen his “thank you” note on your order.]

## **Worldly Possessions**

There is a big difference between what we need and what we want. Almost everyone knows this but still we seem to sometimes confuse the two. An education, food, hospitals, clothes, cars; these are things we need. The best food, the newest clothes, the nicest car; these are things we want.

Modern day possessions aren't a bad thing but I think that they should be pretty far down on our list of importance. How many things in our lives are more important to us than these material things that we could live without? For me personally, just to name a few, God, Jesus, family, friends, prayer, reading the Word. So if this is true, why do I often spend my time playing video games or watching TV? Is it right that I can easily spend an hour on MySpace.com and AIM a night but find it so difficult to spend half an hour a day reading the Bible? Is it fair to God? No it is not. The Bible says that God should come first in our lives. So why do we feel the need to buy the most expensive things? The reason is this; Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4 KJV).

He wants us to believe that getting new things is more important than spending time with our Holy Father. It's the feeling that after we've bought all that we can that there will be nothing else we need, we'll have it all, but money can't buy love; money can't buy a personal relationship with God; money can't buy true friends.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't ever buy nice things; I'm simply saying that we should try to make sure that we put the most important things first and the worldly things second.

### **Romans 12:2**

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Austin Williams  
New Palestine, IN

# No Bars Held

## by Don Snedeker

If you want to take three parts of you—your heart, mind and body—to unplanned places, pursue truth. In your travels, sometimes one of these parts wants to be in one place while the others would rather be elsewhere. Your decision to do anything in life, including attend a Spirit & Truth conference, is the product of reflection. You might make a decision to attend because you want to see friends, learn, teach, get quiet. All good stuff. When the time arrives to get where you're going—via airplane, in my case, to the Live Out Loud Teens & Twenties conference this past December—what happens between the decision to go and takeoff is sometimes another matter. There might be a shift in which parts of you want to go. Or don't want to go.

When I made the decision to attend Live Out Loud, I was into it. Even though it would be sandwiched between Christmas and New Year's Day, I wanted to go. So I bought the plane ticket in advance and was looking forward to the conference.

I love flying and love new places. As I was airborne, though, conflicting feelings crept in, and I intuited that my heart and mind were two different things. The forward progress of the plane was no match for the backward movement of my mind, bringing me joy in the thought of friends and family back home. My heart, though, was no match for the plane, whose forward progress increasingly weighed on me. My legs didn't have a strong opinion either way and got me to the conference after I got my luggage from baggage claim.

Upon arriving at the conference, I wasn't expecting to discover what I did. Some discoveries were energizing, others were realizations of a fallen world I was part of and contributing to. I had to admit something to myself, then to others, and it cut deep. It turned out that it cut many of us pretty deep, which was an illustration of "no new thing under the sun."

I'll come right out with it: There were no bars on my cell phone. Oh...my...God. No connection with the outside world. No diversions. No instant gratification. I made numerous efforts to change my situation, becoming both the guy on the Verizon commercial and his colleague on the other end of the phone, but with the opposite result:

**Question:** Can I text you now?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** How 'bout now?

**Answer:** No.

**Agitated Question:** Now?

**Agitated Answer:** No! Stop asking.

No bars, OK? You're stranded, my friend.

This went on for twenty-four hours with varying levels of intensity. Having studied Scripture for twenty years I knew that faith moves mountains, and I'm going to remove the one in front of my cabin since I'm pretty sure it's the one blocking my cell signal. For better or worse, I'd left my mustard seed at home, which apparently is the key to removing a mountain.

My phone was more unsettled than I was, as it was searching *non-stop* for a signal while I was at praise and worship, teaching, and sleeping. Due to its effort, when I awoke each morning the battery was depleted. It was using its energy to connect with the outside world. The irony struck me: I had become one with my cell phone! When I was younger I never set out to be like a phone, so now I had issues.

I figured out that a constant churning action was happening inside me as I was going through this exercise of trying to connect with people *out there*, when so many of the people I love are *in here*, at the camp I wanted to come to in the first place. It took more than a day of non-cell-phone interactions for me to re-embrace the idea that the purest connectedness is face-to-face, not text-to-text.

So I became aware of how the world had infected me. Going to a place that keeps things simple, that provides an environment to see how we're living on a daily basis, that keeps relationships simple so they can go deeper, all minister to the human heart and mind and helps us get in touch with better ways of living.

There were great teachings, of course. Praise and worship was hot. By the third day I didn't want my cell to have bars. On the way out of the camp a bar or two showed up and I was bummed—it signaled the end of Live Out Loud. When I made my first call, though, in the three preceding days I had been cleansed of so much that I enjoyed the person on the phone because I'd been reminded of how sweet it is to be in the moment with someone and to connect with only that person.

Regardless of the heart-mind battle you may experience, decide to attend a Spirit & Truth conference ([STFonline.org/events](http://STFonline.org/events)). Your legs will bring you face-to-face with beautiful people. You'll find that they think you're beautiful, too, and you'll see it in their eyes.

# Dear Sower

## A Website in German

I really love your website ([www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com)). I've learned a lot about the Bible and its interpretation from your website and from *The Sower*. I enjoy reading about the truth and I am happy to know that there are people who think that "truth matters" and who search for it.

I want you to know that I appreciate and respect your efforts. I can't tell you how precious it is, but still after so many years there is not a German website. I'm sure that there are a lot of German speaking people that would like to read your articles in their native language. For me, it would be so great to be able to read them in German.

Claudia Zahn  
Hoffheim, Germany

**Editor's Note:** If you would like to help us translate any of our articles into the German language, or any other language, please contact us at  
**[STF@STFonline.org](mailto:STF@STFonline.org)**

## Free from Men's Traditions

I am fairly new to your organization. My first involvement came through eBay, where I purchased a book and a couple of tapes on tithing and its controversial dilemma in today's churches.

I have begun to more frequently cruise your website ([TruthOrTradition.com](http://TruthOrTradition.com)) and gather information about other topics. I have found your information to be true and certainly free from men's religious traditions, and encouraging to me. I too feel the way you do on many subjects, but religious legalism, traditions, and protected opinions are hard to break. Oh Boy! But keep up the good work. Your information is certainly helping me in my walk and in my writing. I want only to write the truth, and not a legalistic opinion.

Wilmia H.  
Arkansas City, KS

**Editor's Note:** Like to shop on eBay? We have an eBay store located at:  
**[STFonline.org/ebay](http://STFonline.org/ebay)**

## A Better Relationship

I wanted to let you know how blessed I have been re-reading your book, *One God & One Lord*. For many years I have had “strongholds,” when it came to talking to others about the “Trinity.” As I am re-reading *One God & One Lord*, I am now able to give to others what Scripture says about who Jesus Christ is, not what others have said. Before, I was never able to give people the “Word of God,” primarily because I myself did not understand what I was reading.

*One God & One Lord* is not only continuing to help me understand the Bible, but I am building a much better relationship with my Lord Jesus Christ, and for this I am thankful.

Greg Bailey  
Jacksonville, FL

**Editor’s Note:** You can read key sections of *One God & One Lord* online for free at **TruthOrTradition.com/ogol**

Go to **STFonline.org/ogol** for more information on how to purchase this book through our online store.

## Free Indeed Videos Online

I can’t tell you enough how much I appreciate all the work that’s gone into posting the Free Indeed video teachings.

I spent some time figuring out how to download the flash videos to my home computer and then converting them to MPEG so I could transfer them to my Palm. Thanks! It is WAY COOL!!

Now I can sit in my arm chair, instead of in front of the computer (much more relaxing), with my favorite Bible translation in my lap and enjoy these great teachings. Way to go guys!

Larry Wilson  
Kalispell, MT

**Editor’s Note:** You can visit **TruthOrTradition.com/video** to view all of our Freed Indeed videos absolutely free.

Our Free Indeed videos make a great supplement to your daily quiet time. Try it out!