

Enslaved to Salvation

A biblical answer to the question, “*Can I be saved by simultaneously trusting in Jesus as a sacrifice for my sins and also trusting in my own good works?*”

David Aaron Beaty

Galatians 5:1 NASB20 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

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Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to the Lord Jesus, who loved all of us enough to give His life for us so that we will be found innocent before the throne of God if we trust in Him as our final sacrifice for all our sins.



Book Synopsis

Enslaved to Salvation is an attempt to clearly and concisely use the scripture to answer some of the most difficult questions about whether or not salvation is granted to us because of our own good works or because of faith in Jesus. Are people really saved who attempt to obtain salvation by having faith in Jesus as a sacrifice for their sins while trusting in their own good works at the same time? Does the book of James really contradict the rest of the Bible by describing a salvation by works? We attempt to show the answers to all these questions directly from scripture. This book is written to be understandable and accessible for anyone with a basic laymen's level of knowledge of the Bible.

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Introduction

This short book is dedicated to the all important topic of how to be saved. I will not discuss all aspects of the topic. I would like to just focus specifically on a part of this topic that has probably been the most talked about throughout the entire history of faith and religion. Christianity may be the only religion in the world that offers man eternal salvation as a free gift and not as a reward from God for good behavior. It is crystal clear in the words of the Bible that God grants us salvation, not because we meet some minimum standard of good behavior, but because we accept Jesus as our King and trust that He paid the price for our sins with His death on the cross. This is relatively easy to see in scripture, and I will show that here in this book, but the question that this book will ultimately strive to address is a much harder one. What if somebody says, *"Sure I have faith in Jesus, and that is why God will grant me salvation, but I believe that God also requires for me*

to meet a minimum standard of works and good behavior in my life or my faith in Jesus will not be enough to save me." So this is basically a mixing of salvation by faith in Jesus and a salvation by faith in our own actions having been good enough by the time of our death to meet some minimum standard set by God. I will do my best to address with scripture whether this mixed type of faith is really acceptable to God. Will He grant eternal salvation to those who trust in Jesus, but who also try to simultaneously trust in their own good behavior? What we will see in scripture is that these two different types of faith are wholly contradictory to one another and cannot truly and honestly even coexist with each other in a person's mind. Further, what we will see is that there is some very convincing evidence in the Bible that God will not give salvation to those who knowingly defy what God tells them in scripture by attempting to simultaneously adhere to both the concepts of salvation by faith in Jesus and salvation by faith in one's own good works. The two different types of faith sharply contradict one another, and

faith in works for salvation undermines everything that God is trying to say to us by offering salvation as a free gift by faith in Jesus alone. With that, let's dive in and see what scripture says.

Chapter 1

Saved by Faith in Jesus, Not Works

Here these scriptures below show that following the law by doing good deeds, having good behavior, and performing religious rituals such as circumcision are not what God requires to grant us salvation. They show that only faith is acceptable by God for salvation and eternal life. You might be in total agreement with these, and then there's no point in reading them, but I wanted to at least show the fact that there is a large group of these from all over the New Testament, and even directly from the words of Jesus. I also want to show them here so that there's no question that they are clearly worded and easily understandable. That salvation is by faith alone and not by works, is not in question in the Bible. It is abundantly clear, and I hope this is a point that you agree on. Here are the passages:

[Titus 3:5-6 NASB20] 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior,

[Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB20] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[Galatians 2:16, 21 NASB20] 16 nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by works of the Law no flesh will be justified. ... 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

This word "justified" in Galatians 2 above, of course refers to the condition of being seen by God as totally innocent in spite of the fact

that we have practically and actually committed the crimes of sins.

[Romans 3:20-28 WEB] 20 Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God sent to be an atoning sacrifice, through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, in God's forbearance; 26 to demonstrate his righteousness at this present time; that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

[Galatians 5:1-6 NASB20] 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look! I, Paul, tell you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the Law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

[Galatians 1:6-9, 11-12 ESV] 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so

now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. ... 11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

And here below, as you probably know, we have the same concept directly from the words of Jesus. This is just Jesus reiterating what you've just seen from the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul in the previous passages:

[John 3:16 NASB20] "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

Dynamic translations such as the Weymouth New Testament here below bring out the fact that the Greek word for "*believes*" in John 3:16 above has the concept of "*trust*" embedded in it:

*[John 3:16 WNT] For so greatly did God love the world that He gave His only Son, that every one who **trusts** in Him may not perish but may have the Life of Ages.*

Jesus is again here in the John 6 passage below eliminating the need for works to achieve eternal life and instead he emphasizes belief. They ask Jesus what works are needed to obtain the food that leads to eternal life, and he completely replaces the works with belief, and refuses to even answer back to them with what works they would need:

*[John 6:27-29, 35 NASB20] 27 "Do not **work** for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts for **eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." 28 Therefore they said to Him, "What are we to **do**, so that we may accomplish the **works** of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the **work** of God, that you **believe** in Him whom He has sent." ... 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who **believes** in Me will never be thirsty.*

And here's even a few more passages below just repeating the salvation by faith in the passages above. There are even more passages than what I've shown here. There are so many of these that they are extremely easy to find. They are popping out of every nook and cranny of the Bible:

[Romans 4:2-5 ESV] 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

[Romans 5:1-2 CSB] 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

[Galatians 3:24-26 ESV] 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

[Philippians 3:8-9 CSB] 8 More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ -- the righteousness from God based on faith.

Chapter 2

Not Saved by Faith in Works

In the Galatians 1 passage back on page 7 you can see in verses 8 & 9 that the Holy Spirit closes the door on the idea that there's any other way to be saved except for the gospel that the Holy Spirit, Paul, and Jesus are teaching. It says: *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"* I take this to mean that there is no other way to eternal life. Holding to a different gospel, as you can see in Galatians 1:9, results in being *"accursed"*. The explanation of what this accursedness is, you can see below in this Galatians 3 passage:

[Galatians 3:9-13 NIV] 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written:

"Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole."

(It's important to note that in Galatians 3 above we see a demonstration of what is meant by "*justified*". The right to "*live*" in verse 11, refers to eternal life, and we can also see there in verse 11 that we must be justified by faith and not by works in order to "*live*". So justification is something that is necessary for us to have eternal life. We must be legally and judicially seen by God as innocent and justified because of what Christ did, paying the legal judicial fine for our crimes.) We can also see in the Galatians 3 passage above that the curse is God's judgment, the judgment which Jesus took on our behalf, paying for our sins by being crucified as an object of God's direct wrath,

"hung on a pole", the cross. The Greek word for "accursed", "anathema", "ἀνάθεμα" used in Galatians 1:9 back on page 7 for those who adopt a different gospel other than what Jesus is teaching us is a Greek word which is used repeatedly in the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, to describe the animal sacrifices. These were the animal sacrifices which were devoted to consumption and destruction as objects of God's wrath on the altar. As you probably know, God's wrath was poured out onto the sacrifices on the altar to pay for the sins of the people and bring them temporary forgiveness. These Old Testament sacrifices stood as a prophetic picture of what Jesus would do to permanently bear the punishment for our sin in our place. The ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, called the "*Septuagint*", was generally the most utilized Old Testament Bible by the first ancient readers of the New Testament. Only a minority of first century Christians who first received the New Testament books were actually literate. Of this literate minority, most could only read Greek and not Hebrew. This is likely why the New Testament authors quote from the

Septuagint profusely in the New Testament and not nearly as much from the Hebrew Old Testament. We know this because many of the quotations of the Old Testament found in the New Testament have wording that is unique only to the Septuagint, not being found in the Hebrew Old Testament. So to be "*accursed*", as the Holy Spirit and Paul are using the Greek word back on page 7 in Galatians 1:9, means to be still under God's wrath, to be devoted to destruction, and to not have eternal life. Here's a sample verse below from an English translation of the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, which uses the Greek word "*anathema*", "*accursed*", "*ἀνάθεμα*" to describe the sacrifices devoted to destruction:

[Leviticus 27:28-29 CTT Septuagint] 28 But with respect to every Anathema which a man may devote to the Lord from all that he hath, whether from man or beast, or from field of his possession, it shall not be sold nor redeemed. Every anathema shall be most sacredly devoted to the Lord. 29 And every thing which hath been devoted as an anathema from among men, shall not be redeemable, but by death.

Of course, as you can see in Galatians 3:13 far above, Jesus became the object of God's wrath in our place, becoming the sacrifice which would take God's wrath for us, becoming a "curse" for us. So what Paul and the Holy Spirit are very likely saying in Galatians 1:9 back on page 7 is that if we preach or teach a gospel that contradicts what Paul, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus are teaching, then we are not saved, instead we are "anathema", devoted to destruction like a sacrifice, paying the price for our own sins as you see again here:

[Galatians 1:9b NASB20] "if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"

But is it really a contradiction of the gospel that God and Paul are teaching us in all of these passages to say that we can be saved by trusting in Jesus' sacrifice of himself and also simultaneously trusting in our own adherence to some list of good works, good behavior, and religious rituals to save us? Putting it simply, if we believe that we are saved by faith in Jesus and partly by our good

behavior, are we really contradicting what the Holy Spirit and Paul are teaching in all the previously shown passages? Could this contradiction then make us fall into the category of "*anathema*" or cursed? It seems like a contradiction to say that I am trusting in Jesus' sacrifice to save me, but I am also trusting in my own good works and good behavior. If I say I have faith in the workmanship of a chair enough so that I will sit in it, then do I really have faith in the chair if I always insist on putting on a safety harness secured to the ceiling with a rope before I will sit in the chair. If someone walks up to me and says, "*Don't you have faith in the chair? Why do you always need to use that safety harness to keep you from falling?*" I think I would have to confess that I really do not have faith in the chair. Instead I would probably need to confess that I have a firm belief that the chair is very untrustworthy. That's why I would need the harness, because I think the chair is not trustworthy and it could break at any time dumping me on the floor. So if Jesus' sacrifice is enough and I am trusting that his sacrifice is enough to pay the full price of punishment for my sins that I deserve, why would I need works,

good behavior, and the performance of rituals as a backup safety harness? If I am even partially trusting in works to save me, it seems to me I would be believing that Jesus' sacrifice for my sins was not good enough by itself. It seems that I would be saying that I have to be good enough with my actions in order to make up for the insufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. Is that what the Bible teaches?, that those who believe Jesus' sacrifice is not enough will be saved? It seems to me that the clear answer to this question is in the Galatians 5 passage that I showed far above and here below again:

[Galatians 5:1-6 NASB20] 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look! I, Paul, tell you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the Law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ

Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

As you can see, this passage above seems to say that just taking part in the idea of trusting in following the law to achieve salvation results in a withdrawal or a withholding of God's saving grace from us, "*you have fallen from grace*", "*you have been severed from Christ*". As you probably recall from Ephesians 2:8-9, it is this very grace that saves us:

[Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB20] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So the Galatians 5 passage far above saying that we have fallen from grace and have been severed from Christ, is a very strong statement that those who are resorting to circumcision and the works of the law lose the benefit of the very thing that is needed to save them, namely God's grace.

The context of the entire book of Galatians, as you can see from the numerous Galatians passages that I've shown, is that people were wanting to be circumcised in order to be saved and have eternal life. They were wanting to place their trust in following the law and good works in order to be acceptable before God to further earn God's favor and achieve eternal life. It looks clear that the Galatians 5 passage above is saying that you cannot have both. If you are trusting in your own good works and observance of rituals, you are no longer fully trusting in God's grace and Jesus' sacrifice. Then God's grace no longer applies, we have fallen from grace, and we must observe the entire law in order to be saved just as Galatians 5 says: *"And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law".* As you know, only Jesus was able to observe the whole law perfectly. It seems as if God is calling us to choose one system of salvation or the other in the book of Galatians, grace given through Jesus' blood, or works by following the law perfectly, *"the whole Law"*.

Chapter 3

Not Saved by Faith Plus Works

We might be tempted to look at the Galatians 5 passage far above and conclude that the Holy Spirit is there speaking to people who had no faith at all in Jesus' sacrifice of Himself, and instead they were just people who were only wanting to completely depend on the law and their own good works. If we could convince ourselves of that, then we could conclude that the Galatians 5 passage far above does not apply to those who are trying to mix faith in Jesus and faith in their own good works to have eternal life, also known as, "*faith plus works*". Instead, this would just lead us to conclude that those who "*are severed from Christ*" because of their trying to follow the law for salvation in Galatians 5 were just those who were attempting to completely depend on the observance of the law and good works to be saved. So the argument would go that

they were those who were completely rejecting faith in Jesus' sacrifice as a way to salvation. So the argument would go that, they were totally depending on works for salvation and not at all on faith in Jesus. How do we know which one it is? Is the Galatians 5 passage written to those who were trying to mix faith in Jesus and faith in good works for salvation (faith plus works), or was the Galatians 5 passage written to those who were attempting to completely depend on the law and good works while totally rejecting Jesus' sacrifice as a payment for sin? We have a clue to help answer this question in the book of Acts. There in Acts we see that in the very early stages of the development of the church, the question was being asked whether or not the Gentile believers who had placed their faith in Christ also needed to observe the law and be circumcised in order to be saved. They were entertaining a question that is closely related to the one we are discussing here. That question being, *"Is a person saved by faith in Jesus plus works and observing the law or are they saved only by faith in Jesus?"* Here's the passage from Acts below. There may be several important things to note in this

passage. The first being that those who were arguing the idea that circumcision and keeping the law must also be followed in order to be saved were labeled with a specific phrase. This phrase indicates that they were those who were also simultaneously attempting to have faith in Jesus for salvation. The way Peter was referring to them made it plain that they were trying to mix faith in Jesus and faith in works as a way to eternal life (faith plus works). These were not people who were arguing to completely deny faith in Jesus and instead to only work for salvation by following the law. The label that Peter uses for them is those "*who had believed*". This clues us in that they, at least in part "*had believed*" in Jesus as a way to salvation, but were additionally trying to say that works and following the law must also be added on in order to be saved. These were people who were in the church, as Christians, claiming faith in Christ, but also saying that following the law must be done too in order to be saved. As you read through the Acts passage below, you will also see it being made very plain that the topic that is being argued between them is the topic of whether

or not this mixing of faith in Jesus and performance of good works of the law was necessary for salvation. Here's the passage:

*[Acts 15:1-11 NASB20] 1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had a heated argument and debate with them, the brothers determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. 3 Therefore, after being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they were bringing great joy to all the brothers and sisters. 4 When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church, the apostles, and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees **who had believed** stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to keep the Law of Moses." 6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.*

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "Since this is the case, why are you putting God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our forefathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

So this Acts 15 passage above comes out very strong against the idea that faith in Jesus plus works are necessary for our salvation. More relevant to the point that I'm trying to make though is the fact that this Acts 15 passage above demonstrates that those who were in the churches continually trying to promote following the law and circumcision, were those "who had believed" in Jesus for salvation, but were preaching the idea that the good works of the law must also be

added on to their faith in Jesus in order for a person to have salvation. They were teaching a faith in Jesus plus works for salvation. They were not just completely rejecting faith in Jesus and instead saying that salvation is completely through observing the law. They were doing what we see commonly done in many churches and denominations today. Further on in Acts 18 this label, "*had believed*", is used again, giving us even more confidence that those who "*had believed*" were those who at least partly had faith in Jesus' grace for salvation:

*[Acts 18:27 NASB20] And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who **had believed through grace**,*

If we take this context from the Acts 15 and 18 passages above and go back to the Galatians 5 passage that I showed previously it may help us to understand what is meant there by the phrases, "*severed from Christ*" and "*fallen from grace*". Back in Galatians 5 we see that those who were opposing Paul

were placing the same emphasis on circumcision as we just saw in Acts 15:

[Galatians 5:3 NASB20] And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law.

Circumcision seemed to be the flagship representative act or symbol for salvation by faith plus works that was placed on the outward face of the basket of false beliefs that God refutes in Acts 15 and 18. In Galatians, circumcision appears there again as a flagship representative act or symbol for salvation by faith plus works that stands in the forefront of the whole debate between God and those spreading falsehood. The fact that circumcision takes a prominent front seat position representing salvation by faith plus works in both Acts 15 and 18, and also in Galatians, can give us more confidence that it was a faith plus work salvation that God is refuting in both Acts and Galatians. It was clearly a faith plus works basket of falsehood in Acts being represented by the flagship of circumcision, and then we see the same flagship emerge again over the horizon in Galatians helping to convince us that it once

again represents in Galatians a faith plus works salvation (and not merely a salvation by just works alone).

We have one more very obvious clue in Galatians 5 to inform us about whether or not Paul is giving his warning to those who are attempting to be saved by faith plus works. This clue helps us to see clearly that Galatians 5 is not addressing those who were trying to be saved by works alone without faith in Jesus. It's so obvious that it is easy to miss. When Paul gives his warning to the individuals in Galatians 5 who are embracing the idea of trusting in Jesus and in trusting their own good works for salvation he says, "*keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery*", "*Christ will be of no benefit to you*", and "*you have fallen from grace*". What is the assumption that could be embedded into this language? That's right, this language may have embedded in it Paul's recognition that the people he is warning still believe that the "*grace*" and salvation which come through faith in "*Christ*" were at least part of what they were believing would allow them to receive salvation and be a "*benefit*" to them. Just as

Paul says, they believed that "*Christ benefits them*". They believed that they have the "*grace*" that comes through Christ. They had heard the Gospel of faith in Jesus for salvation from Paul. When Paul warns them, he informs them that these things are what they are in danger of losing. This provides more evidence that they believed that they still had the benefits of grace through faith in Jesus, even though they were trying to also simultaneously depend on works to save themselves. Of course, this way of deducing what the Galatians were believing is not perfect, but it still adds something to the argument that they were trying to simultaneously trust in Jesus and in their own good works to save themselves. It adds something to the argument that they were not trying to trust only in their good works to save themselves. They very likely thought that salvation came through a combination of faith in Jesus and faith in their own good works.

So the wider Biblical context of Acts 15 and 18 very likely informs us that those who were preaching circumcision and works for salvation in Galatians 5, were saying that

these circumcision and works must be added to faith in Jesus in order to be saved. Those in Galatians 5 that the Holy Spirit was labeling as *"fallen from grace"* and *"severed from Christ"* were likely preaching a salvation by faith in Jesus which they believed must be added onto by also obeying the works of the law. They were likely not preaching salvation solely by observance of the law and total rejection of faith in Jesus. They were those who were attending a Christian church, most likely signifying that they did have some type of faith in Jesus. They were most likely Jews who had formally only followed the law for salvation. Their attendance of a Christian church most likely meant that they had at least partly transitioned their beliefs to having some type of faith in Jesus for salvation. If that's correct, then Acts 15 and 18 give us enough context to gain a deeper understanding of those in Galatians 5 who were labeled as *"fallen from grace"* and *"severed from Christ"*. The context of Acts 15 and 18 helps us to understand that Galatians 5 is saying that those who believe that they are saved by faith in Jesus plus observance of the law and good works can be described with these words, *"Christ will be*

*of no benefit to you", "You have been severed from Christ", "you have fallen from grace". If we are still not convinced by this argument, we could just stop dancing around to so many different passages and look for a more direct statement in Galatians. I've already shown the passage previously, but here it is again below. It doesn't beat around the bush or make some qualification as to whether this is talking about salvation by faith plus works or just salvation by only following the law. It just says that those who are relying on following the law in order to be saved are under a curse. It doesn't say, "*But if you are following the law in order to be saved and you are also adding faith in Jesus to that then you are ok.*" Here's the passage again:*

[Galatians 3:9-13 NIV] 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The

person who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole."

Could it be possible that those who are referred to by the statement, *"all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse"* in Galatians 3:10 above are those who are trying to rely on the works of the law and also in faith in Jesus? As I was showing earlier from Acts 15 and 18, the problem that they likely had in the churches was people trying to argue that you needed both faith in Jesus and obedience to the law. So the statement, *"all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse"*, is most likely referring to those who were trying to say you could only be saved by faith in Jesus that is also accompanied by works. The *"curse"* as you can see in Galatians 3 above signifies being not saved and bearing the wrath of God. This is clear because we can see Jesus, in Galatians 3 above, bearing the wrath of God and the *"curse"* on the pole/cross for us. So it's clear that this statement, *"all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse"* in

Galatians 3 above is describing those who do not have eternal life. Just like the other Greek word that I discussed earlier, "accursed", "anathema", the Greek word used here, "curse", "katara", "κατάρα" in Galatians 3 above, "all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse" is also used repeatedly in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, to describe those who were in opposition to God and under his wrath and rejection. Here is an example below from an English translation of the book of Deuteronomy of the Septuagint:

[Deuteronomy 30:19 CTT Septuagint] I call heaven and earth this day to witness against you, that I have set Life and Death, the Blessing and the Curse before you. Chuse thou life, that thou and thy seed may live,

Of course this example from Deuteronomy above is just like how we see the word "curse" used far above in Galatians 3 to describe the wrath of God as it was poured out on Jesus as he took our place and allowed himself to be sacrificed on the cross to pay for our sins.

Chapter 4

God's Love Contradicted by Faith Plus Works

This all raises the question of why God is so concerned that we depend on his grace instead of being good enough and following rituals to earn salvation. There seems to be some strong hints of this right back in the book of Galatians. The Holy Spirit describes those under the law as being like slaves and those under grace as being like adopted sons and daughters. Here are the verses:

[Galatians 4:1, 4-7, 9-11, 16, 19, 21-26, 28-31 NASB20] 1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, although he is owner of everything, ... 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit

of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. ... 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles, to which you want to be enslaved all over again? 10 You meticulously observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. ... 16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? ... 19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you-- ... 21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the Law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. 23 But the son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. 24 This is speaking allegorically, for these women are two covenants: one coming from Mount Sinai giving birth to children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is enslaved with her children. 26 But the

Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. ...
28 And you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac,
are children of promise. 29 But as at that
time the son who was born according to the
flesh persecuted the one who was born
according to the Spirit, so it is even now. 30
But what does the Scripture say? "DRIVE OUT
THE SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE
SON OF THE SLAVE WOMAN SHALL NOT BE
AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE
WOMAN." 31 So then, brothers and sisters,
we are not children of a slave woman, but of
the free woman.

As you know, slavery is characterized by obligation and/or business transaction and is mostly devoid of heartfelt relationship and love. If God's acceptance of us could be based on us obeying him and being paid back for our obedience like a wage that is earned, wouldn't our relationship with God be just like a slave, devoid of love, and devoid of unconditional loyalty and care? If God were to give His love to us based on our performance as evaluated and graded by a standard of law and works, would this really be the unconditional true love of God? Conversely, if our good works and obedience

to God were primarily just an effort to save our own skin and achieve salvation, would our obedience to God be a true expression of our love for him in any way? Earning our salvation with good works and rituals sounds more like a business transaction or the prison of slavery, not a relationship characterized by the unconditional love of a Father for His children. Our obedience to God is not supposed to be a hollow and loveless effort to save our own skin, but it is supposed to be an expression of our love for God and a reaction to God's love for us:

[1 John 4:19 LSB] We love, because He first loved us.

[1 John 5:3 LSB] For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

I think this is what the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate to us in the Galatians 4 group of verses far above. The concept of salvation by works is a frontal assault on the true concept of God loving us as sons and daughters by grace, not by transaction or owing somebody something because of their

performance. If our parents withdrew their love from us because of our behavior, would they really love us or were they just sticking around for the good parts, like business partners who disappear when the profits dry up? So it seems that the very nature and character of God's love for us is contradicted if we ever come to the point where we say that God will only love us if we are behaving according to some list of standards and law and rituals. By embracing the concept of a salvation by works and teaching others this concept, it might be as if we are directly obstructing and contradicting the message of God's love for His people. It might be like teaching people that God is a slave master and not an endearing loving Father. This false slave master persona that some people want to put on God demands we behave or else we're out of there. His love has dried up because we didn't walk the line, meeting some unforgiving list of rules. I don't think God wants this false persona to be put on him, and I think He will go to great lengths to make sure it is not put on him. In the Galatians 4 passage I showed far above we might even see a deeper hint of what I'm

saying embedded in the meaning of the name, "Abba":

[Galatians 4:6b NASB20] God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba! Father!"

There are two Greek words that make up the broader name, "Abba Father". One word is just the usual old Greek word for father that is used dozens of times in the New Testament. Why is an additional word, "Abba" added if all that is to be expressed here is the concept of father? The "HELPS Word-studies" section of the online dictionary entry for the Greek word "Abba" from the "Discovery Bible" found on biblehub.com, <https://biblehub.com/greek/5.htm> , might give some clarity on the nature of this word. Here's the "HELPS Word-studies" entry below:

Abbá – "Father," also used as the term of tender endearment by a beloved child – i.e. in an affectionate, dependent relationship with their father; "daddy," "papa."

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Isn't this who God is to us if He saves us by His grace and not our performance of works? If He sticks around, and sticks with us, and stays faithful to us even when we are at our worst and fail to meet his standards, isn't he Daddy?, isn't he Papa?, isn't it His grace that really makes Him our tender and endearing Father who relates to us as his beloved children? Here in 2 Timothy 2 below we may have an answer to this question:

[2 Timothy 2:13 LEB] if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful—he cannot deny himself.

I think this is at the heart of it. God doesn't want to be portrayed as a slave master. He doesn't even want to be portrayed as just a father. He wants to be "*Abba*", a Father who has adopted us as sons and daughters from his grace and his unconditional love, not

because he wants to partake in a business deal paying back a slave who has performed well on the job. We might even see this directly in Galatians 5 and Romans 11 here below:

[Galatians 5:6 NASB20] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

[Romans 11:6 NASB20] But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, since otherwise grace is no longer grace.

What we might see in these two verses here above, is that God in His love and His grace came down to earth and gave his life in our place as an expression of unconditional love and adoption of us as sons and daughters. As soon as we are put back into the false prison and slavery of having to earn God's love for us by being well behaved children, we are no longer sons and daughters. We would just be slaves being paid back for a good day of work, and Jesus dying on the cross for us would not be an offer and an expression of grace and unconditional love,

but just a useless and meaningless contradictory symbol. Here's the Holy Spirit saying essentially the same thing that I'm saying here, just in different words:

[Galatians 2:21 NASB20] "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

As you can see, the very idea of earning your salvation, is antithetical to and cancels out the message of God's loving gift of grace to us. All this seems to create an association with grace and faith and love that is not communicated through circumcision and following the moral law and works.

This author has been tempted many times to think that the type of endless love and grace of God the Father, Abba that I've just described in this chapter is just too **perfect** and too radical for us human beings to give to others. Can we or should we really love another person in the same way that God does, offering an inexhaustible depth of forgiveness and love that is not conditioned on the person's performance? Here below in

Matthew 5 and Philippians 2 we may find the answer in the words of Jesus and Paul:

*[Matthew 5:43-48 CSB] 43 "You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 "so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? 48 "Be **perfect**, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

[Philippians 2:3-8 CSB] 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. 4 Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. 5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he

emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, & he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death -- even to death on a cross.

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Chapter 5

Jesus by James Preaches a Salvation by Faith

These things that I am saying here about salvation being by faith alone might prompt you to call to mind some passages in the book of James where the Holy Spirit, speaking through James, says some things which might easily be understood to mean that salvation is in fact by works and good behavior. You might know that the Holy Spirit tells us there in the book of James that, *"faith without works is dead"*. In light of all the passages I've shown, is the Holy Spirit through James really teaching a salvation by faith plus works? All the large pile of passages I've already shown come out directly hard and fast against the idea that works are necessary for salvation. In spite of that, I know it's not easy to understand how James chapter 2 is in agreement with all the verses I've already shown. For me, part of what makes it so tough to bring together

James 2 and the verses I've shown is that James uses the same word "*justified*" to say that we can be "*justified*" by works and Paul uses the same word "*justified*" to say that we are not justified by works. Here are the verses that I'm talking about below from both Paul and James:

[James 2:21, 24-25 NASB20] 21 Was our father Abraham not justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ... 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was Rahab the prostitute not justified by works also when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

[Galatians 2:16, 21 NASB20] 16 nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by works of the Law no flesh will be justified. ... 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

This looks like a head on collision between contradictory concepts. The Holy Spirit does not contradict himself though, and I firmly believe that both the apostles James and Paul are inspired by Jesus and speaking directly for Jesus. In Ephesians 2 and in Revelation 19 below we see that it is Jesus who is the one inspiring prophecy and scripture:

[Ephesians 2:19-21 NASB20] 19 So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

*[Revelation 19:10 NASB20] Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brothers and sisters who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the **spirit** of prophecy."*

These passages above, I understand to mean that it is Jesus who is prophetically speaking through his apostles, James and Paul. Jesus is God, God is Jesus, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is God; with of course some important characteristics which also make the three of them mysteriously different and distinct. Here in Exodus 3 below God reveals his name, "I am":

[Exodus 3:14 NASB20] And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

And then here in John 8 below Jesus reveals himself as being God the Father, "I am":

[John 8:58 NASB20] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

So one workable agreement between Jesus' words spoken through both James and Paul is to look closely in James 2 at what impact or influence works are having on faith. As you can see in this James 2 verse here below, it

looks as if Jesus is saying through James that works in some way perfect our faith:

[James 2:22 NASB20] You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

This concept makes sense to me. If I say that I trust a chair enough to sit in it without it breaking and dumping me on the ground, it makes sense that when I do take the action to go ahead and sit in it, I will in some sense deny whatever fears or doubts I have about sitting in the chair. As I move through the action of sitting in the chair, I am simultaneously in some sense embracing faith in the chair and at the same time denying my doubts about the chair. This is the way I understand James 2. As we take action and double down with a real bet on what we say we believe, our faith is given life and comes into true existence. This is the opposite of how James describes faith without works, "*faith without works is dead*". So it may be in this sense that Jesus is saying through James that, "*a person is justified by works and not by faith alone*", meaning that faith becomes real and living under the

influence of works, and that type of living faith leads directly to salvation. So maybe in that limited sense, James is describing how works indirectly lead to being justified and being saved directly by faith. It is still not plausible though that Jesus is saying through James that God is going to evaluate our good deeds to see if they are enough to meet some minimum threshold list for salvation. This would be the very system of works based salvation that Jesus is flatly speaking against throughout the New Testament, over and over again. In fact, we even see right in James 2 that this system of salvation by works is described as a failure, and salvation by faith instead is described. Here are the verses I'm thinking of:

[James 2:5, 10, 23 NASB20] 5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters: did God not choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ... 10 For whoever keeps the whole Law, yet stumbles in one point, has become guilty of all. ... 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS

CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called a friend of God.

As you can see in the verses above, faith and belief are described as being the direct cause of being saved heirs of God's kingdom and also as the cause of being seen by God as acceptable and righteous. On the other hand, the verses seem to describe the system of salvation by works and keeping the law as a failure where just a single sin committed while trying to achieve salvation by keeping the law results in being seen by God as completely and totally guilty. It may not be completely clear in the verses above from James 2, but it may be a little clearer in Galatians here:

[Galatians 5:3 NASB20] And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law.

This shows an agreement between Jesus as he is speaking through Paul and James. Look here again below at both the verses compared together:

Jesus/James/James 2:10 NASB20: *"For whoever keeps the whole Law, yet stumbles in one point, has become guilty of all."*

Jesus/Paul/Galatians 5:3 NASB20: *"every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law."*

So in the book of James, Jesus is teaching a salvation by faith and denouncing a system of salvation by works in which our behavior is being graded and weighed and then judged against some unforgiving minimum requirements list as being enough or not enough. There is no minimum requirements list to meet. The list is the entire law, a maximal list which describes complete, utter, and total perfection. We can never meet this maximal list of the entire law. Instead, Jesus is saying through James that saving faith is the type of faith that produces actions. Jesus may be saying through James that faith is given life and made real by acting on it. There's nothing in James about these actions being graded and weighed to see if they meet some minimum list of works that are necessary for salvation. Only churches that like to very sinfully add to the Bible have

been a reliable source for these minimum lists. Even within the book of James we see the concept of saving faith being the type of faith that produces actions, just as I am suggesting:

[James 2:18 NASB20] But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

Jesus is not contradicting the entire New Testament and saying here in the book of James that God has a minimum list of laws, requirements, rituals, and works for us to follow; and if we don't meet them we fail and are not saved. He is saying just the opposite, that you can't meet the list. Jesus says through James, that in order to satisfy the list you have to keep the entire list, the entire Old Testament law. If we don't do this, then we have failed miserably and have violated the whole list:

[James 2:10 NASB20] For whoever keeps the whole Law, yet stumbles in one point, has become guilty of all.

This eliminates the possibility that we can achieve salvation by faith plus adhering to some short list of works and rituals that some church denomination comes up with arbitrarily. We might even see the requirement to perfectly keep the whole law being fulfilled in Jesus, but then Jesus gives over the results and the benefits to us. If that's correct it may mean that Jesus fulfilled the law, living perfectly and righteously, and then that righteousness can be seen by God as having been put on us who have faith in Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. Here's the passage I'm thinking of:

[2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB20] He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

So Jesus is saying that only a perfect A+ performance accomplished by us following the entire Old Testament law will cause following the law to bring us salvation. As you can see in the verse above, Jesus did that. He kept the "whole law". He "knew no sin", but then handed the benefits over to us, and took his place on the cross, bearing the

direct wrath of God in our place as a powerful love letter to us, his adopted sons and daughters, the recipients of his free and unearned grace. This being grace that is given to us in love without having to meet a standard of slavery and following the law perfectly in order to be saved.

This is not all the evidence that we have though to show that Jesus, speaking through both James and Paul, is in complete agreement. Let's circle back to Acts 15 where we saw the meeting of the church leaders produce the final decision that salvation is by faith. There we also see that all the church leaders, including James, came into unity of thought and opinion. They came into agreement with the Holy Spirit and affirmed salvation by grace. Recall these specific verses below, where we can see in that meeting that faith plus works is rejected and a faith by salvation is instead affirmed:

[Acts 15:1, 5, 8-9, 11 NASB20] 1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ... 5 But some of the sect of

the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to keep the Law of Moses." ... 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. ... 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

If we read on, we see where it says that James was present for this meeting of the church leaders:

[Acts 15:13, 19-20 NASB20] 13 After they stopped speaking, James responded, saying, "Brothers, listen to me. ... 19 "Therefore, it is my judgment that we do not cause trouble for those from the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols, from acts of sexual immorality, from what has been strangled, and from blood.

Of course we see in the verses above that James still believed it was important to give an exhortation to the churches to stop taking

part in the pagan cultic practices of fornication and eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. When a letter is sent with the conclusions from the meeting of the church leaders, we see that the letter includes the exhortations that James suggested above. This demonstrates that the exhortations which James wanted to include above were not in any way contradictory to the main conclusion of the letter. That conclusion of course being that salvation is by faith and not by the good works of following the law. If James had intended for the churches to follow these exhortations in order to earn their salvation with works/good behavior, then these exhortations would not have been included in the letter. Including them in the letter in that case would have been a total contradiction to the main conclusion of the letter. Including them in the letter in that case would simply not have made any sense. As I've said, the letter also reflects the conclusion of the meeting of the church leaders that salvation is by faith and not by works. This is made evident by the fact that the Acts 15 letter denounces the christianized Pharisees who were saying that

salvation can only be achieved by adding circumcision and following the law onto faith, *"some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have confused you by their teaching, upsetting your souls"*.

Here's the greater context of the passage where we can see that the leaders, including James, all came into agreement, and that they denounced the salvation by faith plus works concept:

*[Acts 15:23-29 NASB20] 23 and they sent this letter with them: "The apostles and the brothers who are elders, to the brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles: Greetings. 24 Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have confused you by their teaching, upsetting your souls, 25 it seemed good to us, **having become of one mind,** to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore, we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to*

us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from acts of sexual immorality; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

So this letter above would have been what James was in agreement with, that the salvation by faith plus works which the now christianized Pharisees were promoting was wrong, and that the churches should receive an exhortation to follow certain moral guidelines only so that they, "*will do well*". You can clearly see in the letter above and in the overall context of all the Acts 15 verses I've just showed that this short list of moral guidelines is not a way to salvation. Verse 24 above denounces the faith plus works salvation, Acts 15:24b "*some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have confused you by their teaching, upsetting your souls*", so adherence to the short list of moral guidelines in verses 29 is not a way to salvation, but a way for the churches to "*do well*" as you see in verse 29 above. Looking closer at the Greek word for "*well*" reveals that this is describing doing what is right or

what will result in a prosperous successful outcome. So what we have here in Acts is James being in direct agreement with a conclusive letter which opposes a faith plus works salvation. The letter contains James' suggested exhortations, showing that he was involved directly in the production of the letter and that he approved of it as the letter says, all the leaders, including James, "*having become of one mind*". This should do something to address any thoughts that the Holy Spirit through James and Paul is contradicting Himself.

Chapter 6

Goodness in Me, Only a Gift From God

I've described now one way in which embracing the idea of salvation by faith plus works can lead us to a warped picture of God as a slave master. This is not the only impact that a faith plus works concept of salvation can have on our relationship with God though. Embracing the concept of a faith plus works salvation also has a deep and strong impact on how we see ourselves. If I am good enough to perform the works and rituals necessary to earn God's salvation, then what does this say about me? I'm going to argue that it tells me that I am somehow righteous and good in and of myself. I am righteous and good enough to earn my salvation. If others around me do not meet these standards, then I am, at least in some way, better than they are. Salvation is not completely a gift given to me in love. I'm good. I'm better than others, and I earned it.

I don't think that every person who believes in a salvation by faith plus works consciously chooses to have this type of attitude of arrogance. But I do believe that these are the real and actual implications of believing you can earn your salvation. The Holy Spirit in the Bible speaks out unambiguously against this concept. The Bible shows that we have no goodness with which to earn our salvation. We are totally morally bankrupt and completely unable to carry out any of the good works needed to satisfy God's moral laws. We might put on a good outward show doing things that look good, but in our hearts, our motives are still evil and selfish. The true biblical concept is that good works result from being saved. Being saved does not result from good works. We are totally sinful and morally dead, unable to perform good works, and then God comes and acts upon us, even helping us to have the ability to have faith in Him. That leads to salvation by faith, and then that leads to us even having the ability to carry out good works which God has prepared for us in advance to do. In the light of these true biblical concepts, we are left with no room for pride. Instead there is only a fitting

opportunity to be thankful that God has not left us in the gutter where we came from. Instead, there is only a fitting opportunity to recognize just how powerful God's grace is and just how much God has blessed us with all the things that we do not deserve. This is just a recognition of God's overwhelming love being expressed through his overwhelming grace. If we think we have just been good enough to earn our salvation, all of these powerful beautiful concepts of God's love are not possible for us to see. Instead, we falsely see ourselves in some sense as our own givers of our own blessings upon ourselves. We earned it. God didn't give it freely, He rendered it up as a wage earned by a worker, and we are better than others because of our earning God's salvation and his favor. Here are the passages that support all the flow of thought that I've just described:

Complete and total sinfulness.....

[Romans 3:9-18 NASB20] 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written: "THERE IS

*NO RIGHTEOUS PERSON, NOT EVEN ONE; 11
THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS OUT GOD; 12
THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER
THEY HAVE BECOME CORRUPT; THERE IS NO
ONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN
ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP
DECEIVING," "THE VENOM OF ASPS IS UNDER
THEIR LIPS"; 14 "THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF
CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET
ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16
DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR
PATHS, 17 AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE
WAY OF PEACE." 18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF
GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."*

Here below we see that we have complete and total deadness and inability for good works before Jesus finds us, and then he finds us, and saves us through faith, and recreates us so we can do true good works which are truly motivated by a heart of love.....

[Ephesians 2:1-10 NASB20] 1 And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of

this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Before we received the Holy Spirit, as a result of salvation, we are not even able to truly follow God's laws from the heart.....

[Romans 8:5-7 NASB20] 5 For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

We may fool ourselves into thinking that we can do true good works before God has found us and saved us, but true good works are only good works if they are motivated by a pure and holy motivation of true love. Before God finds us and saves us and begins to make us new, our hearts are truly black and devoid of real Godly love. Notice below how Jesus explains that truly following the law according to the true heart of the law means following it with the motivation of truly loving God and truly loving people. Notice below the type of love that is

described as true love in 1 Corinthians 13.
This is the type of love we are unable to do
until God makes our hearts new.....

*[Matthew 22:36-40 NASB20] 36 "Teacher,
which is the great commandment in the
Law?" 37 And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL
LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR
HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND
WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 "This is the great
and foremost commandment. 39 "The second
is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.' 40 "Upon these two
commandments hang the whole Law and the
Prophets."*

*[1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NASB20] 4 Love is
patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love
does not brag, it is not arrogant. 5 It does not
act disgracefully, it does not seek its own
benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an
account of a wrong suffered, 6 it does not
rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with
the truth; 7 it keeps every confidence, it
believes all things, hopes all things, endures
all things. 8 Love never fails; but if there are
gifts of prophecy, they will be done away*

with; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away with.

It is Christ who recreates us as a result of salvation. We do not make ourselves a new less sinful creature in order to receive salvation.....

[2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB20] Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Embracing the idea that we are totally sinful and totally morally bankrupt and totally undeserving of God's grace allows us to fully understand the love of God.....

[Luke 7:36-50 NASB20] 36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to eat with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, and began

kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this Man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner!" 40 And Jesus responded and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41 "A moneylender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred denarii, and the other, fifty. 42 "When they were unable to repay, he canceled the debts of both. So which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I assume the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." 44 And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she has not stopped kissing My feet since the time I came in. 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but the one who is forgiven little,

loves little." 48 And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49 And then those who were reclining at the table with Him began saying to themselves, "Who is this Man who even forgives sins?" 50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

On the other hand, if we think that we have earned God's salvation by performing enough good works and performing enough rituals to obtain his favor, then we have a false position from which we can judge others and fail to recognize God's love for us.....

[Luke 18:9-14 NASB20] 9 Now He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and began praying this in regard to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, crooked, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax collector, standing some

distance away, was even unwilling to raise his eyes toward heaven, but was beating his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other one; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

So what I'm trying to say is that adding works to faith as a requirement for salvation, strikes at the very heart of what God is trying to say to us throughout the entire Bible. It keeps us from recognizing our own total brokenness. It keeps us from recognizing God's love for us. And it may lead to being denied eternal life if we intentionally contradict God's words to us from scripture and persistently cling to the idea that we are good enough to even partly earn salvation from God. If these are the dangers of adding works to faith in Jesus as a requirement for salvation, I believe it is important to lovingly inform people that salvation is truly by faith and not by works. I believe it is important to lovingly inform people about the passages in Galatians that say that those who are depending on the law for salvation are:

"accursed", "severed from Christ", "fallen from grace", "Christ is of no benefit to you". If it was me, I would want to be told. If I were standing on a train track with a train possibly coming toward my back to run me over dead, I would want to be told. I may be offending some of you who embrace a works plus faith salvation, but if Galatians does in fact pertain to people who are trying to be saved by faith plus works, then it seems clear that I should not worry about offending you and instead speak up to help you embrace a true belief that will lead to eternal life. It seems clear that I should speak up and help you to understand God's love and grace towards you.

Chapter 7

Maybe Only the Defiant are Not Saved

In the 1400's and 1500's in England while the Bible was first being translated into English and distributed so the common people could finally read it, many who were involved in its translation and distribution were murdered and persecuted. The possession and use of the Bibles which had been translated into the English language were also banned. Suppression of God's word in this way raises an important question as it relates to the topic of this book. Will God condemn those who do not have the truth of salvation by faith in Jesus alone as a sacrifice for our sins? Will He condemn those who attempt to be saved by faith plus works if they never have an opportunity to understand what the scriptures really say on this topic? Going on further from there, does God condemn to hell young children who die before they are

old enough to understand salvation by faith in Jesus? Touching off that even further, does God condemn to hell all of mankind who lived before Jesus' sacrifice for our sins was revealed? Obviously, these are somewhat silly questions, and they illustrate that the answer to all of them is no. God holds us accountable for the knowledge that we have been given, not for the knowledge that we never have. He is characterized by justice and love, not an eagerness to condemn:

[1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV] 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We even see in the New Testament that there may be some direct support for this concept:

[Romans 2:13-16 CSB] 13 For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the

law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them 16 on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

The Romans 2 passage above could loosely be understood to illustrate the general principle that those who do not have the Bible (i.e. "the law" which is in the Bible) are not held accountable for the more specific and detailed knowledge of God that it contains. Instead, they may be judged on the basis of how they respond to the internal, instinctive, knowledge of God, that God has recorded on the heart of every human from birth. They may also be judged on the basis of how they respond to the knowledge of God's existence that they can see through what God has created:

[Romans 1:20 CSB] For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he

has made. As a result, people are without excuse.

We might conclude, as many have by looking at the Romans 1 and 2 passages I've just shown above, that these are only describing the fact that God has the justified right to condemn everyone who has never heard the specifics of salvation by faith in Jesus' sacrifice as our payment for our sins. They argue that these Romans 1 and 2 passages above only explain that God has revealed himself through nature and through the God given human conscience. They argue that God's revealing himself in these special ways can only lead to making a person guilty and not innocent of their sins before God because they were sufficiently informed of God and still sinned against Him. They argue that without the New Testament specifics of salvation by faith in Jesus' sacrifice as our payment for our sins, God does not allow anyone to be granted salvation solely based on their response to the knowledge of God revealed in the human conscience and in nature. So they argue that if a person repents and turns towards God's leadership only because of the knowledge God has

given them in their conscience and in nature, they are still condemned to hell. Their argument goes on, *"They never read the New Testament. Their theology was deficient. They never crossed paths with the white missionary, bringing a New Testament Bible. They are all going to hell."* This type of argument characterizes God as unjust and eager to condemn those who have not even been given a just chance at salvation. No wonder that many times non-christians want nothing to do with a brand of christianity that is instilled with this argument. An important counter argument to this type of thinking can be found by simply looking back at the Romans 2 passage that I already showed far above. Look at the passage again below. What are their thoughts in response to their God given instinctive consciences doing for them?

[Romans 2:14-16 CSB] 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either

accuse or even excuse them 16 on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

You got it. Their responses to their God given instinctive consciences are potentially excusing them on the day of judgment. If we keep reading on to the end of Romans 2, to the passage shown below, we see some people who have "*the Law*". This Law is clearly not the Bible, "*the letter of the law*". In spite of this, they keep the requirements of this Law demonstrating that they possibly have a type of faith consisting of submission and repentance towards God, or as the passage says, they have "*circumcision of the heart*". In verse 29, God approves these people with "*praise*", even though they do not have the Bible, "*the letter of the Law*". Take a look:

[Romans 2:26-29 NASB20] 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will his uncircumcision not be regarded as circumcision? 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the

letter of the Law and circumcision are a violator of the Law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

Is this passage above describing a path to repentance and salvation which results only from a person responding with faith towards God as God's voice is heard by them loud and clear through their innate knowledge of right and wrong existing in their hearts from birth? Is this just the same potential path to salvation for those who do not have the Bible which may also be described earlier in the chapter in Romans 2:14-16 shown far above when it says, "*Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.*"? See the passage again below:

[Romans 2:14-16 CSB] 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to

themselves even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them 16 on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

As I mentioned above, we could argue that this is a type of repentance towards God that leads to salvation. We might say that God's Spirit directly speaks to them and calls them to Himself by what He has written in their consciences on their hearts, and they repent in response to the calling of God's Spirit with a change of heart, leading to salvation. The Greek word for repent found in the Bible has the meaning of changing one's mind. If we look at all the instances of the Greek word repent in the New Testament, we see more specifically that the word is used in the New Testament to describe changing one's mind specifically in regard to one's sin. So repentance is changing one's mind from fully embracing sin over to a new mindset of generally deciding to follow God and wanting to obey God instead of sinful desires. In the

three passages below we can clearly see the role of repentance in salvation:

[2 Corinthians 7:10 ESV] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

[2 Peter 3:9 ESV] The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

[Acts 11:18 ESV] When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

The argument that I'm making here about a path to salvation for those who do not have the knowledge found in the Bible grows even stronger if we skip forward to Paul and the Holy Spirit's comments in Romans 10:17-18. To be clear, the argument that I am making is that there exists a path to salvation for those who do not specifically know that Jesus has died for their sins. Notice in the larger

Romans 10:8-18 quote below how verses 8 through 16 provide context demonstrating that Romans 10:17-18 is in fact about salvation, hearing the gospel, "*faith*" in Jesus, but also about those who may not have a chance to hear "*the word of Christ*". "*The word of Christ*" is just the title Paul uses to refer to the gospel of eternal salvation through Jesus in verse 18. Take a look:

[Romans 10:8-18 LSB] 8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, leading to salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES UPON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him, 13 for "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not

believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" 16 However, they did not all heed the good news, for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18 But I say, have they never heard? On the contrary, they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

Paul's answer above to the dilemma of those who have "*never heard*" the New Testament gospel about Jesus dying for our sins is found in Romans 10:17-18 above. His answer is the quote from the Old Testament in capital letters in verse 18. Paul is directly quoting from Psalm 19:4 shown far below. If we look at the quoted passage in Psalm 19:4 far below, we can understand that Paul may be saying in Romans 10:17-18 above that a type of gospel which may not have the specific knowledge of Jesus dying for our sins, "*the*

word of Christ", is in some sense preached directly by Jesus and heard by all people through the beauty and witness of Jesus' creation. Recall that it is Jesus who created the world and everything in it when reading Psalm 19 below. The beauty and the witness of Jesus' creation is Jesus' voice in some sense, "*the word of Christ*", as Paul calls it in Romans 10:17 above. Paul seems to be saying that the beauty and the witness of Jesus' creation is in some sense a type of gospel of eternal salvation, which does not include the specific knowledge of Jesus dying for our sins. This type of gospel, he says, can be "*heard*" and responded to with saving "*faith*", just as described above in Romans 10:17-18. Take a look at Psalm 19 below and the underlined text which Paul is quoting from:

[Psalm 19 WEB] 1 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David. The heavens declare the glory of God. The expanse shows his handiwork. 2 Day after day they pour out speech, and night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice has gone out through all the

*earth, their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which is as a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a strong man rejoicing to run his course. 6 His going out is from the end of the heavens, his circuit to its ends. There is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 The Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart; the commandments of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true, being altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them indeed Your servant is warned; in keeping them is great reward. 12 Who can discern his own errors? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. 13 Keep Your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless and cleansed of great transgression. 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O LORD, my **Rock** and my Redeemer.*

Jesus created the world and everything in it, as I mentioned far above, making the voice of God expressed in creation in Psalm 19 above to be equal to the "*the word of Christ*" as Jesus' voice is also titled in Romans 10:17 far above. Jesus is God right? Jesus said "*if you have seen me you have seen the Father*". Here's Jesus creating the entire world:

*[John 1:1-3, 14 ESV] 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things were made through him**, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

We don't really need to rely on just a single indirect connection to recognize Jesus as the creator in Psalm 19 above though. We will see that Jesus is mentioned multiple times directly in Psalm 19 far above, in some sense leaving his signature all over the description of what He has created to shout His voice to all people. Jesus' signature in Psalm 19, in some sense, may be Him taking credit for His

work and saying, "*I made this, this is my voice to a lost world*". This strengthens the force of what Paul is saying. Paul is pointing to the signature verified work of Jesus in creation described in Psalm 19 and saying that this work is the, "*word of Christ*". To recognize Jesus' signature on his work in Psalm 19 we just need to be familiar with the symbolism that David and the Holy Spirit are using in Psalm 19 to see Jesus there. For starters, the "*Sun*" in Psalm 19:4 is Jesus. Follow the connections and interrelations of the symbolism and imagery of the next nine numbered passages I show in order to recognize Jesus as the "*Sun*":

1. *[Revelation 22:16 ESV] "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the **bright morning star**."*

2. *[2 Peter 1:19 ESV] And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a **dark place**, until the day*

dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

Just as in 2 Peter 1:19 above, in Isaiah 60 below we see Jesus again "rising" like the sun over the people of Israel, and then the rebuilding and regathering of Israel which is mentioned numerous times throughout biblical prophecy starting right at the second coming of Jesus:

3. [Isaiah 60:1-22 ESV] 1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the

nations shall come to you. 6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house. 8 Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? 9 For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has made you beautiful. 10 Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. 11 Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify

the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. 14 The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 15 Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. 16 You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. 18 Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. 19 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but **the LORD will be your everlasting light**, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for **the LORD will be your everlasting light**, and your days of

mourning shall be ended. 21 Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. 22 The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.

In Luke 1 below we see the pronouncement made over the child, John the Baptist, whose role is to prepare the way for Jesus, "*the sunrise*", who comes to "*visit us from on high*" to provide a way for the forgiveness of our sins. When Jesus came to earth to give himself as a sacrifice for our sins he came and "*visited us from on high*", right? Take a look:

4. [Luke 1:76-79 ESV] 76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby **the sunrise shall visit us from on high** 79 to give **light** to those who sit in **darkness** and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Jesus, "the Lamb", is "Lord of lords and King of kings":

5. [Revelation 17:14 NASB20] "These will wage war against the **Lamb**, and the **Lamb** will overcome them because He is **Lord of lords and King of kings**; and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Jesus, "Lord of lords and King of kings", and His army ride out to battle on white horses. Jesus comes to "tread the winepress", defeating the wicked. His robe is covered in blood:

6. [Revelation 19:11-16 ESV] 11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, **a white horse!** The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a **robe dipped in blood**, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure,

were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Jesus in Isaiah 63 below comes at his second coming from Bozrah in Edom with his robe again covered in blood, having just "tread the winepress", just as in Revelation 19 above:

7. [Isaiah 63:1-6 LSB] 1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His clothing, Marching in the greatness of His power? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." 2 Why is Your clothing red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? 3 "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My clothes. 4 "For the day of vengeance was in My heart,

*And My year of redemption has come. 5 "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished, and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. 6 "I **trod down the peoples** in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I brought down their **lifeblood to the earth.**"*

In Habakkuk 3 below we see Jesus again having just come from Teman and Mount Paran, which are geographically also located in Edom, just as in Isaiah 63 above. In Habakkuk 3 below Jesus is "*like the sunlight*", and He is riding on horses in battle against the nations, coming with pestilence and earthquakes, having just trodden down the nations, just as in the book of Revelation:

8. [*Habakkuk 3:3-14 LSB*] 3 God comes from **Teman**, And the Holy One from **Mount Paran**. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise. 4 **His brightness is like the sunlight**; He has rays flashing from His hand, And there is the hiding of His strength. 5 Before Him goes **pestilence**, And **plague** comes after Him. 6 He stood and measured out the earth; He looked

*and startled the nations. So the perpetual mountains were shattered; The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan under wickedness; The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling. 8 Did Yahweh's fury burn against the rivers, Or was Your anger against the rivers, Or was Your wrath against the sea, That You **rode on Your horses**, On Your chariots of salvation? 9 Your bow was made bare; Rods were sworn unto battle by word. Selah. You split the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw You and writhed; The downpour of waters passed by. The deep gave forth its voice; It lifted high its hands. 11 Sun and moon stood in their lofty places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the brightness of Your flashing spear. 12 In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger **You trampled the nations**. 13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked To lay him bare from thigh to neck. Selah. 14 You pierced with his own sharpened rods The head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those Who devour the afflicted in secret.*

And here finally in Malachi 4 below is Jesus, "the Sun", after his complete and total victory over evil:

9. *[Malachi 4:1-3 ESV] 1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who fear my name, **the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.** You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.*

Considering all these nine passages above, we can easily recognize Jesus as the "Sun" in Psalm 19, shown again below:

[Psalm 19:1-6 WEB] 1 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David. The heavens declare the glory of God. The expanse shows his handiwork. 2 Day after day they pour out speech, and night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor

language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice has gone out through all the earth, their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which is as a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a strong man rejoicing to run his course. 6 His going out is from the end of the heavens, his circuit to its ends. There is nothing hidden from its heat.

Recall again that in Romans 10, Paul is using a quote to point to the beauty and majesty of creation described in Psalm 19 above as being the "word of Christ". So it's very likely that he's even saying that the beauty and majesty of creation in Psalm 19 is the "word of Christ", potentially leading to saving "faith", and then reinforcing this point is the fact that we also see Jesus, "the sun" directly in Psalm 19. So this description in Psalm 19 of the beauty and majesty of creation is even more characterized than we thought by Jesus as the creator. Here's Paul's pointer quote to Psalm 19 again below in Romans 10:

[Romans 10:17-18 LSB] 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18 But I say, have they never heard?

On the contrary, they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

We don't need to stop there though. The "Bridegroom" in Psalm 19, coming out of his tent, can also be reasonably recognized as the symbolism of Jesus, the Lamb:

*[Revelation 19:7-8 LSB] 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come and **His bride** has made herself ready." 8 And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

Jesus also refers to himself as the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins below where He admonishes us to be ready for His return because we do not know the day or the hour it will happen:

*[Matthew 25:1, 6, 10, 13 LSB] 1 "Then the kingdom of heaven may be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the **bridegroom**. ... 6 "But at midnight*

there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ... 10 "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. ... 13 "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Then we might also be able to recognize Jesus another time in Psalm 19 through the language describing the expansive circuit of the Sun across the sky:

[Psalm 19:5-6 WEB] 5 which is as a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a strong man rejoicing to run his course. 6 His going out is from the end of the heavens, his circuit to its ends. There is nothing hidden from its heat.

[Matthew 24:27 LSB] "For just as the lightning comes from the east and appears even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

If we specifically compare Psalm 19:4-9 below with Revelation 16:7-9 below we

might even see Jesus, the "bridegroom", the "Sun", the "strong man", casting fire/heat onto his enemies at His second coming, just as he is seen doing many times throughout end times prophecy:

[Psalm 19:4-9 WEB] 4 Their voice has gone out through all the earth, their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which is as a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a strong man rejoicing to run his course. 6 His going out is from the end of the heavens, his circuit to its ends. There is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 Yahweh's law is perfect, restoring the soul. Yahweh's covenant is sure, making wise the simple. 8 Yahweh's precepts are right, rejoicing the heart. Yahweh's commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever. Yahweh's ordinances are true, and righteous altogether.

[Revelation 16:7-9 WEB] 7 I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments." 8 The fourth poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9

*People were scorched with great **heat**, and people blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues. They didn't repent and give him glory.*

If we continue focusing on the last half of Psalm 19, we just continue to see even more of Jesus. It just might be Jesus, the Lamb, in Psalm 19:9 and Revelation 15:3-4 below with His true and righteous judgments. In Revelation 15:3-4 below we see a song which may be sung to Jesus, the Lamb, where the Lamb's ways may be said to be righteous and true, just as in Psalm 19:9 below:

*[Psalm 19:9 NASB20] The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The **judgments** of the LORD are **true**; they are **righteous** altogether.*

*[Revelation 15:3-4 LSB] 3 And they sang the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the **song of the Lamb**, saying, "GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE YOUR WORKS, O LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY; **RIGHTEOUS AND TRUE ARE YOUR WAYS**, KING OF THE NATIONS! 4 "WHO WILL NOT FEAR, O LORD, AND GLORIFY YOUR NAME? For You alone are*

holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

The fun doesn't stop there though. To put the cherry on top, if we read all the way to the end of Psalm 19, we see Jesus the "Rock" named in David's final address of love and admiration to the Lord:

*[Psalm 19:14 WEB] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O LORD, my **Rock** and my Redeemer.*

Is Jesus really the Rock?:

*[1 Corinthians 10:1-4 LSB] 1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and the **rock was Christ**.*

So in Romans 10, Paul is very likely saying that the "*word of Christ*" which leads to saving "*faith*" can potentially be the beauty and majesty of creation, explicitly described in Psalm 19 where it has Jesus' signature all over it. Paul is very likely saying that Jesus can and does sometimes preach a type of gospel of eternal salvation to some people through the beauty and majesty of creation. Paul is very likely saying that those who have "*never heard*" the full New Testament gospel of faith in Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins, have still "*heard*" the "*word of Christ*" in the beauty and majesty of creation, possibly leading to saving faith. This is very likely what Paul is trying to describe by intentionally linking Romans 10 and Psalm 19, shown again below:

[Romans 10:17-18 LSB] 17 *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.* 18 *But I say, have they never heard? On the contrary, they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."*

[Psalm 19:1b-4a WEB] 1b The heavens declare the glory of God. The expanse shows his handiwork. 2 Day after day they pour out speech, and night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4a Their voice has gone out through all the earth, their words to the end of the world.

Is this argument that I have just made about Jesus preaching the gospel of eternal salvation through what He has created in nature just a repeat of what Paul describes back in Romans 1? Here is the passage again:

[Romans 1:20 CSB] For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse.

Does that sound familiar? In the context of all that I've just said about people potentially receiving salvation by simply responding to their conscience or the "word of Christ" expressed in the beauty of creation, what do you think this passage below means?

[1 John 5:12 ESV] Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

If the Son has preached a type of gospel through a person's conscience and through the beauty of creation, then do those who respond and receive salvation in this way have the Son? This verse above gets worn out being used by those who want to say that all the multitudes of people throughout church history who have never been made aware of the contents of the New Testament Bible are going to hell. Maybe it doesn't really mean that? Maybe God's Spirit and His Son are whispering through the trees and murmuring in our thoughts saying, "*Come and follow Me and you will have Life!*" Maybe these whispers offer life to even those who never have the opportunity to specifically know that Jesus died for their sins.

Bringing all these concepts back full circle to apply them directly to the topic of this book, they may also illustrate that God judges on the basis of the knowledge that He has

given us, not on the basis of the knowledge He has never given us. This may illustrate that God is not eager to condemn those who never receive the knowledge of a proper and detailed New Testament salvation theology of having faith in Jesus Christ alone as a sacrifice for our sins. Instead, He may only condemn those who after being fully taught about a true salvation by faith in Jesus alone, stubbornly insist on intentionally and knowingly rejecting that free gift in favor of a counterfeit salvation by faith plus works. In some sense, they intentionally and knowingly reject and deny God's love by denying God's free grace in favor of a business deal in which they still attempt to partially earn His acceptance by meeting some minimum list of works. This minimum list of works would of course be a man-made list that has been falsely concocted by some church denomination. This may be an accurate description of what invites God's judgment as we see again in Galatians 5 below:

[Galatians 5:1-6 NASB20] 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look! I, Paul, tell you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no

benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who has himself circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the Law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

As you can see again in Galatians 5 above, there is no minimum partial list that will save a person when they meet it. God's standard is that anyone seeking salvation through the law must, "*keep the whole Law*". We are not *Enslaved to Salvation* by works, even if works are only believed to be just a partial requirement which must be added to faith in Jesus' as our only and final sacrifice for our sins. We are the children of God and heirs to his free blessings bestowed completely and totally upon us only from faith and from His free gift of love:

[Galatians 4:6-7 NASB20] 6 Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore

you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

[Galatians 5:1 NASB20] It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

If you are anything like this author, you will probably at some point have an opportunity to speak to people who are believing in a false salvation by faith plus works. At that time you will probably also be confronted with the fear that you may offend them if you speak up and tell them the truth. I want to encourage you to not give in to that fear, and instead to pray to God to give you the wisdom and love that you need to lovingly and respectfully inform them that they are believing in a falsehood that may lead to their not receiving eternal salvation:

[1 Peter 3:14-15 NASB20] 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE IN DREAD, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to

everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect;

I believe that the things that I have put in this short book about salvation by faith alone are at the very heart of true Christianity, and they are at the very center of all of what God has to say to His people. If we are not willing to tell other people about these things because we are afraid to offend them, we are basically refusing to communicate to them the most important things that God has to say to them. We are refusing to take part in one of the most important missions that God has given to us on this earth. I don't want to have any part of telling God that I refused to speak the heart of his message to his people. I pray for God's blessings on you all and hope that you will always be finding more of God's truth every day until we all see each other in His Kingdom.

Thank you for reading *Enslaved to Salvation*.

In Christ,
David Aaron Beaty