

Profess or Possess?

Are you saved? If you die right now (God forbid!), do you really know what God is going to do with you? Are you absolutely sure? Have you complied with the conditions for salvation, or do you even care what they are? Does the thought of your death strike you with anxiety and terror? Salvation is a matter of life and death, of acceptance by God and rejection by God. It could be that you answer "yes" to the question of salvation, and still *not* be saved. In fact, many today are claiming Jesus is their Savior and He does not even know them. What a horrifying reality it will be for those who have professed that Christ is their Lord and Savior, but in reality, He is not.

Christianity has become popular in the time in which we live. Really, the Emperor Constantine born about 274A.D., began this popularization of Christianity, or at least he is credited with being a great influence. About 321A.D., Christianity became legal under Constantine. Prior to that, Christians were killed routinely and often just for sport and entertainment. Surely to profess Christ then was not popular, or convenient, it was dangerous! The kind of Christianity that existed (for the most part) was the kind that produced willing martyrs who were not afraid to suffer for Christ's sake. When Constantine converted to Christianity, it was the "in" thing to do, especially if you wanted to stay in the good graces of the king. I am not questioning their salvation in particular, but I am just noting that when the king made Christianity the religion of the state, this union of Church and State had a negative effect on true Christianity.

Many of the pagan concepts and ideas were assimilated into Christian doctrine instead of being abandoned. Christianity was adopted by many in the Roman Empire by a mere profession of faith in creeds. I am not attacking creeds as such, for some good things have come out of these theological councils, like the Nicene Creed (325A.D.), the establishing of the canon of scripture, and Arius was publicly excommunicated after a two month battle with Athanasius. There was not always universal persecution, but there were lulls in the action. Some Emperors were somewhat tolerant of Christianity (Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, Caracalla, etc.), while others were antagonistic and spiteful (Nero, Titus, Domitian, Septimus Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Diocletian). The friendliest being Constantine who made Christianity a state religion, and the worst being Diocletian (284-305) probably the harshest persecution so far.

My mission here is not to recount Church history, for there are those who have done a much better job, and I defer to them and what they have written. What I want is to establish the popularity of Christianity today and from whence it has come. Today there is at least in the free world, very little if no opposition at all to

Christianity. Islamic countries are the main areas (not the only areas) of the world where Christians are still persecuted for simply being Christians. What we must be careful of in this time of lazy Christianity is that of mere profession, the kind of faith that is just convenient without an understanding of the facts. Christianity is not a blind faith. There are definite facts that need to be understood and believed before salvation can occur. While we may make a profession of faith, we may say the "sinner's prayer," we may read Romans 10:9, 10 and make a confession with the mouth as is commonly touted in many Churches, we may be baptized in name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or in the name of Jesus, while we may say we believe in Jesus Christ, we may *not* be saved!

This is what I want to explore and I want to separate those making professions from those possessing. Of course, I cannot do such a thing in reality! Someone just threw this paper down I'm sure and will not read another word. They will say, "Who is he to make such statements?" And rightly so, the question is a valid one, who am I? It is possible I only profess and do not possess. What I can do is give you what the scripture says, and you, not I, will have to judge yourself according to the facts. As Paul says, "*Examine yourselves (you do it, not me) to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?*" (2Cor 13:5). My purpose in writing this is that you do not fail the test. If you find that you have failed in some area, to urge you to make your salvation a reality, not later, right now!

We should start by doing away with professions. We can repeat anything. Infants, after about two or three years of age can repeat anything we say. This becomes a source of enjoyment as we watch our children develop. My three year old daughter wanted some juice I had. She demanded that I give it to her, she said "give me my juice!" I told her first of all, it was my juice and second, that is not the way she should ask for something. She then responded with the same demanding tone, "Please give me that juice!" Again I told her that was still not the way to ask for something. She quickly responded, "I said the magic word!" I had no choice but to give her the juice as I thought to myself how I would teach a thirsty three year old kindness, patience and to be polite.

I find today, some have reduced salvation to this simple method of profession. They are just like my daughter who knew the right words, but the way she said them revealed that her heart was not in it. They think it is some kind of magic, if they just can get the person to say certain words, they then pronounce them saved. Some want more than words, the person must feel sorry and possibly muster up some emotional tears, and then say the magic words. Then, they urge upon the new converts some religious activity that their denomination or Church has sanctioned as a further condition of salvation. If the new convert can maintain

this, they say surely he is saved. If the convert cannot maintain this activity to their satisfaction, they must say the magic words again and re-dedicate themselves to God (make more promises of obedience to their system) and possibly more tears (a display of sincerity).

To me, Jesus Christ did away with professions when quoting from Isaiah He said "*These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teaching are but rules taught by men*" (Matt 15:8, 9). What is important is what is in the heart, or what the person really thinks. Again Jesus said, "*In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness*" (Matt 23:28). There are many who are just paying lip service to God. They may appear to be Christians on the outside, they have learned all the words Christians should say, and can even quote the scriptures. They do their best to act the way Christians act, but are not saved, only involved in religious activity. At the judgment, these terrifying words will come to them, "*I don't know you or where you come from.*" In desperation, they will make their case, explaining how they were engaged in all sorts of religious activity in the name of the Lord, but again the response will be, "*I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!*" (Luke 13:24-28; also cf. Matt 7:21-23). Solemn indeed.

What do they lack? Why have they failed? I do not think sincerity is the problem. There are many sincere in their religion, but they are sincerely wrong! If we do not know Christ and He does not know us, sincerity cannot bridge the gap. They have honored Jesus with their lips and rejected Him in their hearts. They simply have not complied with the conditions for salvation outlined in the Bible. They may have said the right words, but they do not know what the words mean. They say they are saved by grace, but do not understand what the Bible means by the words "saved" or "grace." They say that Jesus died for their sins, but they do not understand it, or do not believe it. They say they believe in Christ, but do not understand what "believing" actually requires. We need to deal with all these issues because these are the true issues of salvation. Salvation is spoken of in the Bible as a free gift, given in grace and received by faith. It is free to us, but it was certainly not free to God. The Father did not even spare his only Son, but delivered Him over to judgment for us all (Rom 8:32). The ones making these professions were never genuinely saved.

How shall we approach such a complex subject? There are many ways I'm sure, but I will use my experiences to form a method. After talking to many about eternal security (once saved always saved), I found this doctrine tests what is in a person's heart. Some may say the doctrine of eternal security and salvation are two subjects, but I think they are so closely related they cannot be easily separated.

In John 3:16, we find the two subjects linked in the same verse, "*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.*" Many read this passage and only believe half of the results of believing in Christ. They like the part about having eternal life, but doubt very seriously if God really means the part about not perishing, why is this? Do we have the option to believe only half the results, because it does not make sense to us? They feel that if it were true, it would promote loose living, a lifestyle of lawlessness. Not only is the person given a license to ring up all the sin they want on God's cash register (the doubters say), but do not have to do anything God wants them to do. In other words, they say the doctrine of eternal security will produce sin, and this sin, or number of sins, will result in eternal damnation. They say to be saved, all sins must be repented of and forsaken, or at the very least an attitude of sorrow and willingness to give them up. They are constantly making an issue of self and what self can do; rather than looking away from themselves and concentrating on what God has already done through His Christ. These people who fight the second half of this verse are certainly sincere, but sincerely wrong.

What about obedience to God? God is very concerned about the quality of life the Christian lives. Sure God wants His child to be obedient, not a maverick. Again, we must look away from ourselves to God and find out what is His way of causing the child to be obedient. First, God does not threaten us into obedience. He gives salvation (from spiritual death, to the eternal state) as a free gift, no obedience can affect or effect salvation because the basis of salvation is not of works (Titus 3:5). God would never give salvation free, by grace, and then take it back because we do not work, or be obedient. There are certainly consequences to disobedience and God cannot be mocked (Gal 6:7). Second, God does not make any demands upon the unbeliever since he is dead in his transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1).

Unbeliever reform is like the "*dog returns to its vomit, and a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud*" (2Pet 2:22). God is not impressed with or surprised that a dog has repudiated some evil behavior and then adopted it again; or that a sow (pig) was washed (moral reform) and returns to the mud again. The dog is still a dog, and the pig is still a pig. The fact is that God is not pleased with a repudiating dog or a washed pig. Nothing anyone could ever do can cause a change in the nature, except faith in the Savior. That is why we are all commanded by God to believe in Jesus Christ, the only way. These unbelievers have not obeyed the command, for "*it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (they know it but have not obeyed it), than to have known it and then turn their backs on the sacred command (they come right to the point of faith, they know the true issues of the gospel, but refuse to believe)*"

that was passed on to them" (1Pet 2:21). It never says that the lamb or the sheep became a dog or pig, but, the dog and pig did profess to being a lamb, and identified themselves with the saved. Jesus did not tell Peter to feed his dogs, or his pigs, no! But to feed his sheep and his lambs (John 21:15-17). God has a plan for His children to be obedient, but the first thing is for them to become his children (John 1:13). God changes them from dogs to lambs. God does it for them, not their attempts at moral reform or cleaning up their lives, or their ceasing from some sins. They are given a new nature, which is created after true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24). Then, they can begin the process of growing in grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pet 3:18). Then they can begin to be transformed by the renewing of their minds through their consistent intake of doctrine, God's thinking. Then, and only then, can they test and approve what God's will is for them, His good, pleasing and perfect will for their lives (Rom 12:1, 2; 2Cor 3:18). From time to time, the child of God may need correction, some more than others. God, who is the perfect Father knows how to handle every situation the straying child may present. God's discipline will never result in eternal condemnation (1Cor 11:32). That would contradict God's own testimony. The child has a permanent place in the family of God (John 8:35). Yes, God is concerned about the obedience of His children, but just as in salvation, it must be done God's way.

Those sincere and often contending for holiness before God, have overlooked God's method of holiness. Now is the time to remember the verse where God declares, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts.*" Since God's thinking is so much higher than man's, God's thinking, at first, may not seem to be reasonable to us. Therefore, as a result of different thinking, He says "*and my ways are not your ways.*" Remember that, especially when you read the plain statement of scripture about salvation and it's security and say, "That just doesn't make sense to me, how can that be?"

To illustrate, it is as if you are standing on the ledge of a burning building and God says there is no other way out. If you go back in that building you will surely perish. He says all you have to do is jump, He will surely catch you and you will not perish, but you will live safely forever with Him. Never has He lost anybody who has jumped into his arms. He promises you not only will He catch you but will never drop you. You look to either side and see most people doubting and only a few jumping. All you can hear are the God's words, you struggle and strain to see Him through the smoke and the blackness of night, but you cannot see God. Something inside you is telling you as you hear these words that God is right, there is just no other way. Again you hear the words urging you to trust Him, that He is the only way out and if you don't believe it and jump, you will perish, even

if you stay on the ledge; for who knows when the fire will overtake the thin ledge you're standing on.

You say "OK" you now believe it, and you're convinced that this is true, and so you repeat the words over and over, but still do not jump. You even tell others you know the only way to safety is to jump, but you still have not jumped. Finally you think, it just doesn't seem reasonable to you that if you jump into the smoky, night air, that God will catch you and not drop you. If you jump, you reason, you will have to totally depend on Him to catch you, and that is scary. After all, if you jump, you will be totally helpless; you will have to rely on Him and Him alone to catch you. Yes, you know, He says He is the Savior, but can you really trust Him with your life? You reason that even if He catches you, what is to keep him from dropping you. You continue to question, thinking, what if He catches you and you squirm around; or what if you panic, and in your insanity want Him to drop you, certainly He will? Then you say "this doesn't make sense; if God really wants me to be saved and loves me, I will depend on Him to show me a way I can go through the building to find my own way down, yes, that is reasonable."

The word "jump" must not really mean to jump, even though that is what it says, it can't mean it, can it? Then you see almost everybody else going back into the building. They say they have come to the same conclusions as you have and they seem to be very sincere, so now you feel assured. The more you listen to those going into the building, the less that voice inside you bothers you, telling you the only way is to jump. In fact, as you enter the smoke filled, dark building, you grope and pray to God for help to find your way down. The voice now only irritates you. When you or anybody else hears the voice, it seems ridiculous and certainly foolish and could not mean to just cast yourself totally upon Him. After all, there must be something you can do. God can use you to find your way down. So you wander aimlessly, lost, unable to trust God. This is only an illustration, but it demonstrates there is only one way of salvation and that is God's way of salvation with His security.

Let us look at some more verses where God links His salvation with His security. We already saw where they "*shall not perish*," and God goes on to explain what He means to not perish in verse 18, "*whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*" "*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*" "*I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me (doctrine of election, and predestination) is greater than all (even greater than those in His hand); no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one (in essence).*" "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (why?), because through*

Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death"
(John 3:16, 18; 5:24; 10:28-30; Rom 8:1, 2).

This is so clear, so precise, so simple, you cannot add to it, or take away from it (Ecc 3:14). These verses speak so directly, there is just no other interpretation. Do not begin to shuffle or turn from scripture to scripture in an attempt to refute the plain teaching of the Bible. There is not one verse in the entire Bible that will contradict these verses, not one! Stop! Do not fight God on this for you will lose. If you can find one verse where the saved one does perish, the saved one is condemned (see 1Cor 11:32), the saved one is greater than the Father and Jesus, the saved one is snatched out of God's hand, then we might as well close our Bibles now, for we are all surely lost. After all, who can trust a God to save them who speaks with a forked tongue? But thanks be to God, we can trust Him, for "*great is thy faithfulness, unto me.*" If this is not what you have believed, I pray that God will grant you repentance (to have a change of mind) to believe the divine testimony.

To the extent that you reject this clear teaching of salvation with its security, you add works to salvation and make an issue of self and may not be saved at all! When you make an issue of self, you inflate your opinion of salvation and security so far out of proportion, that your view of salvation and security is more important than God's view. You would rather resist God's word than submit and your pride be deflated. Instead of being interested in the strait divine testimony, you say in your heart, "Please don't confuse me with the facts." It is a contradiction, plain and simple, to say you believe in the Son as your Savior, and in another breath say His work, His divine energy expended, is not sufficient for you. What kind of Savior is that? To "believe" means you look away from yourself, your dependence is totally upon Jesus and what He did, nothing you can or ever will do, will suffice.

Maybe you do not have faith, which means you cannot look away from yourself to Christ as the only hope of salvation because you think God needs you, that you are not really spiritually dead, or totally condemned already. Therefore, since you cannot believe the plain testimony of a God who conceived of this so great salvation and left YOU out of the process, it cannot be true. Doesn't God recognize who you are, has he overlooked you? No, He has not, and says that salvation is absolutely free, and there is NOTHING that you can contribute to it, not one thing, except to look away from yourself, your spiritually dead, lost, unrighteous, worthless, your incapable of doing good self (Rom 3:10-18), to the only hope of salvation--Jesus Christ, my Lord.

Another problem exists for those who reject the security of God, the great problem of sin. The very thing that we are to believe, the very core of the gospel is the Atonement provided by God Himself on our behalf. If your theology is not based on this truth, you have a foundation of sand. While the sin problem is a serious one, we know that God hates sin far more than any sinful man could ever hate sin. God is perfect in righteousness and justice. God is holy and will not tolerate any sin whatsoever. God condemned the entire human race born in Adam for ONE sin, just one! That one sin caused the entire race in Adam to become sinners (Rom 5:12-20). Because of Adam (not any personal sins committed by any born in Adam), everyone born is a sinner by nature, condemned before he started. No sinful man can stand in the presence of a Holy God. It would be as a fireman totally drenched with gasoline, with a hose filled with gasoline trying to enter a burning inferno and extinguish the flames. He will at once be consumed and all his efforts proven ridiculous and futile. Man has only two choices, to accept God's solution for his sins, or to be that fireman.

God solution is the atonement provided by God Himself. Every sin of every person born, or that would ever be born on this planet called earth, was imputed to Jesus Christ and was judged. That is what it means when the Bible says that Christ died for you. He took ALL your sins upon himself and endured the wrath of God for your sins. He stood in your place and took the punishment you deserve for yours sins, all your sins. He was the only man born perfect on this earth, lived a sinless life and became your substitute. When those awful three hours were over He said, "*it is finished.*" God did it and "*I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him*" (Ecc 3:14). There is nothing that we can say or do, our opinions do not matter, this is a reality and all we can do is believe it. If we do not believe it, it still does not cease to be the truth. If we are going to be saved, this is the very heart of the gospel (and it to me is very good news), that we are called upon to believe and not doubt. Test yourself, reader; do you really believe this?

Not only are we called upon to believe that Christ took away the sins of the world, but also, to believe God's own reaction to what He Himself and His Son accomplished on behalf of our sins. God the Father's reaction to whether the Son's work in dying for our sins was effective or not, can be summed up in one word--propitiation. This word in the Greek speaks of the sacrifice that satisfies the righteous wrath of God. The wrath of God is an expression of His righteous demands upon His creatures who exist in Him but are opposed to Him. Whatever God righteousness demands, His justice carries out in the form of blessing or judgment. God's wrath is justified against man, because of one sin, Adam's. On top of that we have committed our own sins, consistent with our sinful natures.

What God did was to direct the wrath, the punishment, the full penalty for all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ. Our Lord suffered under the pressure, the weight of all the sins of the world. Then, God the Father released upon Christ, His Lamb, the full fury of divine wrath. With crushing and excruciating agony of soul, the Lamb of God screamed continuously, "*My God, My God why have you forsaken me*"! Jesus was paying a debt He did not owe, a debt that we owed, but could not pay. "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.*" How did God make Him (Jesus) sin for us? "*That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them*" (2Cor 5:19, 21). He made Him sin for us by first not counting men's sins against them. Since God cannot excuse sin, not even one, He put them on Christ. After He said "*it is finished*", Christ died physically, but three days later God resurrected Him and He is alive forever. Now, what is the Father's attitude about our sins? What does the righteousness and justice of God now say about our sins and the sins of the entire world? God is said to be propitiated, that is, **SATISFIED FOREVER!** His wrath is forever satisfied with Christ's sacrificial death in our stead (Rom 3:25; 1John 2:2; 4:10). Now *this* is God's perfect solution to the sin problem.

Now, what does it mean to us that God is propitiated or satisfied with what Christ did for us. The first thing it establishes is a way that sinful man may be reconciled to a Holy God; and the fact that God went to such lengths to solve the sin problem, suggests that sin was a very serious problem. It establishes then, the **ONLY** way, the **ONLY** basis upon which a sinful man born in Adam can be reconciled to a Holy God. It also establishes a truth that our sins are indeed paid, not half paid, not three quarters paid, fully paid! Therefore, your personal sins are **NOT** the issue in salvation. Now, what then is the only issue in salvation since the full weight of sins has been borne already by our Savior? The scriptures declare without question--Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the message of the gospel. God did this for you, now, what do you think about His Christ as the **ONLY** way to be reconciled? Do you believe the divine testimony about what He did? Do you believe that what He did worked, was effective? Do you believe He has solved the sin problem forever? I can only hope you do, because these are the facts of the gospel we must believe if we will be saved. If you do not understand them, you cannot believe them. Take your time, hear what God is saying, do not rush past this until you understand just what the Bible says. If you have never understood this, or if you reject this, you can say the magic words a thousand times and it will have no meaning; you can claim salvation all you want, you are not saved! You cannot say you believe in Christ and in the same breath not believe what He came to do, and did.

Blind faith does not save, only an intelligent faith that has heard the divine testimony (the gospel about Christ), understood it, and says yes to the facts. You are not called upon to believe for salvation that Jesus was a good man, that He was an excellent moral person, or that He was a great teacher or prophet, although they are indeed true, but, simply that He is the Lamb of God, His Christ, who took away the sins of the world. *"Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now has he appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" "But when this priest (Jesus) had offered one sacrifice for sins (himself) he sat down at the right hand of God"* (Heb 9:25, 26; 10:12).

There were never any chairs in the earthy tabernacle, the priest always stood. Jesus is sitting, the work is finished forever, the sins fully paid and He is fully approved by God. Therefore, He is sitting at the place of highest honor, a man, not just any man, but a man approved to sit in the presence of a Holy God. A man approved to be the representative of the lost, and fallen race of Adam. Who is this man? Jesus Christ, the last Adam. Why is He there? For you and me, for every man born in Adam. This is the very core of the gospel; can you believe this, do you think it is absolute truth? Or, will you walk away from this, making an issue of your sins, saying that God is really not propitiated, satisfied with Christ work on our behalf, saying you just simply cannot believe that Christ really did take away ALL your sins, even the ones you did not commit yet. Saying that man must still somehow bear his own sins, which is a denial of the facts and an insult to our Lord who really did bear them, and to God the Father, the inventor of this great plan of salvation.

Many go so far as to say that Christ died for them, or Christ died for their sins. Then they also say that their sins still have power to send them to the lake of fire, that they could commit some sin or a combination of sins that will eventually cause them to be lost. So they speak the words with their lips, but their hearts (what they really think) are far from Christ. They say Christ died for them, but continue to make an issue of their sins. The scripture says they are supposed to believe it, so they speak the words; they do not really believe it, because to them what God did is unreasonable. I have questioned many on this point and they say "yes He died for me, but it doesn't mean my sins are not the issue," or they say, "yes He died for my sins but if I commit them and do not ask for forgiveness or repent, I will be lost." This reasoning not only contradicts the truth of the atonement, it also makes the person the basis of salvation and not the atonement provided by God through Christ. In the first case, the person adopts an attitude about their sins that is not God's attitude (paid in full), therefore deceiving himself. In the second, the person assumes that forgiveness and repentance can somehow

take the place of the atonement. Your attitude about your sins is not the issue; remember YOU are the sinner. God's attitude is what is important, and as far as your sins are concerned, He is satisfied forever. If you don't believe that, your attitude is of no consequence.

Repentance is a distorted word. The word repentance is distorted by so many that if used it should be explained. The Greek word (metanoia, the noun) means to have a change of mind. It does not mean to feel sorry for yourself. There is another word (metamelomai) which is somewhat related, but means to feel sorry and usually is translated "regret." This is the word used to explain Judas, the betrayer's attitude. It is not used in the matter of eternal salvation. In 2Peter 3:9, the Lord is not willing that any should perish "*but everyone to come to repentance (metanoia).*" The question is, to come to repentance about what? To have a change of mind about what? About God's Christ, NOT about your personal sins. Jesus Christ is the object of salvation, what you think about Him can decide your eternal destiny. Changing your mind about your personal sins will not cause you or anyone else to be saved. How can you change your mind about your sins if you are spiritually dead, you do not even know about all your sins to change your mind. God never requires a believer to confess, repent, or forsake personal sins for salvation. The correct attitude about your sins is God's attitude, paid!

Repentance is always toward Christ when salvation is the subject.

Your rejection of Christ is a sin, and that is the only sin you can properly repent of for salvation. You can change your mind about Christ (repent) and now believe in Him alone for salvation, where you formerly thought He was not the Christ, or you thought His work was not effective for you (John 16:8-10). So far, we have been discussing what God did for our salvation, what He accomplished for us through His Christ. These are the facts, the record, the divine testimony. Now, whether a person will be saved or not depends on his understanding of the facts and faith.

Maybe you can behave a certain way, feel sorry for your sins, and do your best to be obedient to God hoping he will recognize your sincerity. No! Your only choice is to stand in Adam condemned, unrighteous and rejected by a Holy God; or stand in Christ, justified, righteous, having eternal life, where there is no condemnation. No one falls or stands on their own merit, but on the merit of either Adam or Christ (Rom 5:12-21). Our condemnation or salvation was never dependent upon us, but upon two perfect men. The reason everybody is born in Adam condemned is because of what Adam did, and there is nothing anyone can do to add to or take away from that fact. The reason everybody born in Christ is saved, justified, has eternal life, is because of what Christ did and there is nothing anyone in Christ can do to add or take away from that fact. The reason we fall in Adam is because Adam fell. The reason we stand in Christ is He is alive forever

and He is at the place of highest honor. The only way we could lose our salvation is for Jesus Christ to fall. If Jesus did fall (become condemned, rejected by God), then we would certainly fall with Him for we are in Him. But that is impossible! Away with the thought! God is eternally pleased with His Son and therefore eternally pleased with anyone who is in Christ (Rom 8:31-39).

In conclusion, the appeal to you has already been given. The message here is not anything complicated, but the simple gospel. What is complicated is Satan's attempts to hide this glorious gospel from those who are unbelievers, of whom would certainly include those making professions (2Cor 4:4). The challenge has been given to test yourselves on this serious issue of life and death. This issue is not about me or my personality of whom you are free to reject, but the issue is between you and Holy God. All I have done here is to lay out the facts of the gospel, of which I am convinced are the Word of God. I have myself for years stood on that ledge, mused around in that burning building having only made a profession. But one day I jumped and ever since then, God and His word have come alive in my life. All you have to do is to depend on God, you know the facts of the gospel, now all you have to do is to fully depend on God to do what He does best. God will save anybody who comes to Him by faith alone in Christ alone. Faith is simply letting God do it, just letting God *be* God for you.

Faith is not making a commitment to God or Jesus Christ, for the spiritually dead do not have anything to commit. Faith is not promising God anything, not dedicating your life to Christ, not repenting of sins, and not inviting Christ into your heart. Faith is simply *looking away* from yourself and anything you have, to a resurrected Christ. Settling the matter of the salvation of your soul forever by throwing yourself upon the Lord Jesus without reserve and knowing He can save to the uttermost. It can be accomplished for you in a moment of time, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.*" If you can look away from yourself to Jesus and depend, rely, simply trust in Him for salvation, then this is the very moment of salvation for you.

Please take time to read the [Atonement](#) (part 1&2) and [Eternal Security](#). This will save time and repetition; and information is covered in detail that is only alluded to here. My prayer is that not one who has read these words will be the same, but that they will be reconciled to God through Christ. If you already know these truths, thanks be to God through whom we have received them. I hope you can see in your heart what John saw when He said, "*Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" The way we can be deceived is to disregard the divine testimony. If we do, we are living by our own intellect, and not by divine wisdom. God has a plan of salvation that is perfect in every detail. If it was dependent upon imperfect man in any way, it would not be a perfect plan.

The only way to take salvation is by faith, which is the only way man is excluded from the process because true faith requires that man must look away from himself. If you cannot take your eyes off yourself, it is because you are preoccupied with yourself, your sins, your works, your conclusions and opinions. My prayer is that you trust God and His divine testimony; for He is worthy of your trust. I would like to end with these words, "*We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God, has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son*" (1John 5:9, 10).

Douglas E. Presley
03-18-1996