

UPON THE ROCK

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ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

Phil Gear

God does not waste effort. This principle must be remembered in discussing the unbiblical doctrine of “Once saved, always saved.” He does not waste his time warning of something that absolutely cannot happen. The Bible contains too many warnings of the danger of falling away from God for it to be an impossibility.

The doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is sometimes called “once in grace, always in grace”, “the impossibility of apostasy” or “the final perseverance of the saints”. But no matter what you call it, it cannot be supported or defended from the Scriptures.

Twenty-two of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament were written specifically to help Christians remain faithful to God. Why would God spend over eighty percent of the New Testament helping us to avoid that which cannot possibly happen? Let us look at some of the warnings God gives concerning the danger of falling away.

The apostle Paul had a genuine concern that the Corinthian Christians might fall: “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (I Corinthians 10:12). Some argue that falling away is proof that one was never truly saved in the first place. They argue, “If you are saved you will never be lost and if you are lost you were never truly saved.” But can one fall from some place he has never been? Can you fall from the roof of the house if you have never been on the roof? Paul obviously believed the Corinthians could fall.

But how could they fall from God if they had never stood with God in the first place?

Galatians 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” How much plainer could it be? The Bible plainly says of some, “ye are fallen from grace”. It is difficult to understand how someone can read this and still deny the possibility of falling from grace.

Hebrews 3:12-16: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” No book of the Bible more clearly warns of falling from God than the book of Hebrews, and no chapter in that book is clearer than chapter three. Developing an evil heart of unbelief can cause us to depart from the living God. How can one depart from one with whom he has never been? We are to exhort one another daily so that we are not hardened through sin’s deceitfulness, which would keep us from holding our confidence “steadfast unto the end”. But what if we do not hold our confidence steadfast unto the end? It must be possible to give up before we reach the end, or else why the warning against it? If we let go of our confidence before the end we will come short of our place in heaven. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1).

2 Peter 1:4-11. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather,

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Upon The Rock
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brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Peter is obviously talking about Christians in this passage. They are “partakers of the divine nature” who have “escaped the corruption that is in the world”. He encourages them to grow in the characteristics mentioned so that they will “neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Failure to grow in these things indicates that he has forgotten that “he was purged from his old sins.” (Surely Peter is referring to Christians. Has someone who was never truly saved been purged from their old sins?) Growth in these characteristics means “ye shall never fall”, but what if there is no growth? Obviously you will fall and thus be denied entrance into the “everlasting kingdom of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” So we are to “give diligence to make our calling and election sure.” What would be the point of the giving diligence if our calling and election cannot be anything other than sure? This passage clearly warns of the danger of falling from grace. There is no “once saved, always saved” in this passage.

2 Peter 2:20-22. “For if after they have escaped the pollution’s of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” Peter is talking about those who “have escaped the pollution’s of the world through the knowledge” of Jesus Christ. They had once “known the way of righteousness”, but turned “from the holy commandment” and become “entangled” in the pollution’s of the world again. They are like a dog going back to his own vomit or a washed pig to its wallowing in the mud. They are worse off than if they had never known the truth in the first place.

To teach “once saved, always saved” one must ignore these and many other passages. Like any false doctrine, “the impossibility of apostasy” must be taught *in spite* of the Bible, not because of it. May we never become complacent in our service to God because of those

who would mislead us into believing that there is no danger of our ever being lost. May we always be watchful and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SPRINKLING AND POURING

Tom McLemore

The Bible testifies that baptism is to the penitent believer unto the remission of sins. When sinners, moved by their guilt, asked Peter and the rest of the apostles what they should do, he declared “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). This fundamental command is assumed as spoken throughout the book of Acts as tens of thousands are reported to have responded to the message of the gospel. Among them, guilty, penitent Saul of Tarsus is urged, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). After stressing the ancient wonder of the salvation of Noah and his family through water, the apostle Peter wrote that “baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him” (1 Peter 3:21, 22).

Why begin this study with such matters? Since submitting to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to remission of sins, since therein alone God washes away our sins, and since baptism stands between the sinner and salvation and a clear conscience, it is of the greatest importance that the rite to which one submits truly be baptism. Men have substituted first one thing and then another for baptism and referred to it as baptism when in fact it is not. If penicillin is what is needed for a physical cure, one might substitute aspirin or quinine for it and call it penicillin, but the patient will not be cured. So it is with baptism. When God has commanded baptism, and the sinner substitutes something else and calls it

the earth, along with the Holy Spirit, and there will come a time when Satan is turned loose like never before.

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH IT?

The “Rapture” folks have too many resurrections to be Biblical. The Word of God says, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). Notice that the Lord said that the resurrection for the just and for the unjust will occur at a period of time He called “the hour”. It will happen at the same time. Not too that He said that at this hour “...all that are in the graves...” will come forth. How many is “all”?

Premillennialism teaches that the wicked dead will not be raised unto the end of the 1000 year reign. Our Lord said that there will be one general resurrection of all the dead. Premillennialism has three resurrections separated over a period of 1,007 years! Who will you believe? God or man?

SECRET RAPTURE

We often hear Premillennialists refer to their “rapture” as a “secret”. I recently asked one of them to give me a passage that even suggests this. He turned to I Thessalonians 4:13-18. After he read it, I simply pointed out that this passage speaks of the Lord coming with “...a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...” I then said, “Now, that doesn’t sound very ‘secret’ to me.” He just grinned and said nothing. There was nothing to say! This very fact should cause all who believe in this fanciful doctrine to re-examine. Nothing in the Bible even resembles anything called a “Rapture”. All of this falls under the realm of the traditions of men (Matthew 15:6-14).

speaking, was about 40 years...hence, 1988? We have all seen signs on the highways that read 'Jesus Is Coming Soon', haven't we? There is a song in some of our own song books with this very title. It was written by a Premillennialist about Premillennialism! It should NOT be

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sung for it teaches false doctrine. In light of Matthew 24:36, how can any man claim to know whether the day is "soon" or many decades from now? Sure, the Lord could come today, but He may not come for another one thousand years! No man knows the time. "Oh, but 'soon' is a relative term...It could mean tomorrow, or a hundred years from now." That is what one brother told me in Ohio a few years ago! I was amazed. "Soon" has no such meaning in the New Testament, nor in common, everyday speech. Furthermore, that is not what R.E. Winsett meant by "soon" in his song either. He meant to convey the idea that the coming of Jesus is imminent or "at hand". This is one of their cardinal doctrines. By the way, I am made to wonder also why the song is number 666 in *Sacred Selections*. Was this someone's idea of a bad joke?

Yes, the Rapture, is one of Premillennialism's most popular doctrines. However, there is much confusion among them concerning this topic. They disagree about who will actually be "raptured"...about when the "rapture" will take place (before the "Tribulation" or after the "Tribulation"...or will it come right in the middle of the "Tribulation")...etc.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF PREMILLENNIALISM

Generally speaking, most Dispensationalists believe the "Rapture" will occur prior to the period of time they call the "Tribulation". Their doctrine, basically, is that Jesus came to set up the promised, historical Kingdom of God on earth. The Jews rejected Him and God had to, therefore, set up the church instead. This is called by them "The Parenthesis". John F. Walvoord wrote of the present time we now live in: "...as an unexpected and unpredicted parenthesis as far as Old Testament prophecy is concerned.." (*Armageddon, Oil and The Middle East Crisis*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1974). Their theory goes on to suggest that this age is about over. The "Rapture" of the church is coming "soon". At this point all the saints will be taken from

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baptism, then neither salvation, nor remission of sins, nor a clear conscience will be his as the result of submitting to it. While many fail to understand, or would deny, that baptism is essential to salvation, there are a few who would not affirm that baptism is biblical, very important, extremely meaningful, and greatly significant. And yet, even with such a view, they are willing to substitute something for it. The substitutes accepted by men are sprinkling and pouring.

What does the Bible teach baptism to be? The word *baptism* in the English translations of the Bible is an Anglicization of the Greek noun *baptisma*, and *baptize* is *baptizo* anglicized. The translators of the great standard translations continued a tradition of "ecclesiastical correctness" in this matter. Among of the denominations under whose auspices the translations were produced, there were those who practiced sprinkling and pouring and called it baptism. These learned men knew that the two Greek words properly mean "immersion" and "to immerse." By anglicizing them rather than translating them, they could let everyone read his own practice into the scriptural statements which contain such words. No one need have his doctrine or practice called into question. However, the truth of God was thereby suppressed, and the very key of the kingdom of heaven was withheld in the name of unity and peace.

Countless individuals have had water sprinkled or poured upon them as a religious rite. Those who administered these applications did so in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Those now mature enough to believe, who had such applications administered to them when they were infants, are convinced that they have undergone baptism. Countless others who have had such applications made upon them are yet infants and have no idea what they have undergone. Their parents believe their children have been baptized and will teach them accordingly when they are of age. Oddly, this is in flat contradiction to the very word of God. For God's word on the matter is that they have *NOT* been baptized. What was administered was not actually in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit You, dear reader, may be among them. Please consider the clear teaching of the New Testament with regard to what baptism is.

The Greek lexicon defines *bapizo* as meaning “dip, immerse, middle voice—dip oneself, wash (in non-Christian literature also plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm).” *Bapto* is defined as “dip, dip in something, dip into dye.” *Baptismos* is defined as “dipping, washing.” In the definition of *baptisma*, the lexicon fails us and gives “baptism” as the meaning. But a look at the related words indicates that *baptisma* is thus a dipping, immersing, or washing of someone or something. A *baptistes* (such as “John the Baptist”) is thus someone who dips, immerses, or washes someone or something.

We are not solely dependent upon the authority of the lexicon. Common sense enables even the casual reader to understand the meaning of the terms from the context in which any of them occurs in the New Testament. A few examples will suffice. After Jesus had been baptized, the evangelist Mark reports that “. . . when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove” (Mark 1:10). After the evangelist Philip had preached the good news of Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, it is reported that “...he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38,39). They went into the water so that Philip might dip or immerse the eunuch. To suggest that either John or Philip sprinkled or poured water upon Jesus or the eunuch is to deny to these clear reports what is so completely present in them, namely an immersion has occurred and it is called baptism!

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome with regard to baptism, he masterfully blended the inherent meaning of the words *baptize* and *baptism* with another *idea*—*burial*. “Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin” (Romans 6:3-7). Only an immersion/submersion in water would

cars should be made to pay higher insurance premiums!” I agree, don’t

you? In Lindsey’s popular book we read more... “You really want to know what I think? I think all that talk about the Rapture and going to meet Jesus Christ in the air wasn’t crazy after all. I don’t know about you, brother, but I’m going to find myself a Bible and read all those verses my wife underlined. I wouldn’t listen to her while she was here, and now she’s—I don’t know where she is.” (Ibid. p. 125).

Still another quote from *The Late Great Planet Earth*... “It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touchdown and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled—our quarterback recovered—he was about a yard from the goal when—zap—no more quarterback—completely gone, just like that!” I think it was Terry Varner who pointed out that Lindsey might know something about his “Rapture Theory” but he sure knows little about football. Why was the quarterback playing defense?

Listen...as strange as these quotes may seem to many of us, most all of your religious neighbors believe this in one form or another. Most religious people in the United States today, especially Protestants, are Dispensational Premillennialists, and many of them do not know why. They just take their preacher’s word for it and go on. Men like Billy Graham will get on the TV, as he did just recently, and say, “I believe that the anti-Christ is alive now and living in Western Europe. I believe that I will see the Rapture of the church before I leave this world.” As I pointed out in an article in August’s issue of *Upon The Rock* (*Volume 4, Issue 8—Prophecies Concerning the Church*), Dispensational Premillennialists like Graham and Lindsey believe and teach that the kingdom of God has not yet come, but that it is “imminent”. They believe that these things will happen ‘SOON’. But, you know, they have been saying “soon” for many, many years now. In fact, 1988 was their big date back in the 70’s when *Late Great Planet Earth* was first published. They stressed in their writings and speeches back then that the “Rapture” would come one generation after physical Israel becomes a nation. Israel became a nation in 1948, and they would boldly say that a generation, Biblically

relationship to truth, the objective standard by which God has promised to judge all humanity.

GOD IS GOOD—EVEN IN JUDGMENT

The existence of evil demands righteous judgment. Sometimes the guilty are let go and the innocent are punished — even with the best system of justice that man can perceive. That’s just the nature of humans. However, we can be thankful that the Righteous Creator of this universe will have the final say in all matters of truth and judgment. Since evil exists, justice demands a final reckoning and God has promised to see that it occurs.

Just here, unsaved men should literally quake in their boots! The prospect of standing before a Judge who demands righteousness of His children sends chills down the spine of every lost person who honestly contemplates the fact. However, the gospel of God has been revealed and by it mortal men may be declared righteous through the obedience of faith (see Romans 16:26). It might be an inconvenience to leave home without your charge card, but it will be an eternal tragedy to leave this life without obeying the gospel!

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THE RAPTURE

James F. Farley

“There I was, driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy...cars going in all directions...and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild! I think we’ve got an invasion from outer space!” That is a direct quote from Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* (pp. 124-125). You have seen the bumper sticker haven’t you? It reads, “IN CASE OF RAPTURE, THIS CAR WILL BE WITHOUT A DRIVER!” I heard Alan E. Highers deliver a wonderful series of lectures on “Premillennialism” while I was a student at Freed-Hardeman College back in the late 70’s. He referred to that bumper sticker and said, I think people who put such things on their

adequately express the significance of baptism. Therein, the old man of sin is to be completely and absolutely done away. Nothing less radical than a burial would suffice. And baptism can answer that necessity only if it is submersion/immersion! Notice further the precise correspondence between that to which the Ethiopian eunuch submitted and what Paul describes. The eunuch, and Philip who would baptize him, went down into the water . . . that he might be buried with the Lord by baptism . . . and he came up out of the grave of the baptismal water . . . having been raised with the Lord to walk in newness of life!

Baptism is immersion. Thus saith the scriptures, and therefore, thus saith the Lord. Dear reader, all of the blessings which are found in baptism according to the scriptures are not found in a *substitute for baptism*. The gradual transition from immersion to sprinkling or pouring in the practice of the religious world was not by permission of God in Scripture. It was an accommodation to men made without the sanction of God. The ancient revelation has not altered, and man treads upon the most dangerous ground when he relaxes one jot or tittle of God’s ordinance. If you desire what God promises to those who are baptized, you can experience the fulfillment of those promises through no substitute for baptism, but only through baptism. Will you submit to God’s word and God’s way and know God’s wonderful blessings of salvation?

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INFANT BAPTISM AND ORIGINAL SIN

Mark E. Reynolds

Infant baptism has been practiced by false religions since the second century, but was not widely practiced until the fifth century. It is a very serious subject and its implications are enormous. This article will examine the beginning of the teaching of infant baptism; it will explain the false teaching of original sin and answer it; and it will show the fallacy of baptizing babies.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ORIGINAL SIN DOCTRINE

Tertullian, in about 215 AD, was the first to formulate the doctrine of original sin. He taught that the soul shares in Adam's guilt and every man, therefore, is under condemnation and is punishable for his inherited guilt apart from any actual sin he may commit.

Cyprian, in about 250 AD, enlarged upon Tertullian's conception and declared that even though an infant had committed no actual sin, it needed forgiveness for the sin inherited by Adam. This forgiveness was received, he taught, through their "baptism".

Infant baptism was occasionally practiced before 325 AD, but it was not until after Augustine, in about 450 AD, that it became common practice (Augustine built upon Tertullian's doctrine). Sprinkling for baptism was accepted during this period only on an emergency basis. It developed through baptizing sick individuals who could not get out of bed. The first known case of sprinkling was Novation in 251 AD. What was introduced as an exception, sprinkling in place of immersion, later became the rule.

ORIGINAL SIN AND ITS ANSWER

As already noted, Tertullian invented the idea of original sin, Augustine built upon it, but John Calvin "perfected" it about 1500 years later. Their false idea springs forth from Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by

THERE IS NOT PARTIALITY WITH GOD

Partiality is respect of persons. It ignores the intrinsic merits of a situation and judges based on other subjective criteria. Partiality is an especially ugly word when it works against us. However, we tend not to mind it so much when it works in our favor. Paul makes short work of partiality and the role that it has with God. Hear him - 'There is no partiality with God.' (Romans 2:11).

Partiality is excluded by the fact that God is good and that He will pronounce righteous judgments. He would cease to be good should He render judgments based on subjective criteria and not in harmony with truth. However, that simply will not happen! Paul states as much in two different ways. One way is via the statement that there is no partiality with God.

The second way that Paul affirms that judgment will be rendered based on objective fact is contained in the same biblical context. He declares that eternal life awaits those "...who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality." (v7). In sharp and tragic contrast he affirms that the indignation and wrath of God awaits "...those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth." (v8). God places eternal value on the obedience of His children to truth. He sees it as hypocritical for one to claim to be His child while living in disobedience. That was the situation with the Jews of the first century and it is true today. Jesus said. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:2 1-23).

Human affiliations will make no difference in the Day of Judgment. Secret orders, passwords, handshakes, certificates of membership, recommendations by VIPs and kinship with human royalty will be of NO AVAIL! Earthly wealth, political stature and civic contributions will be of NO AVAIL? The only thing that will matter is how we stand in

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH

The title for this paragraph is taken directly from Romans 2:2. It is a straightforward affirmation; no apologies, ifs, ands, or buts! God will judge according to truth! This fact demands at least two other facts. These are: 1) Knowable truth exists, and 2) Knowable truth will exist at the time of God's judgment. These facts are taught elsewhere in the scriptures and you are invited to study them along with the passage in Romans 2.

First, knowable truth exists. Perhaps the most oft used verse that teaches this fact is John 8:32. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Would any deny that Jesus was a wise and good man? Well, if truth doesn't exist, or if it exists but it is not knowable, Jesus was neither wise nor good. Truth is the mechanism by which the heart of man is freed from the shackles of sin. Jesus taught this again and again. In fact, He was so bold as to declare, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6). Absolute truth exists apart from any man. Truth isn't affected by our attitude toward it or by our ignorance of it! The Truth is the Truth regardless of self-appointed judges who decry its existence. As someone has aptly stated it before, about the only thing that the skeptic knows for sure is that absolute truth does not exist; of that they are absolutely sure!

Secondly, truth is indestructible. When the appointed day arrives (see Acts 17:31), truth will still exist. The assaults of every evil and ungodly force under the heavens will have had no effect on truth. "What is truth?" someone asks. Jesus settled that question when He stated, "Your [God's] word is truth." (John 17:17). It is called the "incorruptible word of God" at I Peter 1:23. "Incorruptible" means that it is not subject to decay or to reduction in power. The Hebrew writer said, "...the word of God is living and powerful..." (Hebrews 4:12). It possessed the power to save in the first century, it possesses that power now and it will possess that same soul-saving power when time's clock has ticked its last tick! God promised to protect and preserve His word until this world passes away (Matthew 24:35). You may rest assured that He will be true to His promise!

sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Notice, the answer to their false teaching is found in the very verse they use to "prove" their theory. What, according to the verse they use, is inherited from Adam? Does it say that we inherit his sin? No. It says that we receive the consequence of sin...death. Adam opened the door that allowed sin to enter the world, but notice the rest of the verse. All men have sinned, talking about those who have reached the age where they can commit a sin, and because of this, death is passed upon them.

Notice some further proof against the original sin theory. The inspired prophet, Ezekiel, wrote: "As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live" (Ezekiel 18:18-19). Watch this next verse now: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall NOT bear the iniquity of the father, NEITHER shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). How much plainer could he put it? The soul that sins shall die. It seems that God answered the question of original sin before it was even thought of by Tertullian, Augustine and Calvin.

Still further, notice some more proof. There is yet another miscalculation that Augustine and Calvin made. I receive, or inherit, my body from my parents, but from where do I receive my soul? Notice what the great preacher said: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God WHO GAVE IT" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Who is it that gave us our soul? Notice what the prophet Zechariah wrote: "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, AND FORMETH THE SPIRIT OF MAN WITHIN HIM" (Zechariah 12:1). Who formed the spirit of man within him? Who gives man his soul? God does! Would the soul that comes from man be a dirty, sinful soul? No, and a thousand times, no! To say that we inherit sin from God, would be blasphemy at its worse.

THE FALLACY OF BAPTIZING BABIES

It is logical that the doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of infant baptism would rise and fall together. If the first could be proven erroneous, than the second would prove worthless. If children are born innocent which we have proven is the case, than there is no need for infant baptism.

In the very next chapter of the Bible from where the false theory of original sin was taken, there is a profound truth that destroys their own theory. The advocates of original sin teach that since “babies are born with sin, they must be baptized, to wash the sin away.” In Romans chapter six, however, it is stated by Paul that baptism is a burial in water. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Baptism is a burial in water. The Greek word for baptism, *baptiso*, means “to dip, to plunge, to immerse” (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Greek Lexicon). The very word used by the inspired writers eliminates infant baptism.

Why is baptism a burial? Because of what it represents. “That like as Christ was raised up from the dead...even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). It represents the burial of the old man and the resurrection of the new man, free from sin. We have already shown that babies are born sinless, so when one “baptizes” them, they are burying a live person.

Furthermore, babies cannot obey. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Notice that baptism is preceded by belief. Can a little baby believe? Of course not. Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.” (Acts 2:38). Can a little baby repent? Again, no, and since a baby is born without sin, what does he need to repent of, even if he could repent?

Dear reader, if you were baptized as an infant and are trusting your salvation to it, we hope that this article will help you to reconsider.

Purgatory is merely a man-made attempt at a second chance after death, that if man is not prepared to meet God when he dies, then the fires of Purgatory offer him the chance to have his sins purged so he may be holy and upright before God. God is indeed the God of the second chance, and the third, and the millionth chance, but these opportunities to purge sin from one’s life are extended to us only so long as we are still living in this earthly tabernacle. Once death comes, or our Lord returns (whichever occurs first), the opportunity to make one’s life right with God is no more.

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I am indebted to Michael Hatcher for his research on the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. Many of the quotes I used were taken from a manuscript he wrote for the 2000 Houston College of the Bible Lectureships. His article is entitled “Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory” (pp. 386-403). The footnotes given in my article were the same footnotes he used in his, so that the reader may see that these quotations were taken from Catholic sources, sources which bear the Catholic *Imprimatur*.
Patrick Morrison

REVELATIONS FROM ROMANS

The Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God (Romans 2)
Jim Bullington

“God is Great. God is Good. Let us thank Him for our food...” - So go the opening lines of a short prayer that many, many kids were taught by their parents. Unfortunately, like far too many truths that we learned as a child, this one also goes by the wayside in the hearts of many professed Christians as they grow older. Far too many learn that God is good only to recant as they grow older and come to embrace skeptic and agnostic ideals.

Romans 1 teaches that God is good. Romans 2 teaches that God is good and that He will judge the world in righteousness (see verses 4 & 5). His goodness does not preclude judgment, nor does His judgment preclude goodness. Paul affirms that a day will come in which the “...revelation of the righteous judgment of God...” will be declared (Romans 2:5). Look at what else Romans 2 reveals.

Jewish age (“this world”) and the Christian age (“the world to come”). A clearer understanding of this passage would require much more space and time than I am able to give to it at this time. But we can be assured that this passage in no way teaches concerning Purgatory, nor does it imply such.

Perhaps the passage used most often in defense of Purgatory is First Corinthians 3:11-15. Paul writes:

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what soft it is, If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

They teach that the fire which shall try the works of man is the suffering of Purgatory. Those who are not prepared to enter heaven, whose works are not perfect, shall see those works burned up, but the person shall be eternally saved. Is that what Paul is teaching in this passage? What is the work being described? Is it the actions of men, or does Paul have reference to something else? Let the Bible answer itself. “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my *work* (emphasis mine, SPM) in the Lord” (1 Corinthians .9:1)? Paul said that the Corinthian Christians were his work. Now examine I Corinthians 3:11-15 in light of this passage. Paul had converted many of these brethren to the Lord. However, he knew that not all of those who he had converted would remain faithful, and that those he had converted who turned from the Lord and died in that condition would be sent to the eternal fires of hell in the last day. In that way Paul said he would suffer loss, but his own soul would not be lost, because he was living for the Lord and trying to bring souls to salvation. Those who remain faithful (“abide”) are allowed entrance into the bliss of heaven, and in this way are a reward to Paul. What faithful gospel preacher has not felt the same sentiments Paul expresses in this passage?

God’s plan of salvation cannot be altered by man, if he wants to be in heaven at the end. For a more thorough study on the plan of salvation, please consider these verses: Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38; Romans 10:10; Acts 8:36-38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 2:10.

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The Editors and Writers of *Upon the Rock* wish to convey our warmest thoughts and prayers to all of the families affected by the attack in New York City and Washington DC. God has blessed America so much, and will continue to do so if we stand for that which is right, and live our lives pleasing to Him. It has been wonderful seeing how Americans have pulled together to help one another!

GOD BLESS AMERICA

FAITH ONLY DOCTRINE

Larry G. Reynolds

The Bible teaches that God calls us out of the world by His gospel. “To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thessalonians 2:14). He adds those who hear His call and obey His will to His church (Acts 2:41,47). It is important that we properly answer the call of the gospel. When we accept the gospel call, by God’s grace, we receive salvation and the Lord adds us to His church.

Unfortunately, there have always been those who have “perverted” certain elements of the gospel. Paul wrote of those who had perverted the gospel by trying to add elements of the Old Law to the gospel (Galatians 1:8,9; see also Acts 15:1,6). He taught against this

false doctrine in his letter to the Ephesians. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9). Then there were those who would pervert the gospel by teaching the doctrine of “faith only.” James addressed this false doctrine in his letter. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:24-26).

Probably the most widespread misconception of the non-Catholic “Christian” is the belief in salvation by faith only. Martin Luther, in his reaction to Roman Catholic emphasis on works of penance taught a “faith only” doctrine. It became the basic concept of salvation to most of the churches, which grew out of the reformation movements of the 16th century, and is still held by all of the so-called “evangelical” denominations. As a result many people have found comfort in this “faith only” religion. Many have been taught to just believe and invite Jesus into their heart, and they will be saved. We need to ask a question. “Is there an example of anyone this side of the Cross of Christ ever saved by faith only”? What does the Bible say? When a person studies the gospel one finds that there are facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received. Indeed, accepting the call of the gospel involves a person accepting the “fact” “commands,” and “promises” contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

FACTS TO BE BELIEVED

One of the fundamental facts of the gospel is that Jesus was crucified for our sins (I Corinthians 15:1-3). Isaiah foretold it seven hundred years prior to the coming of Christ (Isaiah 53:4-6). It was necessary for God’s Son to die because all have sinned (Romans 3:23). But in love, God sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins (I John 2:1,2). The gospel reveals the death, burial, and the resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:4). In the first gospel sermon recorded, Peter centered his message on the fact that Jesus ascended to heaven and

masses, and alms may be offered on the behalf of the souls in Purgatory by living friends and relatives in order to hasten their entrance into heaven. On what does the Catholic Church base such a doctrine? Again, I invite you to listen to some of their own. One writer states, “This (purgatory, SPM) is one of the teachings of the church (Catholic Church, SPM) that is not directly in the Bible.” (Anthony Marinelli, *The Word Made Flesh: An Overview Of The Catholic Faith*). Yet another writer says, “We would appeal to these general principles of Scriptures, rather than to particular texts often alleged in proof of Purgatory. We doubt if they contain an explicit and direct reference to it.” (O.C. Lambert, *Catholicism Against Itself*, Winfield, AL). As can be seen from these two quotes, the Catholic Church finds no direct teaching regarding Purgatory in the Scriptures. Purgatory, then, is at best based upon extremely loose inference, and at worst is merely a fanciful assumption. Despite the fact that they admit there is no direct and explicit teaching in the Bible concerning Purgatory, they still appeal to a handful of Scriptures to lend credence to their assumption of Purgatory. One such “scripture” is mentioned in the Catholic catechism above, from the book of 2 Macabees. The Catholic Church considers apocryphal books to be part of sacred Scripture, but these writings do not belong in the recognized canon of Scripture (The canon is made up of the 66 books which collectively comprise the Bible). Considering the appeal to the passage in 2 Macabees a moot point, for the apocryphal books are certainly not authoritative in matters of religion, let us quickly examine some other pertinent Scriptures to which the Catholic Church often appeals to support its teaching of Purgatory.

In the context of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, Jesus says, “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Mt12:32). The argument is this, if there is a sin which will not be forgiven in the world to come, then there must be those that will be forgiven in the hereafter. Therefore, the conclusion is that these sins will be taken away in the fire of Purgatory. This argument is based upon the assumption that the word translated “world” in this passage has first a reference to this life, then, second, has reference to life after death. The word translated “world” would better be translated “age” or “period of time.” Jesus has reference to the

cleansing fire: “As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that who ever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age or in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.”

1032—This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.” From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: “Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their fathers sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.” (*Catechism Of The Catholic Church* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994), p. 291).

Concerning purgatory the Council of Trent teaches—(1) That there is a purifying fire through which imperfect Christian souls must pass. (2) That the souls temporarily suffering therein may be materially benefited [sic] by the prayers of their fellow-Christians and the masses offered up in their behalf on earth. (Council of Trent, sess.25.) (A.A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* Simpsonville, SC).

Another writer states, “Those in the state of purgation cannot help themselves, but we can help them attain heaven more quickly by praying for them, offering Mass for them, offering our sufferings, good actions, etc.” (Anthony Wilhelm, *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation Of The Catholic Faith*, Paramus, NJ: Paulist Press, 1975).

To summarize, the Catholics teach that Purgatory is the realm of the dead to which the faithful saints must go in order to purge them of their sins before they are able to enter the joy of heaven. Prayers,

would come in like manner (Acts 1:9- 11). These facts of the gospel should move us to obey the commands of the gospel.

THE COMMANDS OF THE GOSPEL THAT MUST BE OBEYED

There are commands one must obey to be saved and the first command is to believe. Unless one believes the gospel there is no hope (Mark 16: 15, 16). The gospel is God’s power unto salvation, but only to those who believe (Romans 1:16). Faith, along with confession, is a necessary step leading to salvation (Romans 10:9,10). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Without faith, one will not act upon the other conditions of the gospel, such as confession, repentance, etc. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Our faith leads us to repentance. To “repent” means to have “a change of mind,” in which case you make the decision to turn from your sins and turn toward the living God. This is why the apostles, Peter, and Paul stressed repentance in their gospel preaching (Acts 2:37-38; 3:19; 17:30-31).

Has faith in what Christ did for you on the cross and sorrow over your sins moved you to the point that you have made the decision to change? If so, then you need to be baptized for the remission of your sins. “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Peter proclaimed baptism for the remission of sins in his first sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Paul would state later that he was commanded to be baptized, “to wash away sins” (Acts 22:16). Have you been baptized for the remission of your sins? If not are you willing to let God cleanse you through the blood of His Son and raise you to a new life? Those who gladly received the preaching of the apostles were baptized, and the Lord added them to His church (Acts 2:41,47). His church is to teach others “to observe all things” (Matthew 28:19-20). His church must be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

RECEIVE THE “PROMISES” OF THE GOSPEL

When we believe the facts of the gospel and obey the commands of the gospel, we will receive the promises of the gospel. One of the promises we receive is the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In Acts 3, Peter expresses it as having our “sins blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Another promise is “eternal life” that is given to the faithful on the day of judgment (Matthew 25:46). It is a gift that comes from God as a reward to His faithful children (Romans 6:23). We need to believe the facts of the gospel and obey the commands in order to receive the promises of the gospel.

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THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY

Patrick Morrison

Perhaps no other false doctrine is as perverse and devilish as the humanly contrived teaching deemed Purgatory. While this doctrine is not widespread among the denominations, it certainly deserves our consideration since it is a cardinal teaching of the largest denomination in the world, the Roman Catholic Church. Lest I be accused of bigotry and bias, I will allow the Catholic Church and her adherents to speak regarding the doctrine of Purgatory. Their catechism states:

1030—All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

1031—The church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the church, by reference to certain text of Scripture, speaks of the (Continued on Page 16)

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