

The Simple Gospel

The gospel has got to be the most important message of all time. If you reject the gospel, you reject the only way of salvation. The bible clearly says that those who do not obey the gospel will face extreme judgment from God (2Thes 1:8). The gospel is a very serious subject and is a matter of life and death. There are severe consequences which will greatly affect each person who believes or rejects the gospel. When I use the term "simple," I do not mean that it is easily understood, or that it is less important. The word "simple" refers to the fact that it is easy to receive. The phrase "simple gospel" is not found in the bible. So, is the gospel really simple? Maybe the gospel is complex. I am only using the word "simple" to illustrate the simplicity in receiving the gospel and being saved. Before it can be received, it *must* be understood. The gospel is not common knowledge or generally understood. We will explore why this is the case.

Since all men are lost from birth, condemned and spiritually dead with an old sin nature, none can save themselves. The very one who condemned them is God Himself. We do not work ourselves into a state of condemnation or sinfulness. We were born with this judgment firmly in place (Rom 3:10-20). However, many have complicated this and think that this only means they *can* work themselves into a relationship with God. Do you realize that God is the one who condemned you? In fact, God condemned the entire human race because of the sin of one man, Adam (Rom 5:18a). If you think there is something in you that God likes, then you have not understood or disregarded His testimony. God has made a judgment from His righteousness, justice, love and omniscience. This judgment was not a snap decision, or one not well thought out. God made this judgment because He was fully aware of who He is and who man was and would be. If we, as lost people in Adam, decide that His decision is unreasonable, our opinion does not matter and will not move the heart of God to reverse the decision He made. Many of those in Adam fail to understand this point (see also Rom 5:17-19).

Just the facts

There was a popular police detective show that aired in the 50s and 60s, named *Dragnet*. One of the detectives, Joe Friday, had a famous line which outlived the show. While in the process of investigating a crime and often when he was interviewing the suspects or witnesses, he would have to say "Just the facts ma'am, just the facts." The reason for this repeated phrase was the witnesses would ramble on talking much about anything and everything and Joe was a no-nonsense type of guy. He was not interested in hearing their life story; he simply wanted the facts which related to the case. Well, the facts are that God condemned the entire human race in Adam because of Adam's one sin in the garden (Rom 5:18). God did not make this decision in ignorance and fully knows what He was doing. Somehow we do not get the

point and when it comes to seeking God, we think that we can ignore the facts and one way or another, God will make exceptions in our case. Many have ignored the facts and go on and on about their works, their sincerity, how loving God is and how impressed He must be with all their accomplishments. Let me tell you before you go too far down that road, God is only interested in the facts, just the facts.

Believe the Facts

We must believe the facts before we would be willing to believe in Christ, God's only solution to the facts. You cannot believe in Christ if you do not understand why you believe. Believing is not a shot in the dark where you hope and wish you might get saved. Believing is not simply confessing some magic formula and someone pronouncing you saved. Believing is not promising God you will live a good life, obey the law or that you love Christ. This type of believing will not save anybody. We must make sure we understand believing because our salvation hinges on that one word. To believe you must *know* two things:

1. You must understand the facts. This would include understanding why you need saving in the first place. You have to understand that you are lost and under the wrath of God as an unbeliever. You must also realize that all your efforts at rectifying this situation are futile. This may take us some time because of our arrogance. However, we must come to the point that we know we are lost and helpless to do anything about it. This helplessness would produce desperation and despair in us that would destroy us, were it not for grace. We must come to this point just as Paul did when he said, "*Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*" (Rom 7:24). Misconceptions at this point will affect your motivation and you will be deceived into thinking that there is something you can contribute, something you can do to help yourself. We must come to understand our helplessness.

Imagine falling into a deep well. It is dark, cold and wet there. The first thing you do is to use your voice in crying out for help. You do your best to focus your voice for maximum distance as you seek to get someone's attention, maybe someone passing by, certainly someone will surely hear you. Finally you have been screaming so long that your voice is gone. You can barely speak let alone shout. You realize this is hopeless. Just then, you have great hopes of climbing out. You work hard on understanding the task of climbing out. You attempt this many times, but each attempt ends with the same result. You fall down and land on your back, but you are not deterred, but more determined. Finally after all your strength is gone, you realize you are never going to climb out of the well. At this point, you begin to realize that you could perish right there in the well. You look over in the corner and there is a skeleton of another who did not make it out of the well. All hope is now lost and you know that unless someone comes to rescue you, your life will certainly end. But then, just then, you hear someone's voice echoing in the well. You can hear

the voice, but have no strength to answer or do anything (see Eph 2:1-4; Rom 7:24, 25).

2. We must understand what is involved in believing and just what is at stake when we do believe. Believing and faith are both from the one and the same root word- *pistis*. To believe means to look away from yourself to another for knowledge, truth or some action. The knowledge truth or action does not come from us, it comes from outside of us! If you say you have faith and are still looking to self for some action from yourself, you simply do not have faith. For instance, saving faith is not believing you will live a good life for Jesus Christ. In salvation, you are looking away from yourself to the Father's plan. His plan was to send the Son to be the Savior of the world. It is the Father's will that we believe in Christ and be reconciled.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the object of our faith. The Father sent the Son into the world to save the world. The world is lost and needs a Savior. Saving ourselves is not an option, or else God the Father would not have sent Christ (Gal 2:21). The Lord Jesus is fully qualified to save us in every way. He performed all that the Father requires to save us in two ways.

1. Jesus lived a perfect life before God as a man. Many think their salvation depends on them living a worthy life before God. They have this strong sense of righteousness where they are driven to perform. They want to prove to God that they are worthy of salvation. This is the wrong attitude altogether! Jesus is righteous, and there is not another human being who will be saved because of their righteousness. We must rely on the facts here, "*as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one"*" (Rom 3:10). Only the life of Jesus Christ satisfies the righteous requirements of the Father. Our feeble attempts at being righteous before or even after salvation will *never satisfy* God's demand of perfect righteousness. When it comes to righteousness, we must look away from ourselves to Jesus' perfect life (Tit 3:5). Not only does Jesus' life meet the divine requirements, God is *very* pleased with the life He lived on this earth.
2. Christ bore our sins on the cross (1Pet 2:24). Every sin you have ever committed or ever will commit in your life was imputed to Christ on the cross and judged. This is the reality for God and as far as your sins are concerned with regard to salvation, God has been propitiated. God's righteousness demands that all sins be judged. God judged the sins of the entire world in Christ, which would include those who will believe in Christ *and* those who will not believe (1John 2:2). There is absolutely no way we can do anything about our sins for God to be propitiated. Hating sin, refraining from sin, condemning sin in others will not propitiate God when it comes to our sins. Certainly the attitude of the sinner is not the issue before God. To demonstrate this, Christ died for my sins approximately 2000 years ago. His being judged for my sins does not

hinge on what I think today. It is yet another fact we *must* understand. Even if I reject what He did and say it never happened, it still happened. I am not saying that rejecting Christ does not have consequences; I am saying that it does not affect the fact that all of my sins were imputed to Christ and judged. Since this is the case, personal sins are not an issue in salvation. If we ask the question, what is standing between a sinner and God? If you answered- sins, that is incorrect. It is not sins; it is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Putting it all together

Jesus Christ did everything to qualify him to be the Savior of the world. He is the only worthy object for our faith. He saves in two clear ways. We depend on His life and perfect righteousness; and we depend on the fact that He was judged for *all* of our sins (Rom 5:9, 10). Both of these facts have one thing in common; we could not of ourselves satisfy a holy God's requirements for either of them. You should begin to see that there are not fragmented parts to this salvation, it is a well thought out plan. Each part of the plan is perfect and we cannot intrude or assist it in any way. We are the objects of the plan for which God desires to save. We can not save ourselves; we are the ones God intends to save, if we comply with the conditions of the plan. Now that you know you were lost and under the wrath of God from birth; now you see that you are a sinner from birth because of Adam; now you understand you were condemned from birth without any works on your own, you can begin to see your total helplessness. God has a solution to your problems; it is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe in Him, He will give you life where you had spiritual death. He will give you justification where you had condemnation. He will give you the perfect righteousness He earned before God where you had filthy rags righteousness. All of this hinges on believing in Christ and not rejecting Him. What is involved in this important obligation to believe?

The matter of salvation

Believing in Christ must be defined since it is the very thing that will cause a person to "*not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*" (John 3:36b). In light of eternity, our lives here on earth are but a drop in the ocean. Where will you spend eternity? Will you be with God in what the bible calls eternal blessing? Or, will you be separated from God in a place of judgment for eternity? This matter is in our hands! I disagree with those who would contend that the matter is out of our hands, and that God has decided this matter for us before time began. The matter is in our hands and the scriptures declare just that (John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; Acts 16:31). Now, you cannot read those passages and fail to see that eternal destiny is dependent on our believing or not believing. This matter should be of *first* importance in our lives. You may live in luxury for 100 years, but if you have not dealt with this matter properly, you could spend an eternity in misery and judgment. This is a very important matter to consider! How will you manage this important matter? What will you depend on to make sure in the end you do have eternal life with God? Will

you look to yourself or to other human beings to insure that you have met the conditions? Or, will you look to God for an eternal solution?

The religions of the world have answered this question in various ways. All the religions have a prescription for getting from this life to a favorable position in the next. That prescription is to earn your way into the hereafter. They all teach one common denominator, that you must have good deeds outweighing your bad deeds. In essence, their theory says that the matter of salvation is up to us and we must save ourselves by our good works. God is not pictured as a loving Savior, but as a judge. I disagree that we can save ourselves because of the facts we learned already from God's testimony. I do agree that the matter is within our power, but we can give this entire matter over to another's responsibility. If we take the responsibility, which we may, we must realize that we are certainly not up to the task. We do not have to wait until the last judgment (Rev 20:11-15) to find out how we will make out, God gave us this information before-hand. The bible deals with this subject extensively. God has spoken as to what the criteria for the judgment will be. We may choose to disregard this testimony, but we will still bear the responsibility. The bible declares that we are born sinners, and in this state we can *never* please God. We are lost and God provides a Savior- Jesus Christ. It is an offer of grace, and it is free to whoever will receive it. If we reject his offer, He will reject us and we must stand on our own two feet before Him in judgment.

Committing the matter to another

Believing is understanding the true issues of salvation, and committing this important matter of our soul salvation to the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that we do not have to get busy doing good deeds to insure we will be saved, we are depending on another. We are relying on Christ to save us. If we truly commit this matter to Christ, we are saying that we depend on Him to completely save us. We cannot save ourselves and we cannot help Christ save us. He is the Savior all by Himself. To believe in Christ is just that, we commit this important matter of our soul salvation to Christ. The responsibility for our salvation is on His shoulders. You are confronted with the decision to entrust the matter to Christ, and this decision has consequences.

1. If you have truly committed the matter to Christ, you should no longer worry about this matter since it is being taken care of by another. You can rest, knowing that this most important question is answered positively for you. You understand that your obedience, works or sincerity are not the issue anymore, it is your committing the matter to Christ that actually saves you. You have investigated the Savior and know that He is qualified to save. He lived an exemplary life and He bore our sins on the cross. We know that God is satisfied with the work of Christ on our behalf (1John 2:2). We can relax and trust in His ability to save. We further realize that this is not our solution; it is the solution of a loving Father who wants us to be reconciled. He has offered a way back, the *only way* and all we have done is to accept His gracious offer

by faith. Once the one condition to believe is met, we now have this matter resolved forever! This one decision to believe gives us great peace and contentment.

2. If you *do not* commit the matter to Christ, you are responsible. You will stand before a holy God on your own merit. Since you rejected the divine offer, you now face judgment without the perfect life of Christ imputed to your account. What will happen? We already know the outcome of this judgment. After God reviews your works, the judgment is clear. "*And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*" (Rev 20:15). This should not be a surprise, for the gospel you rejected had this same warning. "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him*" (John 3:36). There is truly no other way to be saved according to the bible. Also, I don't think we should be loose with what the bible says regarding salvation. God is not broadminded on this at all. Those rejecting God's offer may be very sincere in their attempts to work their way into favor. Sincerity will never replace believing in the Son, and God will not overlook the arrogance of rejecting Christ in any form.

Once and done

Our committing the matter of our souls to Christ is a one time event. Many repeat this over and over, but it only takes one time for you to be saved eternally. The very first time you do it, you are saved. The scriptures declare you to be saved (Acts 16:31). There is nothing you can add to this salvation, and nothing you can take away from it. It is like being born, it only happens once and cannot be repeated. In the same way, being born from above happens just once (John 3:3-8). Just as you have only one birth certificate, you have only one new birth certificate. Salvation is as perfect as God himself is perfect. God does not depend on you to maintain, confirm or validate it; salvation is by the grace of God. You are to grow up in your salvation which is another matter altogether and requires you to be faithful in taking in the word on a daily basis. After salvation, you are done with being born into the family of God, you *must* move on to living the new life (Heb 6:1, 2). We should study the details of salvation to fully understand all that God has done for us. You must develop confidence in God and His Christ. His plan is to save you, and you can trust that He will do just that if you trust in Christ.

Never thirst, Never hunger, Never die

It is nice to know that we have some definite assurances of the fact that once we believe in Christ, our salvation can *never* be undone. Once we are saved, we will always *be* saved. Many have tried to make the point that believing in Christ must be maintained throughout the life or else the person will be lost. Faithfulness is not a condition of salvation and is not the same as saving faith. God is the One who is faithful in salvation, providing the plan, the Savior and making salvation effective. In the book of John we have three passages that

say, *without a doubt*, that believing happens just *once* and does not need to be repeated.

1. The first passage is found in John 4 with the Samaritan woman at the well. She had been coming to the well to draw water, but this day she meets Jesus and He strikes up a conversation. *"Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life"* (John 4:13, 14). Jesus uses the fact that thirst is something that is ongoing for everyone. We must drink daily or we will be thirsty. We all know this to be true from experience. Jesus uses this to say that if the woman were to drink the water He gives, she would *never* thirst again. The water Jesus is referring to is salvation by believing in Him. Now, if salvation satisfies the thirst of being lost, being under the wrath of God and spiritual death, then *never* thirsting would say that once the water of life is taken, those things will *never be* again. The analogy does not make sense if you must keep drinking the water Jesus gives daily too!
2. The next verse deals with hunger and thirsting. Jesus performed a miracle where he multiplied a few fish and loaves and fed 5000. The next day the crowd was looking for Jesus again, but He realized that they were only searching for Him because they were hungry and wanted to eat again. He says to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal"* (John 6:27, 28). This sets up the perfect analogy for us to understand the impact of what Jesus offers. He tells them a little later in the discourse, *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst"* (John 6:35). Again, Jesus offers them something that satisfies their need for salvation permanently. They do not have to eat this bread every day of their lives like they needed to eat literal food. They just have to eat it once and it satisfies forever. This is the only way we can make sense of the analogy.
3. The next analogy is also found in the gospel of John. A personal friend of Jesus died and was already dead for 4 days. Jesus arrives in Bethany in the midst of great mourning. He says to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25, 26). Lazarus had physically died and Jesus noted that He was the resurrection. Jesus has the power to raise physically every person who has ever died (John 5:25). In verse 26, he declares that He *"is the life..."* for all who are alive and believe in Him. If you are saved, then the life that you possess is the life of Christ. *"And*

the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1Jo 5:11). The life we have is Christ's life once we are saved. Our salvation is based on His perfect life which is why it will never die. In the second half of the verse, Jesus says if we are alive and believe in Him, we will *never* die. Physically those who were listening to Jesus did believe in Him, and they did die- physically. Therefore, we know that the spiritual life we receive when we are born again will *never die*, for this is the only way this verse can possibly make any sense.

Saved vs. Safe

Paul said, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16a).* There are *no* exceptions in Paul's understanding of salvation. God gives the gospel its power. This power in the gospel saves *everyone* who believes. There are so-called gospels out there today and they do not save everyone who believes. Theirs is a gospel which promises safety not salvation. Many today are saying that you can forfeit your salvation if you do thus and so. You fill in the blank because there are too many reasons to consider here. One common denominator in all of them is that they have a salvation which depends on them. It depends on what they will or will not do. Of course they also say it depends on Jesus too, but they are clear that they may still be lost if... In my view, safe is not saved at all. If you think you can possibly lose your salvation, can you really say for sure you are saved? If you are still in danger of being lost, can you really claim you are saved?

I have had conversations with many and this is exactly the thinking I get from them. They claim they are saved, absolutely, but still maintain that they can be lost. In my thinking, I don't understand how they can they claim victory and at the same time concede that the jury is still out regarding their salvation. As to those conditions they add to salvation, they maintain that they intend to uphold them and will keep walking with God, and they will never do what they consider to be unthinkable. But, they confess that the possibility exists that they may still fall out of favor with God and be lost. To say you are saved with the possibility of being lost is not salvation at all. If that is your thinking, you might as well wait until the end, when it can be said with the assurance of your making it in or being shut out of salvation.

Think with me for a minute, that kind of salvation is really not salvation at all. Unbelievers have the same hope of being saved, and they just might get there before they leave this earth. In fact, many are working very hard so that when judgment comes, God will save them. Others claim they are saved, but in reality they hope they will continue to do all that God requires so they can be saved. To me, they are in the same boat as the unbeliever. An unbeliever hopes to be saved in the end too! What is the difference between the two?

Some would say that I'm being too hard on those claiming a salvation which is really not salvation. I need to make sure we are clear, since this is a matter of life and death. If a person tells me they can lose their salvation, and claims they are saved, they should modify that to say they are "safe". For them, the word "safe" seems more appropriate than "saved". If in the end you are lost, then it really doesn't matter if you said you were saved or lost; the bottom line is you are lost. This reminds me of stealing a base in baseball. The runner takes off from first and slides into second base. As the dust settles, all eyes and ears are focused on the umpire to render his verdict- SAFE! The runner then stands up and dusts himself off. He is safe for now, but has not crossed home plate. Some view their salvation in just this way. They may get caught stealing a base and be thrown out! Therefore, there is always some work they must maintain for God to ultimately save them. The testimony of the word of God is the moment you believe in Christ, you are saved! You are not on base at all, you are already home. Jesus already went around the bases and crossed home plate long ago for you. He is the only Savior; why not allow Him to do what He does best. There are only two conditions in life, saved or lost, not safe. If you are saved, then you are saved from being lost forever; if you are lost, you were never saved.

Eternal Security and Salvation

Many have divided salvation and eternal security as if they are separate subjects. In reality, they are one and the same matter. The objections come because there are lots of scriptures that come into play and they feel that eternal security is a doctrine that can be debated, but we should not divide over it. I contend that they are the same subject. All you have to do is ask yourself, "is it a matter of life and death?" Your eternal security is certainly a matter of life and death. In the most widely known scripture in the bible, God gives us assurances of eternal security, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). The first result of believing in the Son in this verse is that we "*shall not perish.*" This certainly needs to be said since the reason we need salvation is that we are lost and on our way to the lake of fire if we do not believe in God's only Son. Well, having believed, we are saved from destruction. That is certainly good news. Then we are said to possess eternal life. This life is the life of Christ, which lives and abides forever. I don't know how you can believe that you are saved and have eternal life, but at the same time believe you may still be in danger of perishing.

Back to basics

Each time I encounter someone who denies the security side of salvation, I find one common theme. They unknowingly violate a basic doctrine in order to come to their conclusions. Many times I will point out the violated doctrine and they quickly reply, "I already know that, why are we talking about that?" What they may not know is eternal security is built on the basic teachings of salvation in the bible. Maybe it is their understanding of grace, or sin, or spiritual death, or propitiation, or righteousness and justification, or the nature

of God. If these things are not properly understood, then the understanding will not be there for eternal security. Of course, we could simply believe God when He speaks and tells us that we shall *never* perish, but that goes against human logic and is thought to be too good to be true. In many ways, they are like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The words of Jesus apply here as well, "*He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!'*" (Luke 24:25). A denial of eternal security is a denial of basic bible doctrine. If you think your salvation can be lost, present your reasons for believing as you do. Will God fail or will you fail? If it is you, what is the failure on your part? Who does your salvation *ultimately* depend on, you or God? If you haven't taken time to think through these issues, I would recommend doing it now. It is a matter of life and death.

In Conclusion

The simplicity of the gospel is found in the way it is received. All we are required to do is to look away from our sinful, dead, condemned and helpless selves to the only Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to save us. It is easy to depend on someone else to do something for us. If I know that person is capable and willing to take on this matter of my soul salvation, then I can rest on Him. Such an important matter weighing our shoulders can cause stress and anxiety, but Jesus says, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*" (Matt 11:28). Jesus saves! You can put your complete trust in Him. The only thing keeping anyone from putting their complete trust in Jesus is their rejecting the Father's plan of salvation. That rejection can come in many forms. Maybe they do not accept the facts. Maybe they are involved in religion which appeals to the arrogance in man. They may refuse to comply with the terms of salvation, which is by grace. Many will take this route and will face eternal rejection from a holy God. "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it*" (Matt 7:13, 14).

Since the gospel is so simple, why is there such a great failure rate according to Jesus? Earlier I stated that the simplicity is found in the way the gospel is received. The gospel deals with the issues of life and death, of eternal life and eternal judgment, with the holiness of God and the condition of a sinner. There is much information that needs to be understood before one can make a rational decision to believe in Christ. Many do not know they are lost. They do not really understand why they need salvation. Often they will go to a church that asks them to repeat a prayer and then they are pronounced saved! Well that is OK with them, since they didn't really understand they were lost in the first place. They didn't know they were lost and they didn't know what they were being saved from. Then the person now confesses they are saved without really being saved at all. The Holy Spirit keeps on working in their hearts to bring them to the knowledge of their condition and real need of salvation.

The gospel is not simple as far as understanding the issues involved. These issues need to be understood before the gospel can be believed. This is complex since the issues are spiritual in nature. I find the failure in man will generally fall into three categories. God has revealed the gospel to man in three ways, the Father planned it, the Son executed it, and the Holy Spirit reveals it.

The Father planned it

Here, the plan of salvation is unfolded to man. God the Father designed this great salvation. He loved the lost so much that He was driven to design a way for perishing man to be reconciled. God the Father Himself rejected man because He is holy. He had to find a way to reconcile man without violating any of His holy standards (John 3:16; 5:24; 2Cor 5:18-21; Rom 8:32; 1John 5:9, 10). He accomplished this perfectly through the plan of salvation. Many will fail at this point. They will not accept the plan of salvation as spelled out in the bible. They are the authors of their own plan to be reconciled to a God who is not holy and has not really rejected them. Here is where you will find many religions of the world. They have many different philosophies about origins and God. It is interesting that all the religions of the world feel it is necessary to do meritorious works. They use these works to appeal to a deity in order to progress to the next life in a favorable position. Why should they have to do this at all? Why are they rejected from entering into an eternal future with God without this behavior? What is the standard of righteousness? All these questions may be legitimately asked of these religions. The answers to these important questions have been commonly taught in the bible since it began to be recorded. To reject the Father's plan of salvation does not leave other options to be saved, it is the only way the Father approves.

The Son executed it

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and fulfilled the Father's will to go to the cross and be judged for our sins and fulfill all righteousness. The Son came, He lived a perfect life before the Father and submitted completely to the Father's plan (Gen 3:15; John 1:29; 14:5, 31; Phil 2:5-9; 1Tim 2:4-6; 3:16; 1John 2:2). Many fail at this point because they refuse to believe that the only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ. There is widespread rejection of the fact that the Son came in the flesh. Many refuse the idea that Christ died for their sins, or that they need a Savior at all. Many will depend on their imperfect works instead of the perfect work of Christ. Most of the religions of the world do not have a Savior. Some believe in the concept of a Savior Messiah but do not think Jesus is the Christ. Instead of love and appreciation for Jesus Christ and the work He has performed, the world hates Him.

The Holy Spirit reveals it

God the Holy Spirit has the responsibility of getting the spiritually dead unbeliever to the place where they understand the true issues of the gospel. When it comes to learning anything about God, the Holy Spirit leads us into that knowledge. We could not be saved or come to a mature knowledge of God

were it not for the Holy Spirit (Gen 6:3; John 16:8-15; Acts 7:51; Eph 4:30). He will certainly do His job, but we can resist His influence. We can take a position where we choose not to be enlightened or led by the Holy Spirit. Many fail here also by choosing tradition or culture over the promptings of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Holy Scriptures. Many reject His word and adopt another reality for themselves. If you refuse to be enlightened to the Father's plan, you reject plan. In arrogance, you close your ears and refuse to listen to God (see Acts 7:51).

God worked hard to make sure the plan of salvation is perfect and does save. It is not only perfect, it is offered to us by grace. It is free to us, but expensive to God. The simple gospel must be understood before anyone would properly trust the matter of their soul salvation to it. Believing in Christ is not a shot in the dark. God's plan of salvation took divine wisdom to figure out a way for man to be reconciled. Many are claiming they are saved before they allow God to reveal His plan to them. God is the only one who can save. We must look away from ourselves and trust God to receive His salvation.

Many people look at Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, and use him to teach that we shouldn't doubt. Thomas may have doubted, but he did come to believe. Doubts will come since this is such an important matter, but do not stay there, resolve those doubts! You need to *fully* put this matter in the Lord Jesus' hands. The Lord answered Thomas' doubts by showing up. You may have doubts, but give God an opportunity to show up with solid answers. He further pronounces a blessing on those who believe without Him having to make a physical appearance. We all are in this category *if* we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have determined like Thomas, they will never believe the gospel, "*Stop doubting and believe.*"

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:26-31).

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