

The 5 Truths & the 5 Keys

10 Critical Truths that Every Christian Should Know



The 5 Truths of the
Gospel of Jesus Christ

and

5 Keys to Understanding
the New Testament



A True Gospel Ministries Presentation

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Introduction: The 5 Truths and the 5 Keys



The 5 Truths and the 5 Keys



Why do you believe the things you do about God and the Bible? Chances are it is because that is what you have been *instructed* to believe. That makes it sound like your beliefs are not so much your own but those of the people who have influenced you.

If you are like most people, you would prefer to think that you have your own mind and that you make your own choices about what you believe. But, do you really? Consider how you have come to believe what you do. If you are from a religious family, you likely have adopted the beliefs of your family's denomination or religious group. In your younger years, believing what your family believed seemed quite normal; that was your entire world and they were the people you trusted. Children usually believe what their families tell them, whether it is true or not. But, what do you believe now that you have grown older? A disturbing percentage of Christians today cannot explain what they believe or why they believe it.

The World Christian Database estimates that there are 635 "Christian" denominations in the United States and 9,000 worldwide. This is above and beyond all of the non-Christian religions in the world. Yet, the Bible expressly forbids division within the Body of Christ. Most Christians have just grown up thinking that denominations are a normal part of the Christian religion; but, this "disunion" is not from God.

1 Corinthians [1:10b] that you all agree and **that there be no divisions among you ... [1:13a] Has Christ been divided? ... [12:25a] so that there may be no division in the body ...**

The reason there is such great division is that many people throughout Church history, including Church leaders and Bible scholars, have attempted to interpret the letters of the Apostles based on their own human understanding rather than relying on the teaching of the Holy Spirit. At various points in Church history, such as the Protestant revolt, people recognized just how far the Church had strayed from the actual truth of Scripture. They broke away to establish their own independent group thinking they now had the “truth.” But, these new groups continued this same practice of using their own human reasoning, and the splits kept dividing the Church again and again. This tradition continues today.

Important: “Traditional” teaching is meant to be understood as any teaching that comes from interpreting Scripture through human reasoning instead of that which comes from the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Both denominations and Bible commentaries influence people greatly because people believe they teach the truth of the Bible. Yet, with their many contradictory assertions, they have actually become the two primary modes of transport by which the “the wisdom of men” has been passed down through the generations.

1 Corinthians 2:5 so that **your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

It is common for people to study the beliefs and opinions of other people through books and commentaries. If you want to become a pastor in a particular denomination you are required to attend their seminary or Bible school that is oriented to their particular set of theological beliefs. Seeking by faith the teaching of the Holy Spirit is just not concrete enough for denominations because it cannot be controlled at the human level. The fear is that people will teach “any old thing they want.” Well, with the hundreds of denominations in the world today, people are teaching “any old thing they want.”

Division means error; error comes from division. People hang onto the teachings of their denominations because they are trained to do so and because it is very uncomfortable to consider any other point of view. Denominations forbid straying from their set of beliefs, either by subtle pressure or overt persecution. The Catholic Church is the most stark example but Protestantism has been equally inflexible, both having a history of violence against “heretics.” The pressure has not diminished although it has become more civilized.

As a Christian, you can, in a relatively short period of time, surpass the level of scholars and pastors in your understanding of the Bible if you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. This may sound impossible but it is not. You will no longer be limited by your own intellect or the biases that blind most scholars and pastors. The hard part is giving over to God your particular set of theological beliefs and biases.

True Story: A woman was asked this question, “Will you give over to God all of your beliefs so that He can separate truth from error and give back to you only His truth?” The woman responded, “I will give over to God all of my beliefs except speaking in tongues.”

Spiritual growth is dependent on an accurate understanding of Scripture. Whether you are reading the Bible, listening to a sermon or reading a book, you will really come to know the truth only as you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. This will transform your mind and cause you to grow spiritually. As you do this, you will gain confidence that you are hearing the voice of the Lord and that you are beginning to understand the truth that the Holy Spirit is teaching you. It is important to recognize, however, that God’s truth, when first understood, may actually seem like heresy because traditional teaching, rooted in the wisdom of men, has been around so long that it is accepted as orthodoxy.

Important: “Orthodoxy” means the teaching of the majority while “heresy” means a teaching that goes against the majority. Orthodoxy **does not** mean that the teaching is true and heresy **does not** mean that the teaching is false. Originally being called a heretic was not a negative term but simply meant that the person brought “another idea” to the discussion. In New Testament times, the Pharisees and rulers of the people were “orthodox” while Jesus and the Apostles were “heretics.”

If you remain trapped in your denominational beliefs, you will become stagnant in your spiritual growth, just as so many millions of Christians are today.

John 14:26a But the Helper, **the Holy Spirit ... He will teach you all things, ...**

Some of the things that you are about to read are not as you have always heard them taught in Christian churches. Much of today's teaching has roots that go back centuries, but not all the way back to the Apostles. Being old does not make these teachings true. Millions of Christians have been deceived by teaching that is based on tradition and history.

This booklet present 10 truths that are critical for every Christian to know. This is what the Apostles taught (although the material is organized differently). The "5 Truths" of the Gospel will help you understand exactly what the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ accomplished. The "5 Keys" to understanding the New Testament are Biblical truths that correct much of false teaching that is so common in the Christian Church today. When you finish, you will understand what you believe and why. Then, your beliefs will be your own rather than those of others.



The 5 Truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ



The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of human history. This is because the Gospel shows the way to a restored relationship with the living God, something that was lost at the beginning of the human history. Most Christians recognize the Cross and resurrection as foundations of the Gospel, but Christ's sinless life was just as important. Together, Jesus Christ repaired everything that went wrong when Adam sinned and lost his innocence and intimacy with God. The Gospel of Jesus Christ really is the "Good News."

There are several ways to accurately proclaim the truth of the Gospel. Some are very simple such as, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved"; others would fill an entire book. The following is a straight forward yet comprehensive statement of the Gospel.

Note: You may have an emotional reaction to some of the things you are about to read. You may even have the urge to reject these things if they make you feel uneasy. Don't feel pressured to believe what you read, but don't reject it - just absorb it. Then, take what you read to the Lord and ask *Him* to separate truth from error. You will be amazed as the Lord removes the veil of tradition from your eyes, maybe for the first time in your life.



The Gospel of Jesus Christ

All sins of all people were forgiven for all time on the Cross of Jesus Christ, except for the sin of unbelief that Christ is Savior. This single sin of rejecting Christ is the barrier that people place before God and His free offer of salvation unto eternal life through faith in Christ Jesus. When you trust in Christ as Savior, God removes your old sinful spirit (heart) and replaces it with a brand new, clean heart. Then, the Holy Spirit comes to live in your new heart to make you literally righteous by His indwelling presence as He joins as one with you in spirit. Whereas your inner spirit is redeemed and righteous, your outer mortal body has not yet been redeemed. Thus, your spirit is alive because of righteousness but your body is still dead because of sin. This means that the Christian life is living in union with Christ in your spirit and following Him by faith in your mortal body and human soul. Christ lives His righteous life through you, and you trust Him and follow Him in faith.



The Gospel of Jesus Christ has five fundamental truths: forgiveness, cleansing, righteousness, union and faith. As you understand these five truths, you will understand why Jesus had to go to the Cross and why God had to raise Him from the dead to “save” you. Believing these Biblical truths is the same thing as trusting Christ as your Savior; these are the essentials of the Christian faith.

First Truth: Forgiveness

Jesus Christ shed His blood on the Cross as full and final payment for all sins of all people for all time. The only sin that was not forgiven on the Cross was the sin of unbelief, the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior.

Colossians 1:20 and through Him to **reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the **world** to Himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Both believers and unbelievers are forgiven and no longer need to seek forgiveness from God. All are forgiven - but not all are “saved.” Many will try to convince you that only the sins of Christians are forgiven. This error has been around for most of Church history and is still widely believed today. To many, teaching that all sins are forgiven sounds too much like “universalism,” the false teaching that all people will be saved. Salvation comes from being “born again,” not from being forgiven.

Misunderstanding about forgiveness is rooted in a faulty understanding of the relationship between the Gentiles and the Old Covenant Law. The Gentiles were never given the Law and were not held to the same accountability for transgressing the Law that the Jews were. Whereas the Jews died because of sin through *the Law*, the Gentiles died because of sin through *Adam’s sin*, not through their own transgressions of the Law. (See Romans 2:12 and Romans 5:12-21 for a full explanation; this issue will be also be discussed in greater detail in Key #5.)

Romans 2:14-15 For when Gentiles **who do not have the Law** do instinctively the things of the Law, **these, not having the Law**, are a law to themselves, [15] in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

The Gentiles had their conscience instead of the Law to tell them if they were doing right or wrong.

Romans 4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: **for where no law is, there is no transgression.** (KJV)

Romans 5:13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but **sin is not imputed when there is no law.**

The forgiveness of sins is critical; but, forgiveness is not the same thing as “salvation.”



God took the first step toward you by forgiving all of your sins. The Cross did not merely create the possibility of forgiveness, as traditional teaching often implies, it *accomplished* that forgiveness forever.

1 John 2:2 He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but **the sins of all the world**. (NLT)

It was the *blood* of the Cross that reconciled you to God, not your faith response to the Cross. But, faith is absolutely essential for salvation, but for a reason other than forgiveness.

Revelation 1:5b ... To Him who loves us and **released us from our sins by His blood** -

You were forgiven *before* you were even a believer. How could you have repented, confessed, believed or been baptized as a condition of your forgiveness?

Romans 5:10a For if **while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of His Son ...

All sins were forgiven on the Cross, except unbelief.

Mark 3: 28-29 Truly I say to you, **all sins shall be forgiven** the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; [29] but **whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.**

Jesus explained that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the same thing as the sin of unbelief ...

John 16:8-9 And **He** {the Holy Spirit}, **when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin** and righteousness and judgment; [9] **concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;**

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin because of its unbelief that Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior. When you reject Christ, you reject the work of the Holy Spirit and *blaspheme* Him. This is an eternal sin that will never be forgiven because it was not forgiven on the Cross. It can be overcome only through faith in Christ – unbelief turned to belief.

Note: “Unbelief turned to belief” is the real meaning of repentance. Tradition has added many things to repentance, usually involving a pledge to turn from sin. Only by living in union with the indwelling Christ and walking by faith can you live a righteous life pleasing to God. As will be seen in the next two sections, your mortal body (mortal flesh) is still dead because of sin. Any pledge made from your unredeemed mortal self may be sincerely felt but will usually end up as an unfulfilled promise.

Second Truth: Cleansing

All people, believers and unbelievers, have an inner spirit and an outer mortal body. (See Key #3 to learn more.) When talking about cleansing and righteousness, it is your inner spirit, not your outer mortal body, which is cleansed and made righteous upon faith in Jesus Christ. Your physical body will not be redeemed until sometime in the future.

Romans 8:23b ... even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for {our} adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.**

God is perfectly righteous. Unless you are perfectly righteous as well, you will remain as all unbelievers are now, lost and separated from God. No one can live a perfectly righteous life; it is impossible from a human point of view. The Hebrew Law proved this to the children of Israel; God did not even ask the Gentiles to try to live by the standards of the Law. The only solution is for God to give you righteousness as a gift.

But, God cannot make you righteous when you have any unforgiven sin in your life - that is, the sin of unbelief. This is why faith is necessary. That last sin of unbelief must be turned to belief (faith) before God can make you clean and righteous in your spirit. Remember that it was only one sin, that of eating a piece of forbidden fruit, that separated Adam and the woman (and subsequently all of mankind) from God. And, it takes only the one sin of unbelief to keep you separated from God.

When God sent His Son to this earth, He lived a sinless life. He was the only one before or since to do so. Jesus lived a perfect life in your place because you would not have been able to do so yourself. Because He fulfilled the Law perfectly, Jesus was qualified to be your substitute when He went to the Cross. The Law under which Jesus lived required an unblemished lamb for sacrifice to cover sins. Jesus was that perfect Lamb and the only one who met the requirements to pay the penalty for your sin. This is why Jesus Christ is the only one who can save you.

Jesus not only lived a sinless life for you, He became sin for you. This is a remarkable truth that tradition rejects or ignores. Jesus actually took on the sinfulness that was in you and received the judgment of God in your stead. He died for you so that you would not have to suffer eternal separation from God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

When you trust in Christ as Savior, God literally removes your old sinful spirit - it is gone forever. He replaces it with a brand new, clean heart. You now have a new spirit (“heart” or “nature”) that is completely clean and free from sin.

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin** {“old sinful nature”) **might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;**

1 John 1:9b ... and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**

Faith in Christ is the *only* way to God because Jesus is the *only* one who can make you clean and righteous in your spirit. Even if you still struggle with sin after becoming a Christian, that comes from your outer mortal flesh, the human part of you, not from your new clean heart. In your spirit you are free from sin forever.

Romans 6:7 for he who has died is **freed from sin**.

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though **you were slaves of sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness**.

Only your spirit is changed when you trust Christ as Savior. Your outer mortal self, the human part of you, remains the same as it always has been, that is, dead because of sin. But your spirit is alive because it has been made clean and righteous. You live by faith since you are still unable, even as a Christian, to live righteously through your own human self-effort.

Romans 8:10 If Christ is in you, **though the body is dead because of sin** {because it has not yet been redeemed}, yet **the spirit is alive because of righteousness** {because it has been redeemed}.

Third Truth: Righteousness

Note: Cleansing and righteousness are what Scripture means when it speaks of being “born again.” Although you must be forgiven to be born again, being born again is what actually “saves” you into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Because you now have a clean heart, God has a “clean vessel” within you where He can live. God could not live in your sinful, unclean heart and He could not give you a new heart until that last sin of unbelief was turned to belief.

Through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, God gives you the greatest gift you will ever receive.

Romans 5:17b ... much more **those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

The Cross was for sin and death; the resurrection is for righteousness and eternal life. God raised Jesus from the dead to bring you life – His own indwelling eternal life.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, **much more, having been reconciled** {forgiven}, **we shall be saved by His** {indwelling} **life**.

Being “born again” is how God makes you clean so that the Holy Spirit can live in you to make you righteous.

1 Peter 1:23 for **you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable**, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

Note: Saying that the Holy Spirit indwells you is the very same thing as saying that Jesus Christ lives in you. See Romans 8:9-11 to see how these terms are used interchangeably; also see Galatians 2:20.

As the Holy Spirit comes to live in you, He makes you truly righteous here and now in a real and literal sense. You are not merely credited, or "imputed," with being righteous, as so many teach, you actually are righteous in your spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17b Do you not know that **you are a temple of God**, and that the **Spirit of God dwells in you?** [17] ... for **the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**

It is the indwelling presence of God that makes you literally righteous because He joins as one with you in spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But **the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit**

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

In fact, your new righteous spirit can never sin again. From the moment you are born again, any sin in your life comes from your mortal human flesh, not your redeemed and righteous new spirit. You cannot sin in your spirit because Jesus Christ in you cannot sin.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

Note: "He cannot sin," does not mean a "lifestyle of sin" as is commonly taught. That is theologically trying to make "square pegs fit into round holes." Traditional teaching does not recognize the distinction between your redeemed inner spirit and your not-yet-redeemed outer mortal flesh. Since Christians do not live sinless lives, human reasoning had to redefine this verse to mean a pattern of sinning less and less. The verse means exactly what it says.

Righteousness is what separates true Christianity from all other religions and is why Jesus Christ is the only way to God. Only Jesus can make you clean, and then come to live in you to make you righteous. Only by being righteous can you be saved into the family of God.

Matthew 25:46 "**These** {the unrighteous} **will go away into eternal punishment**, but **the righteous into eternal life.**"

Fourth Truth: Union

Note: The term "union" is not found in the New Testament. It is used here to convey the truth of being "in Christ."

John 14:10a,11a Do you not believe that **I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?** ... [20b] **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

The last thing that Jesus taught His disciples before going to the Cross was *union* - the union that He shared with His Father and the union that they themselves would soon come to know. Jesus said that He was *in* the Father and the Father was *in* Him. What did He mean? Jesus spoke about the *union* of spirit. It was the Spirit of the Father, the Holy Spirit, who descended on Jesus at His baptism to become one with Him in spirit. In this union Jesus became one with His Father and the Father became one with Him.

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, Jesus now had power to live life and do the will of the Father. He could have lived out of the nearly limitless resources of His own sinless human body and soul (His mind, emotions, personality and strength of character) but that would not have been faith. Jesus lived from His

oneness with the Father; Jesus lived by faith. This is a critical truth because this same Holy Spirit that gave Jesus His power to live out the will of the Father now lives in you. Therefore, the life that Jesus lived is your *model* for a life of faith.

Matthew 12:28 But if **I cast out demons by the Spirit of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

John 5:30a **I can do nothing on My own initiative ...**

John 14:10b ... The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but **the Father abiding in Me does His works**.

When you come to know by the teaching of the Holy Spirit what God's grace did for you through the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you will begin to understand that Jesus lived the very same life that God designed for all Christians to live. You have the Spirit of God living in you; you have the same power and resources to live life that Jesus had.

As you experience life from your inner spiritual union, you will experience Christ living His life *in* you doing His work *through* you. In your not-yet-redeemed mortal soul and body you *follow* Christ in faith.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Life is in Jesus Christ; in fact, eternal life *is* the person of Jesus Christ living in you. Your union with Christ gives you everything you need to live a godly, rewarding life. Jesus lives in you and it is *His* power that is *your* power to live life. As you rely on the Holy Spirit, you will live your life from His eternal power instead of your own mortal weakness.

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Fifth Truth: Faith

In your clean and righteous spirit, you live in perfect oneness with Jesus Christ all the time – (yes, all the time). This is why you can never lose fellowship with God. You are righteous in your spirit and indwelt by Jesus Christ. There is never a mention in Scripture, not even one time, that this relationship can be broken or diminished.

Note: The very few passages in Scripture that give some the impression that salvation can be lost, such as Hebrews 6:4-6 and Hebrews 10:26-29, are verses that are interpreted out of context. These two verses are speaking of Jews who recognized but rejected the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ and, instead, went back to the Law to seek their righteousness. If you reject the righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ, there is no righteousness to be found in the Law or anywhere else.

In your mortal flesh you are still dead because of sin. Most Christians do not understand this. They try their best to live a holy life from their own human self-effort. They always fail, even though some are deceived by their own lesser standards of *self*-righteousness. Most know very well that they cannot live righteously and many become discouraged or frustrated. This is why the Apostle Paul said that he often groaned at his lack of ability to live a perfect life.

2 Corinthians 5:2 For indeed **in this house {mortal flesh} we groan**, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

The key is to stop trying to be holy by your own human effort and, instead, follow the inner life of Christ in faith. He will live His holy life through you.

Galatians 2:20b ... and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, ...

God is transforming your mind (which is part of your human soul) with His truth so that you will think more in keeping with your spiritual union with Christ. This is why it is so important to read the Bible and listen to those who have been gifted by God as teachers of His Word.

Ephesians 4:23 and that **you be renewed in the spirit of your mind**,

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is**, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Your transformed mind focuses less on yourself and has more confidence in the object of your faith, Jesus Christ. As a result, you let the life of Christ flow from within you instead of trying to live externally from your own mortal weakness.

Colossians 1:9b-10 ... to pray for you and to ask **that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, [10] **so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please Him in all respects, **bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God**;

Living from your spiritual oneness with Christ is *faith*. It is Jesus Himself living *His* life through you and as you. Seeking to live under external rules or laws is *works*, an ever-failing attempt to serve God and be righteous through your own human self-effort.

Romans 8:14 For **all who are being led by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God.

Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and **put no confidence in the flesh**,

Jesus recognized that His source of power was His Father, not Himself. It was the Father who lived *in* Him and *through* Him.

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: **Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him** in your midst, ...

Acts 10:38a You know of **Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power**, ...

Therefore, you do not have to worry if you have the talent to do the work of God. God is not looking for your abilities. In fact, God declared that He is going to use the “foolish things” of this world to shame the wise and the “weak things” of this world to shame the strong.

1 Corinthians 1:27 but God has chosen the **foolish things** of the world to **shame the wise**, and God has chosen the **weak things** of the world to **shame the things which are strong**,

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the **surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves**;

This means that you are ready right now to be a servant of the Lord, *prepared* for good works which God has already planned out for you.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

God will work through you by the spiritual gift(s) that He has already given you. It is *His* power working through *your* weaknesses.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, **for power is perfected in weakness.**" Most gladly, therefore, **I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

Spiritual gifts are simply the way that Jesus lives out His life *through* you. These are "supernatural" gifts in the sense that you cannot do these things through your own human abilities. The Church traditionally seeks people with talents and resources to "do great things for God." Any effort that originates from the mortal flesh, no matter how impressive it may seem, will be burned up on that day when all things are tested by fire. Only those works that come by faith will remain. Only those works originated by the indwelling life of Jesus Christ in you are works of faith.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if any man builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw**, [13] **each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.**

[14] If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. [15] **If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire.

The considerable amount of activity that is driven by human-effort does not speak well of this era of large church buildings and expensive programs while, at the same time, pastors and evangelist throughout the world, particularly in Asia and Africa, do not even have the basic resources to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many Christians are missing the wonderful opportunities that God is presenting to them. Being focused on your own group or denomination prevents you from seeing, and participating in, the unified Body of Christ that is literally bringing millions into the Kingdom of God.

Growing in your faith is the process of knowing God better as your mind is renewed by God's spiritual truth through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. This is where it is critical to be freed from the human traditions that have so dominated the Church for most of its two thousand year history. False teaching, if believed, causes you to stop growing as a Christian. If you have ever struggled with why you can't seem find spiritual maturity, this is probably the reason.

Only when Christ is freely living His life through your mortal body and soul can you fulfill the most important commandment in Scripture:

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**, even **as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

And, if you are not growing spiritually, you will miss the other great command from Jesus Christ – to be His ambassadors to the world.

2 Corinthians 5:19b-20 ... and **He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** [20] Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were making an appeal through us; **we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

Comparing the Biblical vs. “Human Wisdom” Gospels

Much of the teaching that is popular today comes from tradition rooted in history and based on human reasoning rather than the teaching of the Holy Spirit. This chart shows many of the significant differences between the Gospel as the Apostles taught it and “traditional” gospels that are common today. (See supporting Scriptures that follow.)

Truths	Biblical Gospel	Traditional Gospels
Goals of the “Faith”	Righteousness, eternal life, grace, spiritual union, faith.	Sinning less, trying to be acceptable to God, law, self-effort.
Forgiveness	All sins of all people for all time were forgiven on the Cross, except the eternal sin of unbelief.	Past sins or all sins forgiven after you become a Christian.
Cleansing	Upon faith, old sinful nature (spirit) is removed and replaced with a new, clean heart.	Old sinful nature is retained after faith in Christ as Savior.
Righteousness	Your spirit is redeemed fully and forever. You are literally righteous in your “born again” spirit. Your body (mortal flesh) is not yet redeemed or righteous.	You are credited (imputed) with Christ’s righteousness but you remain a “sinner” even after being born again.
Union (In Christ)	Indwelt with the Holy Spirit in the same way that Jesus was indwelt with the Holy Spirit during His time on the earth. The Holy Spirit is Eternal Life living in you.	Indwelt by the Holy Spirit whose role is to convict you when you sin.
Faith	You follow the inner life of Christ by faith because your outer mortal flesh (body and human soul) has not yet been redeemed or made righteous.	The Holy Spirit “helps” you live a life pleasing to God.

Scripture Verses Supporting the “Biblical Gospel”

Forgiveness:

2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Mark 3: 28 Truly I say to you, **all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men** {There is no implied “if” or “when” in this verse.}

John 1:29 The next day he {John the Baptist} saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**"

Note: Tradition has difficulty with this verse and 1 John 2:2 because it sounds like universal salvation (“universalism”); so, the claim is that “world” means Christians only. Salvation is the result of being born again, not being forgiven.

Romans 5:10a For if **while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** {forgiven} **through the death of His Son,**

Colossians 1:20 and through Him to **reconcile all things to Himself**, having made **peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 2:13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions,**

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the **propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

Cleansing:

Ezekiel 11:19 "And I shall give them **one heart**, and **shall put a new spirit within them**. And I shall **take the heart of stone out** of their flesh and **give them a heart of flesh**,

Ezekiel 36:25 Then I **will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean**; I will **cleanse you from all your filthiness** and from all your idols.

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin** {old sinful nature} **might be done away with**, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

Romans 6:7 for **he who has died is freed from sin** {in your spirit}.

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though **you were slaves of sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness**.

1 Corinthians 6:11 Such {referring to the unrighteous} were some of you; but **you were washed**, but **you were sanctified**, but **you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and righteous** to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.

Righteousness:

Romans 8:10 and if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, **yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness**.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God**.

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more **those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:16 And **if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also**; and **if the root be holy, the branches are too**.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are a **temple of God**, and that the **Spirit of God dwells in you?** [17] If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for **the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are**.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**.

Ephesians 4:24 and put on the new self, **which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Union (In Christ):

1 Corinthians 6:17 But **the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit**

John 14:20 In that day you shall know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** But if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ,** he does not belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,** whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own?**

2 Corinthians 6:16b ... for **we are the temple of the living God;** just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith;** examine yourselves! **Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you** - unless indeed you fail the test?

Galatians 2:20a **I have been crucified with Christ;** and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me;**
...

Colossians 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you,** the hope of glory.

1 John 4:15-16 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God abides in him, and he in God.** [16] And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and **the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.**

Faith:

1 Corinthians 2:5 that **your faith** should not rest on the wisdom of men, **but on the power of God.**

John 10:27 **My sheep hear My voice,** and I know them, and **they follow Me;**

Romans 10:17 So **faith comes from hearing,** and hearing by **the word of Christ.**

Romans 14:23b **whatever is not from faith is sin.**

2 Corinthians 5:7 for **we walk by faith, not by sight**

Galatians 2:20b ... and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,** who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Ephesians 3:16-17a that **He would grant you,** according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;** [17] so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;** ...

Ephesians 6:16 in addition to all, **taking up the shield of faith** with which you will be able to **extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and **put no confidence in the flesh,**

Colossians 1:29 For this purpose also I labor, **striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.**

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and **this is the victory** that has overcome **the world - our faith.**

5 Keys to Understanding the New Testament

Note: There is some overlap and duplication between the content in the “5 Truths” and the teaching in this section.

As people attempted to interpret the Bible with their own human understanding, false teaching sprang up. One of the later ones is a doctrine that purport a system of “credits,” things that are *credited* to you but things you do not actually possess yourself. Tradition says that you, as a Christian, are not really righteous but rather are *credited* as being righteous because of the sinless life of Jesus Christ; this is called “imputed righteousness.” This is the basis of the common expression, “I am just a sinner saved by grace.” Many also teach that, although forgiven, you must go to the “foot of the Cross” or “plead the blood” over and over to be fully forgiven and in proper “fellowship” with God. In essence, these traditions render the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ as offering only the *potential* of having any real meaning in your life and the lives of all people.

In reality, there are no “credits” in the Christian faith even though imputed righteousness is a foundational teaching in many churches today. Plainly said, “imputed righteousness” is just not true, and never has been. What God did through Jesus Christ is real, permanent and was accomplished at the time it happened.

Note: There is an eternal sense to God’s grace that is not relevant to this discussion, i.e. Hebrews 4:3 “... His works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

Christ died on the Cross “once for all”; what happened on the Cross was *finished* on the Cross.

John 19:30b ... He said, "**It is finished!**" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The power of the Cross and the power of the resurrection are not *activated* by your faith. This may sound strange at first but you are not saved *by* your faith, you are saved *through* your faith. In other words, forgiveness and salvation do not come *from* your faith but *from* the grace of God by the power of the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Faith is essential because the Cross of Christ did not forgive one particular sin, the sin of unbelief. Only when you have faith, by turning unbelief to belief (repentance), is that last sin in your life defeated. Only then can God “save” you by removing your old sinful spirit and replacing it with a brand new, clean heart. You are not merely *credited* with being righteous, you really are righteous in your “born again” spirit because Jesus Christ now lives in you. And, you were forgiven because of the Cross of Christ, not because you asked for forgiveness.

The traditions of men have taken on the appearance of being Biblical truth. The five “keys” presented here are intended as an antidote for much of this false teaching. Scripture is understandable and makes perfect sense when you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you instead of relying on the beliefs of people who have taken an academic approach rather than a faith approach to interpreting the Bible. This is why the first key is ...

Key #1: All Spiritual Truth is Understood by the Illuminating Revelation of the Holy Spirit

Scripture declares that all spiritual truth is understood only by the illuminating revelation of the Holy Spirit since the human mind is incapable of comprehending God's unfathomable truths. God's truth is the transforming agent of change that allows you, as a Christian, to understand the Bible and hear God's spiritual "voice" teaching and leading you. God's truth is what *grows* you as a Christian. The road to the abundant life of Jesus Christ is God's pure, unfiltered and untainted Word as taught by the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus Christ is the “Word of God” who lives in your heart.

Revelation 19:13 He {Jesus} is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, **and His name is called The Word of God.**

2 Corinthians 3:3b ... **you are a letter of Christ**, cared for by us, **written** not with ink but **with the Spirit** of the living God, not on tablets of stone but **on tablets of human hearts.**

But, the barriers to understanding God's truth are the unbiblical "wisdom of men" traditions that have so divided the Church. Divisions are expressly forbidden in Scripture (see 1 Corinthians 1:10-13), and they destroy the unity of the faith. All divisions are rooted in human reasoning whereas unity is achieved by submitting to the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

One of the most limiting and damaging characteristics of denominational Christianity is that people are locked into the beliefs of their denomination. The sovereign God of the universe did not reveal opposing "truths" to different denominations. There is but one truth. Tradition has damaged the faith of millions of Christians. It also leaves many unbelievers with a false notion that they are saved when, in fact, they are not saved.

Matthew 7:22-23 Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, **did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?**" [23] And then I will declare to them, "**I never knew you; Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.**"

When people hear teaching that goes against their denominational beliefs, they usually reject it out of hand. It makes them uncomfortable to hear something different because they have been conditioned to interpret it as heresy. If they consider a different teaching, those in the denomination will encourage or pressure them to reject it, even to the point of persecution. (If you don't believe this, tell a denominational pastor or leader that all unbelievers are forgiven and that all Christians are literally righteous - see what happens.)

Jesus faced the very same thing when He came to this earth. Over the centuries, the leaders of the Jews had added so much of their own human understanding to the revealed Word of God that they did not recognize the "Truth" when He was presented to them. They rejected Jesus as a heretic and killed Him because their own human understanding could not see that He was the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.

If you are locked into the beliefs of a particular group or denomination, you will not grow as a Christian because your denominational doctrines do not allow you to change your thinking. You cannot grow spiritually if you don't change your mind regarding the critical truths of Scripture. As a Christian, you are a member of the Body of Christ - that is the only true Church; all others fall short of the glory of Jesus Christ.

Consider the powerful declaration that Paul makes in
1 Corinthians 2 ...

1 Corinthians 2:10a, 11b-13a, 14, 16b For to us **God revealed them** {the things He has prepared for us} **through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. [11] ... **the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.** [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know** the things freely given to us by God, [13] which things we also speak, **not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit,** ... [14] But a natural man {even a believer thinking in human or fleshly terms} does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, **because they are spiritually appraised** {understood by the teaching of the Holy Spirit} ... [16] ... **but we have the mind of Christ** {as we are taught by the Holy Spirit}.

As a believer, you have the mind of Christ because Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, has joined as one with you in spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who teaches you as you read the Bible, listen to a sermon or

read a book. Only the Holy Spirit can separate truth from error. It is by faith, not human effort, that you will come to know what the Bible really teaches; and, it will be with a certainty that is far greater than those who struggle to understand the opposing assertions of human reasoning.

In your not-yet-redeemed mortal body and human soul (see Key #3), you still have your natural mind. Much of your thinking is the same as it was before you became a believer. And, many of your emotions are the same as well. This is why the battlefield for spiritual maturity is in your mind. As God transforms your mind through His Word, you begin to understand God better and you begin to experience the intimacy of your union with Him.

Ephesians 4:23-24 and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, [24] and **put on the new self**, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

You will then begin to experience what it means to be “in Christ” and to live the abundant life.

Note: The “abundant” life of John 10:10 is spiritual, not physical.

Key #2: The New Testament Must be Interpreted in its Original Jewish Context

If the New Testament is not interpreted in its original, primarily Jewish context the message becomes dramatically changed. Early Church leaders and scholars, besides attempting to interpret Scripture with their own human understanding, distanced themselves from the Jews who they viewed as unbelievers and the ones who killed Jesus. They began to believe that Christians and Jews had distinctly separate religions and that the Christians replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people. Lost was the understanding that the Gentiles were grafted into a “Jewish” salvation.

John 4:22b ... {Jesus speaking} we worship that which we know, for **salvation is from the Jews**.

The separation became so severe that the Church began to persecute the Jews; and, they did so for much of Church history. Tertullian (160-225), one of the first theologians, wrote that “though Israel may wash all its members every day, it is never clean. Its hands ... are always stained, covered forever with the blood of the prophets and of our Lord himself.” St. Augustine wrote, “the Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because after killing Christ ...” These early Church leaders, along with hundreds of others, did not seem to even understand the basic truth that Jesus laid down His own life and that He came to this earth so that He could go to the Cross. Yet, these comments illustrate how quickly the “Church” fell away from the truth.

At Pentecost, and for the first two decades or so of Church history, virtually all Christians were Jews. The Apostle Paul may have spent up to 20 years learning the mysteries of Christ before taking the Gospel message to the Gentiles. In the meantime, God was building His Church with the Jews. Everything about Christianity is “Jewish”; all of the symbolism of the Old Testament pointed to and was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. You cannot be Christian and hate the Jews, and you cannot separate yourself from your Jewish roots.

Many have the idea that Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles only – and he was; but this did not occur until later in his ministry (see Acts 18:5-6). Prior to that Paul was chosen by God to ...

Acts 9:15b ... bear My name before the **Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel**;

Paul’s custom when he entered a new town was to first go to the local synagogue and teach the Jews; then he would teach the Gentiles.

The Apostles continually had to fend off false teachers who were diluting and perverting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not only from the Judaizers but also from the pagan influences around them. The false Gentile perspective of the New Testament was one of those pagan influences that infiltrated the Church

of God. It is still widely accepted today even though most Christians are not even aware of it being an issue.

For example, the four Gospels are all about Jesus living under the Law and teaching the Law. Jesus was a Jew and He ministered *to* the Jews. But, this is not the way the Gospels are usually presented in a Christian church.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, **born under the Law**,

Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"

Old Covenant Law and New Covenant grace are not the same. It is no longer, "If you follow my laws I will bless you and if you don't I will curse you" (paraphrased).

Important: Grace means that God initiates and provides everything needed for salvation, and He initiates and provides everything needed to live a righteous life. Your power to live a godly life comes from the indwelling life of Jesus Christ in your born again spirit, not from your mortal flesh (the human part of you). As a Christian, you follow the inner life of Christ by faith. How many Christians are taught this? It is the central dynamic of your life as a Christian.

Law and grace do not mix because they are complete opposites. The Law was external and was lived out by human self-effort; grace is internal and is lived from the life of Jesus Christ flowing out from your spirit.

Jesus must be understood in the context of the Law. The period of Law was *before* the Cross. Jesus had to fulfill the Law before He could go to the Cross. He had to become the lamb without blemish by the sinless life He lived under the Law. It was not until *after* the resurrection that New Covenant grace was even possible. Grace now reigns because Jesus lived out the requirements of the Law for you.

Romans 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: **sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh**, [4] so that **the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us**, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The majority of New Testament writings have the Jews in mind as their principle audience. This is even true of Paul's letters. The book of Romans is probably the best example. It is Paul's detailed description of how the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ allowed for the transition from Old Covenant Law to New Covenant grace. Like the Gospels, if you interpret Romans as being written exclusively or primarily to the Gentiles, you will misinterpret much of the book because the Law was never given to the Gentiles.

Romans 9:4 who are **Israelites, to whom belongs** the adoption as sons, and the glory and **the covenants and the giving of the Law** and the *temple* service **and the promises**, (All these things were given to Israel, not the Gentiles.)

Note: Many teach that Romans 1:5 and 1:13 prove that Romans was written to the Gentiles. But, the other and more common translation for the word "Gentile" {"ethnos" in the Greek} is "nations." These verses are better understood if translated as "nations."



The traditional interpretation of Romans 7 has damaged the faith of millions of Christians. Paul is not bemoaning his "bondage to sin" but rather responding to two false claims that were being lodged against his teaching. Paul begins Romans 7 by identifying that he is speaking to the Jews ...

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (**for I am speaking to those who know the law**), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

Then, in verses 7 through 12 Paul responds to one of the false charges - that he was teaching that the Law was sinful.

Romans 7:7a What shall we say then? **Is the Law sin?** May it never be...

Paul then explains that it was sin {indwelling sinfulness}, "taking [the] opportunity through the commandment," that produced every kind of sin. It was not the Law which caused sin, it was indwelling sin; the Law was holy.

In verse 13, Paul responds to a second charge - that he was teaching that the Law brought death to the people.

Romans 7:13 Therefore **did that which is good** {the Law} **become a cause of death for me?** May it never be! **Rather it was sin**, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death **through that which is good**, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Paul responds by saying again that it was indwelling sin, not the holy Law, which was the cause of death. For the remainder of the chapter, Paul elaborates on this specific response.

Because of section headings that are common in many Bibles, people often begin reading Romans 7 at verse 14 instead of verse 13. As a result, the section is perceived in an entirely different way. Romans is not the woeful mourning of a man hopelessly caught in the clutches of sin. Paul just got finished explaining in Romans 6 that God had freed him from sin forever.

Romans 7 takes on the feeling as if it is applicable to Christians because the mortal body is still dead because of sin. But, the way that this chapter is traditionally taught hides one of the great truths in all of Scripture – you are, in your born again spirit, free from sin forever! (See Romans 6: 3-23 for a detailed look at this and then chapters 5, 6 and 8 for a broader picture.)

Galatians is another notable letter that has taken on a false Gentile interpretation. Galatians is about starting with grace for initial salvation but returning to the Law for daily living. The "us" and "we" in Galatians are, in proper context, referring to the Jews, not the Gentiles.

Galatians 3:13 **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law**, having become a curse for us - for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" –

Galatians 3:24 Therefore **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ**, so that we may be justified by faith.

Ephesians is another interesting book regarding its Jewish context. Ephesians 1:1 – 2:10 was written to the Jews while Ephesians 2:11 – 3:21 was written to the Gentiles. The remainder of the letter was written to both.

Those who study the mystery of predestination vs. "free will" need to understand that the word "predestined" found in Ephesians 1:5 and 1:11 is speaking of the Jews as a race of people, not of individual Jews or Gentiles.

Ephesians 1:5 **He predestined us** {the Jews} **to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Ephesians 1:11 also **we** {the Jews} have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will,



In addition to the Jewish nature of the New Testament, there are other context issues that can cause serious teaching errors. One of the most common is that of mixing Old Covenant Law with New Covenant

grace. The Old Covenant was “not of faith.” Trying to combine the distinct teachings of Law with grace will always result in error. Jesus taught this ...

Matthew 9:17 **Nor do people put new wine** {representing the New Covenant} **into old wineskins** {representing the Old Covenant}; **otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined**; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.

Mixing old and new is the root of many of the modern errors being taught today. Many think, for example, that God is obligated to bless you in material ways; if you do not receive His blessings it is because you have “sin in your life” or you “do not have enough faith.” This kind of teaching damages the faith of many Christians.

The truth is that believers have been blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places in Christ,

God already accomplished everything you need for salvation and everything you need to live a righteous life of faith; the abundant life is in your spirit. The indwelling life of Christ gives you the power to live and to accomplish the two critical missions of the Body of Christ: [1] loving one another and [2] bringing the “Good News” to the lost.

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Another source of error is mixing temporal things with eternal things. The temporal things of this world have to do with the physical dimension. The temporal world is separate and distinct from the spiritual world, although you live in both.

It is critical to understand the difference between your spirit and your mortal body/human soul. Your spirit is already clean, already righteous and “born again,” living in perfect union with Christ; your spirit resides in the eternal realm. But, your mortal body and human soul are not yet redeemed and are still dead to sin; your mortal body and soul live in the temporal realm. The best the mortal self can muster is self-righteousness which does not honor God.

Your life as a Christian is living in union with Christ in your spirit and following Him by faith in your mortal body and soul. In fact, the whole reason that faith is even a part of your life is because you continue to live in a mortal “tent” that cannot live righteously on its own. It is from the eternal life of Christ in you that you now live. That is why the Apostle Paul says ...

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, **but at the things which are not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, **but the things which are not seen are eternal**.

Out of these 5 “keys,” proper context is the most difficult to recognize because Scripture does not specifically defend itself against taking its truth out of context. But, as the Holy Spirit teaches you, this issue will become quite apparent to you.

Key #3: All People are Spiritual Beings Living in Mortal, Human "Tents."

Your spirit alone was redeemed when you were “saved”; your mortal body, which includes your human soul, will not be redeemed until some future time. This is the dichotomy between your inner, redeemed and righteous spirit and your outer, not-yet-redeemed mortal body and human soul.

Note: There are a lot of varying opinions about the difference between soul and spirit. This booklet follows the Apostle Paul's use of “spirit” as being the inner part of you that was saved when you trusted Christ as Savior. The following is an odd verse to cite because it is about the Corinthian man who sinned by taking his Father's wife. But, it illustrates well the

dichotomy of the redeemed spirit and the not-yet-redeemed mortal flesh. This man's body was given over to Satan for destruction, but his spirit was saved.

1 Corinthians 5:5b ... I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, **so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

Your human soul, defined as your human thoughts and emotions, or personality, is not perfectly righteous. This fact can help you understand why your soul is part of your yet-to-be-redeemed mortal flesh and not the part of you that has already been redeemed. If your human soul were the part of you that has already been saved, every thought and emotion would have to be perfectly righteous all the time.

Your immaterial soul is one with your material body, and both are separate and distinct from your inner spirit. The thoughts of your mind are produced by electrical and chemical processes in your brain while your human emotions are caused by the release of "neurochemicals" in your brain.

Scripture says that all people are spiritual beings living in mortal, human bodies. Yet, the Christian community tends to deny this. You often hear, "You can't divide people into parts." But, why not? The Bible certainly does.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our **outer man** is decaying, yet our **inner man** is being renewed day by day.

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the **inner man**,

Many just do not believe that people are two distinct and separate parts, a spiritual person living inside a mortal body. But, by rejecting this truth it is impossible to see the victories of the Cross and resurrection. By not seeing the dichotomy of spiritual perfection living inside mortal imperfection, absolutes like "clean" and "righteous" do not make sense. Yet, the New Testament is filled with absolutes that describe you as "righteous," "holy," "perfect" and "complete."

Note: This is how the false teaching of "imputed righteousness" came about; without recognizing the distinction between the redeemed, righteous spirit and the not-yet-redeemed mortal flesh, how can a person really be righteous? Human reasoning said that it must mean that people are *credited* with Christ's righteousness.

Among the best chapters in Scripture that explain how the eternal spirit is separate and distinct from the mortal body is 2 Corinthians 5. (This chapter is among the most important in the New Testament.)

2 Corinthians 5:1-2, 4, 6b, 8b, 16-21 For we know that if **the earthly tent which is our house** is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For indeed **in this house we groan**, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ... [4] For indeed **while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened**, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. [6] ... **while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord** - [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight - [8] ... and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. ...

[16] Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. [17] Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

Whereas your inner spirit is redeemed, righteous and eternal, your outer mortal body is still dead because of sin. This is why Christians still sin and battle temptation from the evil one. Look at this now familiar verse once again ...

Romans 8:10 If Christ is in you, though **the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**

Your mortal flesh (body and soul) causes you many problems, so many that it often makes you “groan.” Like the Apostle Paul, you long to get rid of your mortal imperfection and have a body that is like your redeemed spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:2 For indeed **in this house we groan**, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

2 Corinthians 5:4 For indeed **while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened**, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

There is something deep inside of every believer that longs to shed their human exterior. Paul goes on to say that, if given a choice, he would leave his “tent” so that he could be with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21-23 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the **desire to depart and be with Christ**, for that is very much better; ...

Key #4: Jesus, Eternal God and Creator, Emptied Himself to Live Fully as a Man During His Time on Earth

The issue of who Jesus was when He came to this earth is one of the most sensitive in all of Christianity. As a Christian, you probably have never really been allowed to consider Jesus Christ in any other terms than Him being “fully God and fully man.” Although this man-made teaching was created to protect the “deity of Christ,” it has had the unintended effect of diminishing your present relationship with Jesus Christ.



Cults have twisted the Word of God to make Jesus someone other than the eternal God. But, even mainstream Christianity has not understood who Jesus really was when He physically came to this earth. Jesus is God; Scripture is clear.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God, Eternal Father**, Prince of Peace.

Hebrews 1:8a But of the Son He says, "**Your throne, O God, is forever and ever**,"

Jesus loved you so much that He became poor so that you might become rich. He did this by *emptying* Himself and becoming fully human while here on this earth.

Hebrews 5:7a **In the days of His flesh**, He {Jesus} offered up both prayers and supplications ...

John 1:14 And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Scripture says that Jesus emptied Himself. However, human reasoning could not reconcile the question of, “How can God stop being God?” As a result, this seminal passage was redefined by scholars as saying that Jesus emptied Himself of His *prerogatives* as God.

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, **although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped**, [7] **but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant**, and being **made in the likeness of men**. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a Cross.

The prerogatives interpretation is so powerfully ingrained in the minds of most Christians that any other view is considered the most serious of all heresies, even treason. Yet, as you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you, the clear evidence of Scripture is that Jesus *emptied* Himself instead of *veiling* Himself as the “prerogatives” doctrine implies.

None of the Apostles taught that Jesus was both fully man and fully God at the same time. And, Christians for the first 400 years of Church history never even heard of this idea. Centuries later, scholars claimed that they began to understand Scripture in a clearer light. Today, teaching Jesus as fully man evokes the fear that it sounds like the cultic idea of the Jehovah’s Witnesses who claim that Jesus was merely a created human and was never God. Or, it sounds like the Mormons who have a bizarre notion that Jesus and Lucifer were brothers and, therefore, were created beings.

Jesus *is* God who *emptied* Himself for you during His time on this earth. Teaching that Jesus emptied Himself to become fully human does not deny His deity, it *confirms* it. Jesus would have had *nothing* to empty if He were not God Himself. Jesus had to become like you, yet without sin, so that He could go to the Cross for you, and so that He could be sympathetic to your struggles and weaknesses.

Hebrews 2:17a, 4:15a Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things ... [4:15a] we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses ...**

There are no verses in Scripture that explicitly support the “prerogatives” doctrine but there are dozens and dozens of verses that support the truth that Jesus emptied Himself to become fully human during His time on this earth.

The verses that are typically used to “prove” that Jesus was fully God and fully man speak of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Colossians 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for **all the fullness to dwell in Him** {Jesus},
Colossians 2:9 For **in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form**,

Jesus *was* filled with the Holy Spirit who descended on Him at His baptism. But, it is also true that *all* believers are filled with the Holy Spirit as well.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you**, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

There are some important verses that do speak of how Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *unique* in the universe.

Colossians 1:15 **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

Hebrews 1:3 And **He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature**, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Jesus is the uncreated God who *emptied* Himself for a time to become fully human. Christians are created mortals who have the living God *indwelling* them.

Consider the very words of Jesus as He prayed to the Father at His “last supper” ...

John 17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, **with the glory which I had with You before the world was**. (NASB-U)

Jesus prayed that the Father would restore the same glory He had with Him from eternity past. Why would Jesus need His glory *restored* if He simply was going to *unveil* it?

Jesus not only *was* the perfect Lamb, He *is* your model for a life of faith. Jesus lived under the control and direction of the Holy Spirit; so can you.

John 8:28b ... **I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.**

John 14:10b ... The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but **the Father abiding in Me does His works.**

This is a very critical issue because the outcome will greatly affect how you experience *Christ in you* for the rest of your life. You will never identify with Christ if you think that He was completely different than you. Tradition prevents you from understanding that Jesus lived the same life that God designed for you to live – through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Key #5: The Law Was an Exclusive Covenant Between God and Israel

Tradition seems to assume that people *are* under Law, or *were* under Law until faith in Christ. The Bible teaches that the Law was an exclusive covenant between God and the children of Israel. It was never given to the Gentiles. Not only that, Scripture also declares that Jesus Christ *ended* the Law so that He could begin a New Covenant.

Jesus came to this earth to *fulfill* the Law, and He did so with His sinless life. This qualified Him to become the perfect Lamb so that He could go to the Cross. After His resurrection, when sin and death had already been defeated, Christ ended “the Law for righteousness” to all who believe. So, the question is, “When were the Gentiles ever given the Old Covenant Law?” The answer is that they were never given the Law. Christ ended the Law before the Gentiles were even offered salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. By that time the Old Covenant Law had become the ministry of “death” and “condemnation” since it had never been able to make anyone righteous.

Romans 10:4 For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who believes.

2 Corinthians 3:6-9 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; **for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.** [7] But if **the ministry of death**, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory ... [8] how will the **ministry of the Spirit** fail to be even more with glory? [9] For if **the ministry of condemnation has glory**, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

The false assumption that the Gentiles are or were under Law has changed the world in dramatic ways. Had the Church understood that the Gentiles were never given the Law, there would be a much greater focus on the victories of Christ and His righteousness instead of the obsession with sin and sinning that is so much a part of Church history. Think of all of the wars and suffering inflicted by the Church judging the sins of people. The judgment of sins was *completed* on the Cross. The wrath of God was satisfied. Everything after the Cross is man’s attempt to atone for sins or to take on the role of God.

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for everyone’s sins in full on the Cross. Only the sin of unbelief was not forgiven. The issue of personal sins and the transgressions of the Law was settled 2,000 years ago. Today, the only two issues for unbelievers are: [1] the sin of unbelief (the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior) and [2] indwelling sinfulness since all unbelievers are “sinners,” a condition inherited from Adam.

God already reconciled the world to Himself “not counting their trespasses against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19). But, unbelievers must be reconciled to God as well; it is like two sides of a coin.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; **we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

Being reconciled to God is the same thing as believing in Jesus Christ as Savior. Faith is the only requirement because it removes that last sin of unbelief from your life.

This may sound strange to read that your sins are not an issue in salvation since the Gospel is traditionally presented as the forgiveness of sins. However, the Biblical Gospel does not say that you must be forgiven to be saved; it says that you must be "born again" to be saved.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"

It is receiving a new clean heart and being made righteous by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that saves you. Your sins were forgiven on the Cross.



As was discussed in Truth #1 regarding forgiveness, God does not charge people with their personal sins in the absence of formal law; in like manner, most societies do not charge people with crimes in the absence of formal law.

Romans 5:13 for until the Law sin was in the world; but **sin is not imputed when there is no law.**

A law from God is His command that defines His standard; by it He judges the deeds of those to whom it was given. God gave Adam and the woman one law ...

Genesis 2:17 **but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.

Since that was the only law ever given to them, they never, ever "transgressed" another law again. That does not mean they never "sinned" again; rather, it means that there were no other laws to *transgress*. The Gentiles were never given the Law; therefore, the Gentiles had no laws to *transgress*.

Romans 2:14a For when **Gentiles who do not have the Law** ...

Romans 9:4a who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and **the covenants and the giving of the Law** ...

Where there is no law, there is no transgression. Why? Because "transgression" is a *violation* of law.

Romans 4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: for **where no law is, there is no transgression.** (KJV)

God does not charge people individually with their sins when there is no Law. Therefore, your sins were not charged to you personally.

Romans 3:25b ... because in the forbearance of **God He passed over the sins previously committed;**

Note: Many argue that Romans 3:25 refers only to the sins committed *before* the Law because of the past tense of the verse. The assumption is that since the Law had now been given, God could no longer pass over sins any longer. This verse, in context, is referring to the Jews. The meaning of the verse is that prior to the Law, God passed over the sins committed by the *children of Israel*.

Because of Adam's one transgression, God placed all humankind under condemnation; this occurred at the *beginning* of human history.

Romans 5:18a So then as through one transgression {Adam's sin} **there resulted condemnation to all men,**

God did this in order to show His mercy.

Romans 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience **that He might show mercy to all.**

Instead of being held accountable for your individual transgressions, you were put under general condemnation because of Adam's transgression. This one transgression caused the spiritual death of all people. Death passed on to all people through an inherent nature to sin. As a result, all became sinners.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as **through one man** sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and **so death spread to all men, because all sinned** -

The Jews died because of sin - their death came because of sin through their *transgressions of the Law*. The Gentiles died because of sin as well but their death came through *Adam's transgression*, not through their own personal transgressions of the Law. All people are born as unrighteous but *forgiven* sinners who are separated from God. The Gentiles need a Savior just as much as the Jews did because of their inherent unrighteousness, not because of their transgressions of the Law.

Romans 2:12 For **all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law**; and **all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law**;

The Cross *did not* forgive one specific sin - the sin of *unbelief*, the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior. This is the barrier that unbelievers place before God and His free offer of salvation unto eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Unbelievers are forgiven but they are not saved because they remain unrighteous sinners who reject their only Savior, Jesus Christ.

Unbelief is the sin known as "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." Jesus talked about it with His disciples in the "upper room" shortly before His arrest.

John 16:8-9 And He {the Holy Spirit}, when He comes, **will convict the world concerning sin**, and righteousness, and judgment; [9] **concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me**;

Upon faith in Christ, the sin of unbelief has been turned to belief so that God can now save the new "believer." The general condemnation under Adam is removed. But for the unbeliever, the condemnation remains.

John 3:18 **He who believes in Him {Jesus} is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Misunderstanding about the Law has become one of the great tragedies in the Church. It has been a divisive issue. Christians have suffered needless guilt and shame. The Cross paid for everyone's sins; there is no need to continue to seek forgiveness. It is righteousness that should be the obsession of every Christian. Tradition is afraid to teach that Christians are free from Law. But, if you are not free from Law, you will sin because the Law gives sin its power over you.

1 Corinthians 15:56 ... and **the power of sin is the law**;

So what is the believer's relationship to the Law today? The *spirit* of the Law, its representation of God's holiness, is eternal. But the *doing* of the Law was replaced by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago. The Law under the Old Covenant was *external*, powered and accomplished by *human self-effort*. The "laws" of God under the New Covenant are *internal*, powered and accomplished by the *spiritual power of Jesus Christ* in the heart of every believer. The Old was imperfect because of human weakness; the New is perfect because of Jesus Christ.