# GRACEOFOCUS WWW.FAITHALONE.ORG MARCH/APRIL 2018 ISJESUS PROMINENT OR PREEMINENT?



#### CONTENTS

- **3** From the Editor
- 4 Longing for the Pure Milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:1-3)

BY BOB WILKIN

- 9 The Capable Shepherd BY CHARLIE MCCALL
- 10 The Prayer God Always Answers BY BUD BROWN
- **16** Be Strong (2 Timothy 1:1-13) BY ZANE C. HODGES
- 18 Are You Reading Our Blogs?
- 19 The Mailbag
- 20 Giving Away the Free Gift! BY ALLEN REA
- 23 Believe to Live: Luther, Paul, and Habakkuk 2:4 BY JOHN H. NIEMELÄ

25 The Bookstore

- 33 They Said What? BY BAD QUOTES
- 34 Bible Heroes Had Messy Lives BY MARCIA HORNOK
- 37 When Christians Walk in Darkness BY LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER
- 41 Grace on the Go
- 44 Q&A



46 Is Jesus Prominent or Preeminent? (Blog)

BY SHAWN LAZAR

#### **GRACEINFOCUS**

Volume 33, Number 2 © 2018 by Grace **Evangelical Society** 

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Robert N. Wilkin, Ph.D.

**EDITOR AND DESIGN** Shawn Lazar

Gray

**OFFICE MANAGER** Bethany Taylor

**CIRCULATION** Mark "The Interpreter" the gospel, assurance, and related issues. For your free U.S. subscription sign up on our website or send your name and address to P.O. Box 1308, Denton, TX 76202. If you would like to make a offset the costs of printing and postage, it would be

**GRACE IN FOCUS** is a free, bimonthly magazine about tax-deductible donation to greatly appreciated.

orty-four years ago this August, I joined  $\dashv$  the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ. If you count the seven years I was in seminary, during which time I had various part-time ministries, I've been in the ministry a long time.

I started GES in the summer of 1986. A year later I gave up my teaching position at Multnomah and went full time with GES. So this ministry is nearly thirty-two years old.

Grace in Focus began as a one-page newsletter. Soon it was two pages. Then for many years it was a four-page newsletter. In January of 2012 we became a 16-page magazine because of the foresight of Kyle Kaumeyer. Shawn Lazar took over the magazine in July of 2012 and gradually increased the magazine to 32-pages and then to our current 48-pages.

There have been quite a few Directors of Publication over the years: Cathy Beach, Mike Makidon, Jeremy Myers, Kyle Kaumeyer, and for the past five-plus years, Shawn Lazar. They all have done great work.

Ministry is a team effort. While our team at GES is small, just two full-time and two parttime employees and one regional representative, we are backed by many who support this ministry via prayer and giving. We call them our partners. We are partners in grace.

You can help Grace in Focus reach more people. How? Sign them up! Friends from church and work and school. Your pastors. Your doctors. (Grace in Focus is found in many waiting rooms.) Your family. You can sign them up on our website (www.faithalone.org). Or you can go old school and mail them in.



**FROM THE EDITOR** 

Partners in Grace

Bob Wilkin, **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** 

Just make sure to print neatly since Mark Gray does not have the gift of interpretation.

Like everlasting life, *Grace in Focus* is free. Well, unlike everlasting life, Grace in Focus is only free for people within the United States. (Non-U.S. residents can subscribe to our free electronic edition of the magazine.)

I trust you will enjoy this issue. Once again, I think this is the best issue we've ever published.





Address changes? Comments? Prayer requests? Testimonies? Send them to ges@faithalone.org. Theological questions? Send them to questions@faithalone.org. Or write to Grace in Focus, P.O. Box 1308, Denton, TX 76202.



#### BY BOB WILKIN

#### INTRODUCTION

I ow does growth occur in the Christian life? Is it by having an accountability partner? Prayer? Being in a small group? Attending church? Memorizing Scripture? Reading Christian books? A one-time commitment to serve God? Daily commitments to serve God?

The answer, as we shall see, is that God's Word, if gladly received, produces growth.

Primarily that means that growth comes by attending a solid Bible-teaching church where your thinking is molded by clear verse-by-verse exposition.

Peter wrote his first epistle around AD 64, probably from Rome (see 1 Pet 5:13). Peter was writing to Jewish believers who were chosen by God to be pilgrims, or sojourners (1:1). That is, these Jewish believers had been dispersed from their homelands.

At the end of chapter 1, Peter commanded the readers to love one another. At the start of chapter 2, he ties that theme in with the importance of the Word of God in our spiritual growth.

#### PREPARE YOURSELF TO RECEIVE GOD'S WORD (1 PETER 2:1)

The command is in v 2: "Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

But before Peter gets there, he tells the readers to lay aside those things which would hinder us in desiring and receiving God's Word.

We are to lay aside:

- All malice
- All deceit
- Hypocrisy

- Envy
- All evil speaking

Peter is not being exhaustive here.

These attitudes and actions both look back and look forward. They look back to the command just given to love one another (1 Pet 1:22), and forward to the command to desire the pure milk of the word that we may grow thereby (1 Pet 2:2).

These sinful attitudes and actions hinder us from loving one another and from taking in God's Word. In his commentary on 1 Peter, Wayne Grudem says, "Someone who is practicing 'deceit' or 'envy' or 'slander' will not be able truly to long for 'pure spiritual milk'" (p. 94).

Ernest Best points out in his commentary: "the ability to receive spiritual nourishment...and the sharing of fellowship with other Christians are interdependent" (p. 97).

In the first century almost nobody had even a single book of the Bible in his home. People only received the Word at church on Sunday.

Thus, this certainly looks at the way one prepares to come to church. Notice that all of these things are community related: evil speaking, envy, hypocrisy, deceit, and malice.

In his commentary on Peter's epistles and Jude, J.N.D. Kelly says, "If distinctions are to be drawn, wickedness (*kakia*: an all-inclusive term) and deceit stand for general attitudes disruptive of community life..." (p. 83).

Grudem says, "All these sins aim at harming other people, whereas love seeks the good of others" (p. 94).

#### DESIRE THE PURE MILK OF THE WORD (1 PETER 2:2A)

Babies love mother's milk. In our culture babies live on milk for the first six months or more. When a baby is hungry, he will make his strong desire known. And babies eat every two to three hours!

We are to hunger for God's Word like a little baby craves milk.

The expression "the pure milk of the Word" can also be translated "pure *spiritual* milk." The Greek is *to logikon adolon gala*. *Logikon* is only used twice in the NT, here and Rom 12:1, in which it refers to "reasonable service." It is related to *logos*, which Peter uses in the preceding context (1:23). Though not all commentators agree, the translation "the pure milk of the Word" captures the sense nicely.

Just as milk provides physical nourishment, God's Word provides spiritual nourishment.

Babies grow by means of milk. Christians grow by means of God's Word.

Peter calls it "the *pure* milk." It is pure in the sense that there is no error in God's Word. It is 100% good for you. It is 100% true. It is fully profitable for growth.

Peter is not using the word *milk* to refer to merely the basic elementary teachings of God's Word. Paul contrasts the milk of the Word and the solid food of the Word (1 Cor 3:2), where milk referred to the food baby Christians eat. The author of Hebrews made the same distinction in Heb 5:12-14,

You need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil.

"The preacher's job is to prepare the spiritual meal. The listener's job is to prepare himself to eat."

Peter is using milk to refer to *all* the teachings in God's Word. His point concerns the strong desire we should have to take in God's Word. He is not suggesting that his readers are young believers or that they only receive basic teaching.

When we come to church on Sunday morning, do we come with a strong desire to hear and to receive God's Word?

The preacher's job is to prepare the spiritual meal. The listener's job is to prepare himself to eat. He is to come with great anticipation.

Sometimes that is hard, isn't it?

We can be sick or tired, or sick and tired.

Sometimes the preacher isn't preaching the Word, but is

instead preaching some recent Christian book or article.

I've come to see that being a good listener when others preach is just as important as being a good speaker when it's my turn to speak.

Everyone, preacher included, needs to desire the pure milk of the Word.

#### THAT YOU MAY GROW Thereby (1 Peter 2:2B)

If a Christian does not feed on God's Word, he will not grow.

Growth for the Christian comes by taking in God's Word.

I should note that some English translations add "to salvation" at the end of v 2. The NIV, NASB, and HCSB all add those words. However, the majority of Greek manuscripts do not have them. Hence the NKJV and the KJV rightly do not include them.

In terms of eternal salvation, there is no growth. Once saved, always saved. Once born again, always born again.

Of course, there is a sense in which we can experience more out of everlasting life. We can experience it more abundantly. However, since the words *to salvation* are not in the text, that is not an explicit point Peter is making. He is talking about spiritual growth.

Years ago I had a discussion with a pastor friend. My friend is a DTS graduate, a very sharp guy, and a very gifted preacher. He was preaching each week to over 400 people, and they loved it

I had been encouraging him to preach God's Word verse by verse, like J. Vernon McGee. Instead, he would merely proclaim what he considered the main point of a passage, and then he would spend the bulk of the sermon giving lots of illustrations and practical applications.

We had lunch one day, and here is my recollection of what we said:

Me: I know you can preach verse-by-verse. You were trained in this, as I was, at DTS. And I know you are a gifted guy. This is a matter of choice on your part. It isn't that you are unable to preach verse by verse and do it well.

Friend: Yes. I could. But I believe that the real issue in preaching is application, not explanation. Most Christians know a lot more Bible than they will ever use. What they need are practical ways in how to apply it.

Bob, this cuts both ways. You have given several sermons at our church in the past year. I've noticed that you gave almost no applications. Why don't you give people specific applications to work on?

Me: Well, in my opinion most texts of God's Word are not calling for us to do something, but to believe something. As I see it, the main application of most texts of Scripture is to have our minds renewed as Rom 12:1-2 and 2 Cor 3:18 say. Our lives are transformed as our minds are renewed. So instead of laying out a lot of specific applications when the text of Scripture gives no such applications, I seek to help the listener understand and believe what God says.



In my view, spiritual growth occurs when we believe what God says. We need what Paul calls "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). We need to have our minds renewed. When we think properly, our actions follow.

Friend: When you don't give specific applications, people leave and nothing changes in their lives. You have given them a Bible lesson, but nothing to do.

Me: There's the difference in the way we view preaching. I see God's Word as changing lives. I don't see my coming up with lists of applications as changing people.

We moved on to other things because it was clear we had different views on how preaching should be done.

At my home church, Victor Street Bible Chapel in Dallas, we are all united in the power of God's Word. For over 60 years (including nearly 50 years when Zane Hodges spoke once each month), this church has proclaimed the glorious gospel

of grace and the power of God's Word to cause us to grow. Verseby-verse Bible teaching has been the hallmark of this church. It doesn't matter whether you listen to Luis Rodriguez, Dave Renfro, Charlie Bing, John Daniels, or me, you hear the Word of God being taught. If you desire it and receive it, then you grow thereby.

#### IF YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS (1 PETER 2:3)

Peter's remarks are an allusion, a loose reference, to Ps 34:8, "Oh, taste and see that the *LORD* is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"

Most commentators note that the word *LORD* in Ps 34:8 is Yahweh and that it refers to God. However, Peter and Christian writers understand Yahweh in Ps 34:8 to refer to the Lord Iesus Christ.

I would say that Yahweh in the OT often referred to the second person of the Trinity, but it isn't until the NT that we realize this.

Peter uses a word for *gracious* or *good* here that sounds like Christ. The word is *chrēstos*, which means *kind* or *good*. There is a play on words here. The reader sees that Peter is talking about Christ (*Christos* in Greek): the Lord, Christ, is *chrēstos*, kind or good, to us. To be kind or good is to respond to people with favor, with blessings, whether deserved or undeserved.

Ernest Best paraphrases this as "'You have tasted that the Lord is good (= Christ),' i.e., good for food, for growth" (p. 99).

The Lord's goodness is seen especially when we partake of His Word.

Peter's point is that if a person learns from God's Word that God is gracious toward those who love Him and follow Him, then he grows by his desire and reception of the Word.

There is a sequence here. When we receive God's Word, we grow and we experience the goodness of God in our lives. This in turn makes us hungrier to partake of more food from God's Word. The more we grow, the more we desire God's Word.

This is a Biblical principle. The Lord said that the one who has will receive more, but the one who does not have will lose what he has (Luke 8:18; 19:26). So the more we taste the goodness of the Lord, the more we desire His Word and the more we grow. Growth occurs week by week, month by month, year by year, decade by decade, as we come to church desiring and receiving the pure milk of God's Word.

Of course, if a brand-new believer has not yet tasted that the Lord is gracious, then this is a lesson he needs to learn. This is an invaluable lesson in growth.

To be born again we must believe in the promise of everlasting life to the believer.

To grow in our new life we must believe that the Lord is gracious toward those who love and follow Him.

Legalism will not produce true and lasting spiritual growth.

Art Farstad told me a cautionary story. Many years ago a young man in Art's assembly was influenced by a Christian teacher to read ten chapters of the Bible daily: five chapters of Proverbs, one chapter of Psalms, and two chapters each in the rest of the OT and in the NT. The young man found this a burden. But he felt he could only please God by faithfully doing this.

While Art was preaching God's Word, he'd see the young man plowing through his required ten chapters. He wasn't listening as God's Word was being taught by one of the great Bible teachers of our day! When they had prayer meeting, the young man was reading his ten chapters.

While it is fine to read God's Word daily, we must not be legalistic about it. There is no command to read so many chapters a day. In fact, in the early church no one had even one book of the Bible in his home. People could only get the Word of God by coming to church and hearing it proclaimed. Even today when many of us have five or more different translations in

our homes and offices, our primary intake of the Word of God should still be in church. God gifts men to teach His Word, and church is the primary place we hear that instruction.

God's Word is living. It is powerful. It changes lives. That is why it is so important that we desire the pure milk of the Word. That is why we should come to church hungry for a spiritual feast.

#### **APPLICATIONS**

Come to church ready to receive God's Word. Be prayerful and desirous to learn.

Realize that growth comes from our taking in God's Word. Treasure it.

It is not wrong to love God's Word. If we love God, then we must love His communication to us.

This applies to when we hear the Word in church, when we read it on our own, when we are in Bible studies, and when we read Christian books about the Word, etc.



Bob Wilkin is Executive Director of Grace Evangelical Society. He lives in Highland Village, TX, with his wife of 41 years,

*Sharon. His latest book is* Is Calvinism Biblical? Let the Scriptures Decide.

MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org

# The Capable Shepherd

By Charlie McCall

#### **MEDITATING ON JESUS**

hat are the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus? Our new Bible school students knew all of them when I asked the other day. Frankly, I was surprised...and glad! But, so what? What is their significance for life today?

Jesus Christ is essentially only an ideal or principle to most Christians. Most people do not know Him as a Person. He has revealed His Person that we might have fellowship with Him and with one another. When there is no experiential knowledge of Him, we cannot have true fellowship with Him or with others (1 John 1:1-13). It is that important to know Him.

Meditating on His self-designations and yielding to His Person as so described are good places to start in knowing Him experientially. He tells us that He is: the Bread of Life; the Light of the World; the Door; the Good Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and the True Vine.

As I have been meditating on these "I Am" statements, "The Door" and "The Good Shepherd" figures have especially been a help in knowing Christ.

#### **SECURING THE SHEEP**

Jesus states that salvation, satisfaction, and security are provided for the sheep because of His being the door (John 10:9).

He is also the Good Shepherd. He sacrificially loves the sheep to the point of laying down His

life for them (John 10:11). Being good, He not only is emotionally concerned about the sheep, but He does a good job shepherding them. He is the Good Shepherd. No one can do a better job caring for the sheep than He. In fact, in His defense of the flock, He is so extremely capable that no thief can steal His sheep.

This Capable Shepherd is committed to our welfare. He is our salvation, our satisfaction, our security, and loves us sacrificially. Regarding our tendency to stray and our fear of being stolen from Him, He tells us that we have been given His life—eternal life—and no one can take His life away. What a beautifully simple way to understand our eternal security. I will never lose my salvation because my salvation is eternal life, His life in me. He does not permit anyone to take away His life—even me, the one to whom it has been bestowed. No one takes it away!

Jesus, our Shepherd. Wholly committed to us for our salvation, satisfaction (of soul), and security. Committed to the point of death. Wholly able to shepherd. He is good. He does His job well.

#### GRUMBLING AT THE FLOCK

And to think how easily we grumble and become irritated at the sheep who bump into us, or who walk too slowly in front of us, or who seem to get in the way of our being close to Him. How silly to think that sheep would ever become irritated with other sheep when they all follow the Good Shepherd. How silly we are!

God allows other sheep to be in our path who seemingly come between the Shepherd and us. They come in the form of our children, spouse, employer, or others. However, if His enemies are not even able to do so, we can be assured that none of His sheep will ever keep the Shepherd from being all-in-all to us.

He is fully able to be all that He is to each sheep in the midst of the whole flock...salvation, satis-

faction, security, sacrificing Shepherd.

That is significant!



Charlie McCall is the General Director of His Hill Bible School and Camp in Comfort, TX.



# The Prayer God Always Answers

BY BUD BROWN

, () ()

Ifelt like I failed them when I went away to Bible college—"them" being the men I had been ministering to and witnessing to for several years. They were American citizens imprisoned in Mexico for drug crimes. The pastor of a small Baptist church on the border got me started in this evangelism ministry shortly after I was born again. I loved the work and prayed fervently for all of those men.

In time, God moved my wife and me so I could begin my studies. I looked forward to Bible college with glad anticipation, but the move was bittersweet. I was disappointed with the results of the prison ministry. There was no fruit. I had nothing to show for my efforts.

Two years later a letter landed in our mailbox that rocked my world. It was handwritten by a man who was doing a thirteen year stretch in that wretched prison. I could scarcely believe what I read. A prison revival had broken out. Men by the dozens proclaimed faith in Christ. People were baptized. Bible studies were going on in every cellblock throughout the whole prison. Hardened men who faced years of harsh confinement were walking with Jesus.

I was undone. I wept for joy and gratitude. For a brief moment, I savored what Jesus had promised: "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

That promise, found in John 16:24, is one of four such promises of answered prayer. We find them in John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; and 16:23-24.

#### THE SCOPE OF THE PROMISE

These verses are misread if taken as unconditional promises that anything and everything you can ever ask for will be granted.

Worried about putting your kids through college? Just pray and watch the money show up in your bank account.

Is a loved one desperately ill? Just pray and stand by to see him rise from that sickbed.

Wondering if you'll have enough to live on in retirement? Stop worrying, start asking, and make the most of those golden years because Jesus will underwrite the whole thing.

Wouldn't it be great if that's what these promises actually meant?

Despite what prosperity preachers proclaim, Jesus had something dramatically different in mind. These promises are like every other verse in the Bible. Their meaning is derived from the context.

Imagine if friends invite you over for a backyard barbecue. You show up a bit early, so the hostess graciously says, "Make yourself at home. You know where the kitchen is. You can have anything you want." Now it just so happens that you want venison, so you wander into the kitchen looking for that succulent steak. After you rummage around you're disappointed there's none to be found

Does that mean the promise that you can have anything you want was false?

Of course not!

You understand from the context that the promise is limited to anything you can find *in the kitchen*.

Likewise, Jesus' promise that whatever you pray for shall be given doesn't mean that you're going to win the Powerball Lottery. In context, it means that God always answers our prayers *for mission success*.

#### PRAYER FOR GREATER WORKS THAT GLORIFY THE FATHER

The promise in John 14:13-14 follow Jesus's remarkable statement in v 12: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

At first glance, this stunning prophecy seems improbable at best. But in light of the history of Bible times, it makes perfect sense. Jesus' work was confined to a small geographical area. His followers covered everything from Great Britain

to Southern Europe, North Africa, India, and perhaps even Southeast Asia. During His lifetime, Jesus gathered a handful of believers, perhaps as many as 500. But within a few years of His departure, His followers had gathered hundreds of thousands of believers from all over the world.

Jesus' followers did far greater works than He because the power of God was made available to them. All they had to do was to believe (v 12), and pray (vv 13 and 14). The evidence that God honored the promise to answer their prayers is written on the pages of history.

#### THE PRAYER FOR FRUITFULNESS THAT GLORIFIES THE FATHER

Two promises are found in John 15. Verses 7 and 8 promise that if we live according to Scripture and walk in fellowship with Jesus, our prayers will be answered. The promised answer, which takes the form of fruitfulness which glorifies the Father, clues us into what is requested in these prayers: more fruit! That fruit is identified in the next promise.

The promise in John 15:16 is the linchpin for all four promises. Jesus put it this way: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." This is a Johannine version of the Great Commission, with different details. These men have been chosen to serve in a specific fashion. Their form of service is to go and bear fruit. This entails the evangelism process that results in more people entering eternal life by believing in Jesus. The fruit is new believers.

So the promises of answered prayer in John 15:7-8 and 16 are linked to the mission of winning people to faith in Jesus. Jesus promised that prayers for evangelistic success would be answered.

#### THE PRAYER FOR STEADFAST MISSION COMMITMENT IN THE FACE OF HOSTILITY

The fourth and final promise of answered prayer in John 16:23-24 takes a bit more digging. We start by observing the context. Notice that the first three verses of the chapter move the discussion to the opposition they would encounter

on their mission. The chapter's closing verses sound the same note. Just before the promises are spoken, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would convict a rebellious world (John 16:5-11), and illuminate and guide them in the face of opposition (John 16:12-15). So, whatever the promises in 16:23-24 mean, they must relate to the staying on mission even in the face of deadly opposition.

Verses 23 and 24 use two different words, both translated as "ask" in our English Bibles. These words, like most others, have various fields of meaning, so I need to hold what I'm about to say a little more loosely. The first "ask" in v 23 probably means "ask for information." It says that "on that day"—the day they see the resurrected

Christ"—they would no longer need to ask for information or explanation. They would finally know that His power is sufficient to conquer all opposition, even death.

In that knowledge, when they encounter hostility to their evangelism, they would "ask" (the second "ask" in v 23 and both "asks" in v 24) for something. What would they be asking for? In

light of the context it's most likely they would be asking for the Holy Spirit's help to stay the course of their evangelism work. It would be the prayer for boldness.

ACTS 4

#### When Peter and John were ordered to stop preaching the gospel under threat of punishment, they reported back to the church. The believers all gathered and called out in prayer. They didn't ask for protection. They didn't ask to be excused from the mission. They didn't ask for favor with the Roman authorities. They prayed for boldness in the face of hostility, the very prayer that Jesus

promised to answer in John 16:23-24:

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30, emphasis added).

As Jesus promised, their prayers were answered.

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness...With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all (Acts 4:31, 33).

The prayer for greater works (John 14:13-14) and for lavish fruitfulness (John 15:7-8, 16) was also answered! "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people...And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women (Acts 5:12, 14)..."

#### **NO BLANKET PROMISES**

I don't find anywhere in Scripture a blanket promise to answer Scripture a blanket any and every prayer. But I do find Jesus' solemn promise, repeated four times during his final hours in the Upper Room, that God always answers our prayers for mission success.

> The answers don't always come in our time. I had to wait several years for my prayers on behalf of those prisoners to be answered. Many of you have been praying for decades for your church's evangelistic success keep it up.

Nor do the answers always come as we expect. Paul's prayers and plans to minister in Rome weren't answered with a journey of fellow missionaries; they were answered in chains.

But we have Jesus' solemn promise: prayers for new believers to be borne out of our faithful missional service will be answered.



Bud Brown is President of Turnaround Pastors (www. turnaroundpastor.com).

**12** MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org

I don't find

anywhere in

promise to answer

any and every

prayer.

### JOIN US!

We are praying for and dreaming of new ministries to promote Free Grace.

There are over ten thousand of you reading *Grace* in Focus every month. There are over a hundred thousand reading online. If you went to faithalone.org, clicked on DONATE, and committed to a monthly donation of only \$10, we could raise the funds to support ministries like these:

- International Speaker & Missions
- Sunday School Curriculum writer
- Campus Minister
- West Coast Speaker
- Social Media Coordinator (full-time)
- House Church Mentor

For every \$100k increase in our budget, we can fund one of those positions for two years.

### get us to the goal!





### Be Strong (2 Timothy 2:1–13)

#### BY ZANE C. HODGES

#### FIND FAITHFUL MEN

2:1. The Apostle commences with an emphatic you (su) and an inferential therefore (oun). In the light of the weakness and defection of others, "you, therefore, be strong." Paul derives a challenge both from the weakness of the many and the courage of one (Onesiphorus). Consequently, Timothy is to stand out sharply for spiritual strength (endunamou). If he stands against a general backdrop of failure, it is only by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (en tē chariti tē en Christō Iēsou). As our salvation is by grace, since few are saved, so also is any strength we may have to be faithful in these days of spiritual declension and decay. We stand by grace alone.

2:2. The failure of others, however, is not only a call to personal fortitude but also to special efforts to find faithful men to whom we can commit the truth and insure its perpetuation. The phrase dia pollōn marturōn means in the midst of many witnesses and doubtless refers to the many who had heard the Apostle's doctrine and could hence testify that what Timothy taught was truly apostolic. As the spiritual climate darkens, the perpetuation of truth to chosen men becomes increasingly vital.

2:3. Then again (and note the repeated *su oun* which seems to take up at the same point of thought as in 2:1), such circumstances of weakness and human failure (cf. 1:15–18) point up most plainly that there is a spiritual warfare in progress. Such a conflict makes plain that hard times lie ahead, and Timothy must be ready to endure them—to suffer evil (*kakopathēson*)—as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

**2:4.** Accordingly, effective service in this conflict requires avoiding entanglements and retaining a singleness of heart for our Captain. This is extremely difficult to maintain due to the subtle allures by which we become so easily entangled with life. The word *pragmateia* is a word which, in its classical background, would readily suggest business affairs (cf. the verb pragmateuomai in Luke 19:13 in which it means "to trade," "to do business"). The Apostle doubtless intends to forbid all kinds of entanglements, but especially material things and the love of money. All such entanglements prevent the soul from sincerely seeking to please Him Who enrolled him. They are the basic reason for the fall of countless warriors of the faith.

faithalone.org MARCH/APRIL 2018 15

#### THE RULES OF THE GAME

2:5. But this conflict is also an athletic competition whose rules cannot be circumvented. The extra-Biblical background of lawfully (nomimōs) in connection with the games points to the fact that its reference embraces not only the regulations of the contest but also the proper training for it (cf. Epict. 111.10). We can neither shortcut the spiritual exercises which prepare us for the contest, nor can we circumvent its rules.

We cannot be slack in prayer and meditation on Scripture and expect to win the crown. Nor can we adopt unscriptural techniques and gain any prize. It is always shorter to run across the track rather than around it, but only those who run around it are crowned. We must resist the allure of modern high-pressure, organizational procedures with all their emphasis on mass production and numbers, and we must follow the simple rule book of Scripture if we want a crown. The compromise of Timothy's day was winning no crowns. Nor is it in our day.

2:6. Verse 3 condemns spiritual softness; v 4 spiritual ensnarement; and v 5 spiritual compromise. These are followed by the stigmatizing of spiritual turpitude and laziness. It is the laboring farmer who has a preeminent claim on the fruits. It is always harder and more laborious to resist compromise and to strive "lawfully." The soul can easily sink to a level where it is unwilling to make the effort required by faithfulness and obedience to the truth. But those who do make this effort will—in a coming day of spiritual harvest—have first place and first claim on the fruits of that harvest. It is easier always to choose a ministry that is financially "safe" rather than spiritually faithful.

2:7. These figures deserve Timothy's consideration. The Apostle desires that God would grant him a full understanding of them. More is in them than meets the eye. They deserve our attention as well, for they are pivotal to the spiritual life. It is doubtful that the spiritual principles of victory are presented more succinctly or pointedly anywhere else.

#### **OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST**

**2:8.** All of what precedes in vv 3-6 has to do with our person and position—whether as a soldier,

athlete, or husbandman. But exclusive occupation with self and self-experience is unhealthy. We need ever the counterpoise of occupation with Another—with Jesus Christ (*Mnēmoneue Iēsoun Christon egēgermenon...ek spermatos Dabid*). Jesus Christ is to be ever remembered both in His resurrection triumph as well as in His earthly prerogatives. He is at once a Living Person and also One Who has a place in the future affairs of the earth because He is of the seed of David.

The angelic proclamation that God will give Him the throne of His father David (see Luke 1:32) is sure to take place. The death of the cross could not prevent it; He is risen. And as surely as He is risen, He must reign "over the house of Jacob forever" (see Luke 1:33).

Only the Dispensationalist can, in the fullest sense of the term, remember Him as truly of the earthly seed of David. The non-Dispensationalist has partially, at least, forgotten. The events of history will ultimately jog his memory.

His triumph over death, and His future, are the objective mainstays of the soul (cf. His kingdom anticipated in v 11). Remembering Him is the superlative inspiration to the laborer, to the athlete, or to the soldier.

#### THE WORD GOES OUT

2:9-10. If the Risen Savior is our personal inspiration, His gospel program is our personal challenge (*kata to euangelion, en hō kakopathō*). In the service of a gospel which presented these glorious facts, Paul felt able to endure the indignity of prison knowing that nothing could hinder the on-going of God's Word or the accomplishment of His gracious purpose toward the elect. If sufferings are a part of this, he is ready to endure them.

Notice how the Apostle here widens Timothy's horizon (and ours) from the personal struggle that attends self-discipline and restraint (vv 3-7) to the ongoing program for those who have been chosen by God to eternal glory (hupomenō dia tous eklektous hina kai autoi sōtērias tuchōsin...meta doxes aiōniou).

The hardships of our personal combat are here swallowed up in the Person of Christ and in the program of the gospel. Like the Savior Himself, Paul becomes—and we may become—willing to suffer, even die, for the elect's sake and for their



salvation. Thus the servant's pinnacle of experience, and the disciple's, is reached: he is as His Lord and Master. The experience of vicarious suffering for the salvation of the very ones for whom Christ suffered is perhaps the loftiest of all possible spiritual experiences.

It is also thrilling to dwell on the statement the word of God is not chained (ho logos tou Theou ou dedetai). Human authorities may restrain the servants of Christ, but they cannot restrain His message. They can imprison the proclaimers but cannot imprison the proclamation. They may bind an Apostle, but never apostolic truth.

For nineteen hundred years, the Word of God has defied all human chains and prisons. Its diffusion in the world today is an eloquent comment on the Apostle's remark. What has happened to the Hellenistic philosophies of his day? They are dead. But the Word of God is living and free.

#### THE REIGN TO COME

2:11-13. But is it all worthwhile? Verses 11–13 give the answer. Co-death guarantees co-life with Him (sunapethanomen...suzēsomen). Fellowship in endurance of suffering presages fellowship in the reign to come (hupomenomen...sumbasileusomen). Conversely, to deny Him is but a prelude to our greatest shame, i.e., He will deny us (arnoumetha...arnēsetai hēmas). We may ever trust, for even when we do not, He is completely trustworthy (ei apistoumen, ekeinos pistos menei).

Note that the elements of v 8 are in v 11. Jesus Christ is risen, and so are we, and so will we be for we are united with Him in His death (cf.

Romans 6). He is the Seed of David and must yet reign, and so may we, if we endure.

On the other hand, it is sobering to consider the shame we may feel in a coming day if we are ashamed of Him now (Matt 10:33; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 12:9). We contemplate this truth too little.

The final verse is full of comfort. It is, in fact, the basis of all true faith. We tend to trust our faith and not the faithful One. We must learn to believe that He is faithful in the very moments of our greatest unbeliefs and doubt. Compare Peter and Christ in Matt 14:28-31. When Peter's faith failed, Christ did not let him sink. Likewise, the cry of the doubter is heard by a faithful Lord Whose hand of power will be stretched out to us.

This bedrock, 2 Tim 2:13, was the foundation stone of Hudson Taylor's life of tremendous faith. It can be ours as well. Jesus must remain faithful. To do otherwise would contradict His very nature, for He cannot deny Himself. He is true to us because He is true to Himself. In this reality—which lifts us utterly out of our feelings, and fears, and failures—lies the secret of true faith.



Zane Hodges taught New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary.

6 MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org



### **Are You Reading Our Blogs?**

bout a year ago we started blogging three times a week. Shawn Lazar, Ken Yates, and Bob Wilkin alternate blogging on grace topics.

Today we blog four or five times a week, and your response has been wonderful.

People contact us regularly to talk about the blog for that day.

Many people have told us—and completely surprised us—that they start their day with our blog. It gives you a daily dose of Free Grace doctrine for the day.

If you aren't reading our blog, you're missing out on our most productive source of communicating truth.

These blogs are short—around 500

If you go to our website at www.faithalone.org/blog/ you will see our most recent post. Earlier blogs can be seen by scrolling down.

There is a sign-up button at the end of each blog if you'd like to receive them by email.

### The Mailbag

#### By You

We love going to the p.o. box and seeing it full of your letters!

"Thank you for your works!" ~S.C., Milford,

"We are blessed and will keep y'all in our prayers." ~E.K., Baton Rouge, LA.

"Enjoy your publication!" ~T.T., Johnson City,

"Thanks for your work in the ministry" ~B.G., Hortonville, WI.

"Thank you so much for putting on a conference in Portland. I have given your book Beyond Doubt...I very much enjoyed your understanding of James as wisdom literature." ~F.T., Sequim,

"I am very interested in the radio ministry that GES is investigating." ~J.H., Bynam, TX.



"May God bless your amazing ministry and remember to always look up—our redemption draws near. It's closer today than yesterday." ~A.A., Baton Rouge, LA.

"I am so grateful for GES and you guys. If it weren't for your love for believers like me, I would still be obsessing about my salvation!" ~L.F., email.

"Thank you for maintaining your articles on faithalone.org." ~B.M., Salisbury, NC.

Send mail to Grace in Focus, P.O. Box 1308, Denton, TX

#### Mobile Ed: TH 265 **Free Grace Theology**

Have you ever wondered, "Can I lose my salvation?" or "Does God choose who is saved?" or "What does Jesus mean when he talks about rewards?"

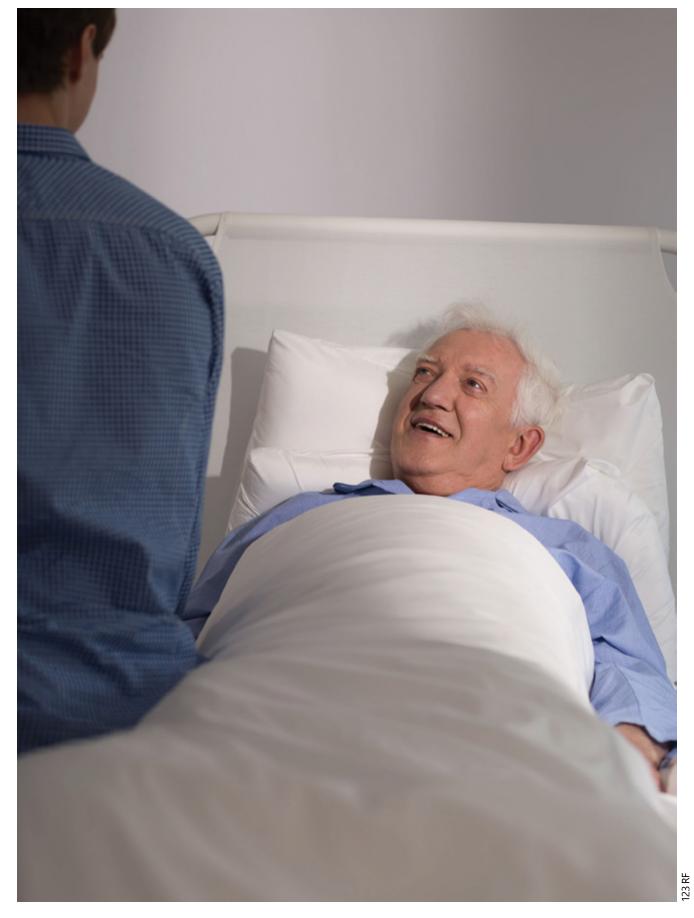


In this 12 hr video course, Dr. Bob Wilkin explores these and other questions related to salvation. You'll see how Free Grace theology compares to Calvinism and Arminianism, and how it relates to the Lordship Salvation view.

Ideal for small groups, Sunday school, and Bible classes.



Order at www.logos.com MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org



### Giving Away the Free Gift!

#### BY ALLEN REA

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF EVANGELISM

P vangelism. So many give lip service to it, but fewer and fewer do the work.

Evangelism is giving the gift of the gospel to the unsaved.

Evangelism, like love, is something commanded of all Christians.

What is evangelism?

It has been defined in many ways.

Some define it as simply sharing the good news. Others describe it as one beggar telling another beggar where to get food. I've come to embrace evangelism as *giving away the free gift!* 

At the church I pastor, I constantly emphasize that we should love Jesus while sharing His love with others. I often make myself available to my church members for going with them to any friend, neighbor, or co-worker who needs eternal salvation. I recently had an experience that I would like to share.

#### "YOU NAME IT. HE DONE IT"

A church member called and requested prayer for a family member. The man had recently fallen and broken some bones. As doctors performed more tests, they found he had advanced cancer and had less than a month to live.

I asked about the state of the man's soul. She said that he was not a churchgoer and had lived a "you name it, he done it" kind of lifestyle. However, since the recent diagnosis, he had become open to spiritual things and was even asking some questions. Would I mind going to speak to him?

As it happens, I had just read Bob Wilkin's article "The Broken Record Approach to Evangelism." Before embracing Free Grace Theology, my evangelism was complicated, coerced, and ineffective. Now I usually use John 6:47 as my main verse. I have it printed on a card and use it to walk a person through the free gift of salvation. Bob's article reinforced that I was on the right track.

I walked into the hospice facility and introduced myself to the man. He was attempting to feed himself some food.

"What do you want?"

"I want to give you something," I replied.

I spent the next thirty minutes or so simply getting to know him. I asked about his life, his family, and his church experience.

He shared his many regrets and mentioned confusion about heaven and how to get there. "I know I need to get it right, but

what do I have to do?"

He mentioned the many pastors, chaplains, and evangelists he had talked to through the years. As recently as last year, one pastor determined that he simply needed to be baptized.

My new friend said he followed the rules, went under the water and right back out, but there was no change.

Shame on pastors who use souls to increase their statistics!

#### **CLEARING THINGS UP**

I told him that I would like to help clear these issues up for him. I told him that salvation is a free gift. I gave him a card with John 6:47 on it and asked him to read it. He did and replied, "That sounds pretty simple."

He was concerned that he was not sure he could remember all the sins he had committed. He began to cry and talked about a teddy bear he had stolen forty-five years ago. He wept about past parties and foul languages.

I emphasized that salvation was a free gift.

His eyes lit up. "Free?" I asked him if he believed John 6:47.

I asked him if he believed John 6:47. He said he did. He said he finally understood that he did not have to do anything.

He cried, and I read John 10 to him. He asked if he could lose his salvation. I told him about being in Jesus's hand which was in the Father's hand. I took out my pocket knife and gripped it with my right hand. I asked if he could take it from me. He said maybe, but he doubted it. I then covered my right hand with my left and asked if he could take the knife now. He said he would never be able to get it.

I could see the doubt melt from his heart.

He realized not only was he safe because of the free gift of salvation, but he was also secure because of the free gift.

We prayed, laughed, cried, and talked a little more. I asked him what salvation was and he said without hesitation, "A free gift!"

Then he drifted off to sleep.

"He realized not

only was he safe

because of the free

gift of salvation,

but he was also

secure because of

the free gift."

The nurse said he couldn't sleep before.

This was several days ago.

At the time of this writing, he has yet to wake up.

#### **GET OUT THERE**

I am so thankful for the opportunity to give away the free gift of salvation. My new friend is now my new brother in Christ. He is saved.

He is not baptized.

He is not a church member.

He is not a theologian.

He is saved all because he

believed the promise of Jesus in John 6:47.

Let's get out there and give away the free gift!



Allen Rea is pastor of Higgston Baptist Church in Ailey, GA.



#### Believe to Live: Luther, Paul, and Habakkuk 2:4

#### By John H. Niemelä

The-just-by-faith shall live (Hab 2:4, Author's Translation).

#### **A CONTROVERSY**

aul's use of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17 is controversial today. What did Paul mean? What did Habakkuk mean? Did Paul quote Habakkuk out of context?

Traditionally, many Evangelicals have followed Martin Luther's interpretation. Luther argued that Paul was right to quote Habakkuk because he thought both the apostle and the prophet were speaking about the same subject: forensic justification by faith apart from works.

However, many modern scholars now disagree. They claim Habakkuk was not speaking about justification at all, so Paul was wrong to take him that way.

What do we do with Luther's legacy? Was he right or wrong? Three possibilities exist:

- Luther was right, and Habakkuk's topic was justification by faith.
- Luther was wrong, and Paul incorrectly assumed that the prophet spoke of justification by faith.
- Luther was close, and Paul made an appropriate *application* of Habakkuk.

Which of the three views is correct?

#### **LUTHER WAS CLOSE**

I believe Luther was close, but not quite right. The key is to understand the phrase *shall live*. Many interpreters view this as almost a throw-away expression, rather than being crucial to the passage. What does it mean to live? What kind of living is in view?

When Habakkuk prophesied that certain people would live, he was not talking about *eternal* life, but *physical* life.

More specifically, the contextual meaning is that a remnant would live in the sense of being protected from premature death during the coming Babylonian invasion. Many Jews were going to die. But Habakkuk prophesied that *an extension of physical life* would be granted to a believing remnant (the ones who are righteous-by-faith), even in the face of the onslaught.

2 MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org

### WHAT IS GRACE EVANGELICAL SOCIETY?

THE GOSPEL PROMISE was under assault in Paul's time and still is today. How many "Christians" have followed the ancient Galatians in believing they can be saved by a mixture of faith and works?

Grace Evangelical Society (GES) was founded in 1986 to promote the soul-winning truth that God offers man the free gift of everlasting life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from works done before or after the new birth (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35, 47; 11:26).

Another of our aims is to promote Christian growth by emphasizing the Biblical truths about eternal security, assurance, and eternal rewards.

We do this by publishing *Grace in Focus* magazine, expository books, booklets, and tracts, and the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*. We also hold an annual conference each Spring at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, TX, and regularly speak at local churches and Bible conferences.

For more information about our ministry please visit

#### **FAITHALONE.ORG**



So Luther was close. He correctly saw that Habakkuk was speaking about believers (i.e., the justified). However, Luther misunderstood the contextual meaning of *shall live*. Since he held to Replacement Theology, Luther wrote off Israel and could not imagine Habakkuk predicting the survival of a believing remnant of Judah. Hence, he came close to the correct interpretation, but finally did not fully understand either Habakkuk or Paul.

#### LIVING BY FAITH

This is what Paul meant: those who have been justified by faith can and should live. That is, they should live righteously in their experience.

In his commentary *Romans: Deliverance from Wrath*, Zane Hodges put it this way:

The righteous man, therefore, is the one who can live in precisely the sense Paul elaborates in Romans 6–8. In fact, he states, "if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom 8:13). Life in the truly Christian sense of that term can only be "lived" by the one who is righteous by faith! (pp. 37-38).

Thus, contrary to modern critics, Paul did not misuse Hab 2:4. His interpretation was perfectly consistent with that of the prophet.

It is key to see that the words *shall live* do not refer to regeneration, but to living, just as in Rom 8:13. Why wouldn't the theme verses of Romans anticipate both of the book's sections? The words "the just by faith" point to the topic of justification (3:21–5:11), while "shall live" anticipates the sanctification section (5:12–8:39: Those who Are Righteous by Faith Can Live Victoriously).

Just as the justified remnant could be blessed and survive the Babylonian invasion if they stayed true to their God in Habak-kuk's day, so, too, modern believers can be blessed and have fullness of life *if we walk by the Spirit*.

The principle is the same in each case: when believers put their faith into practice, they can really live!



John Niemelä is President of Message of Life Ministries.

### THE BOOKSTORE

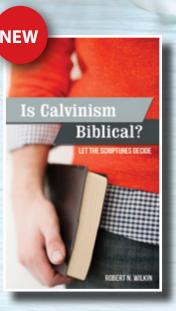


### Chosen to Serve: Why Election Is to Service, Not to Eternal Life

#### Shawn Lazar

Does God predestine individuals to eternal life or death? Or is Biblical election about service?

USD \$18.00 Softcover • 284 pages Code: cts



### Is Calvinism Biblical? Let the Scriptures Decide

#### Robert N. Wilkin

Wilkin measures the five points of Calvinism against twelve key verses.

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 166 pages Code: icb

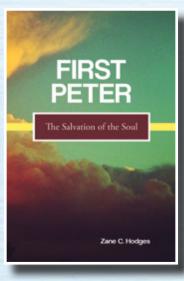


### Tough Texts: Did Jesus Teach Salvation by Works?

#### Zane C. Hodges with Robert N. Wilkin

Zane and Bob discuss passages in the Synoptic Gospels that seem to teach salvation by works. With study questions.

USD \$18.00 Softcover • 174 pages Code: tt



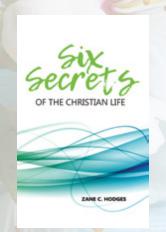
#### First Peter: The Salvation of the Soul

#### Zane C. Hodges

As you read through First Peter, you will better understand God's desire to save your soul.

USD \$10.00 Softcover • 106 pages Code: 1pet

**GO TO WWW.FAITHALONE.ORG TO SIGN UP FOR FLASH SALES!** 



#### Six Secrets of the Christian Life (with Study Questions)

Zane C. Hodges

Hodges sets forth some basic principles for growing in Christ.

USD \$12.00 Softcover • 100 pages Code: sscl2

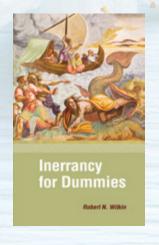


#### The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and **Works in Tension**

Zane C. Hodges

What is the relationship between faith and works?

USD \$16.00 Softcover • 266 pages Code: gus2

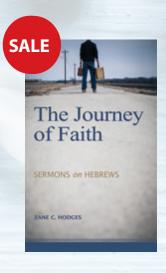


#### Inerrancy for **Dummies**

Robert N. Wilkin

Wilkin explains "true inerrancy," and how to resolve alleged discrepancies in the Bible.

USD \$7.95 Softcover • 75 pages Code: ifd

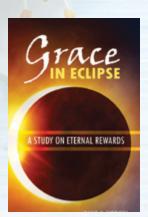


#### The Journey of Faith: **Sermons on Hebrews**

Zane C. Hodges

The Epistle to the Hebrews is about the incredible journey of faith.

USD \$15.00 \$10.00 Softcover • 212 pages Code: jof

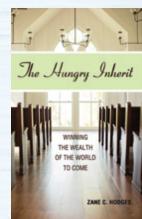


#### **Grace in Eclipse:** A Study on Eternal Rewards

Zane C. Hodges

How does the doctrine of rewards relate to the saving message?

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 168 pages Code: gie2

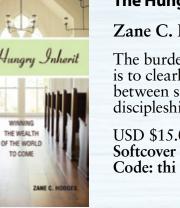


#### The Hungry Inherit

Zane C. Hodges

The burden of this work is to clearly distinguish between salvation and discipleship.

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 160 pages



#### **Spiritual Lessons from**

the spiritual life from David and Saul?

USD \$10.00 \$6.00 Softcover • 94 pages Code: lod

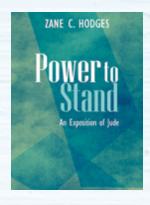


#### **Keys to Kingdom Greatness: An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount**

Steve Elkins

What was the sermon about—kingdom entrance or kingdom greatness?

USD \$19.95 Softcover • 428 pages Code: kkg

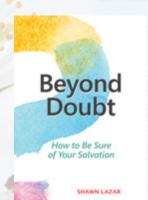


#### Power to Stand: An **Exposition of Jude**

Zane C. Hodges

God gives every believer the power to stand, so as not to fall away.

USD \$9.00 Softcover • 76 pages Code: pts



#### **Beyond Doubt:** How to Be Sure of **Your Salvation**

Shawn Lazar

What are the most common errors that lead to a lack of assurance?

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 154 pages Code: bd



#### the Life of David

Zane C. Hodges

What can you learn about



YOU CAN

BE SURE!

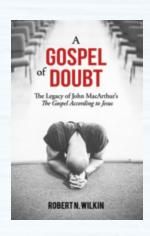
**BOB WILKIN** 

#### What Is the Outer Darkness?

Zane C. Hodges with Robert N. Wilkin

Zane and Bob discuss all three occurrences of the phrase "the outer darkness" in Matthew.

USD \$14.00 Softcover • 112 pages Code: wod



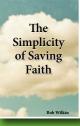
#### A Gospel of Doubt: The Legacy of John MacArthur's The Gospel According to Jesus

Robert N. Wilkin

Wilkin shows how to move from a gospel of doubt, to a gospel of assurance.

USD \$22.00 Softcover • 305 pages Code: agd







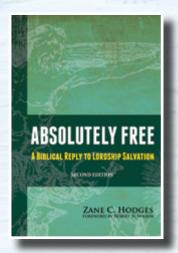


	Bob Wilkin	Bob Wilkin
Quantity:	Price Each	
1-24	\$.25	
Pack of 25	\$5.00	

#### **Booklets**

— Enduring till the End / Code: ete — His Promise Is Certain / Code: hpc — Saving Faith in Focus / Code: focus 1 — The Simplicity of Saving Faith / Code: ssf — There's a New Day Dawning / Code: ndd — What Is Free Grace Theology? / Code: fgt — You Can Be Eternally Secure / Code: ycbes — You Can Be Sure! / Code: ycbs — Puedes Estar Seguro / Code: ycbs-sp





#### Absolutely Free: A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation (Second Edition)

Zane C. Hodges

This book clearly explains the gospel of God's free grace, and how popular theologies tend to confuse faith and works, salvation and discipleship, eternal life and eternal rewards.

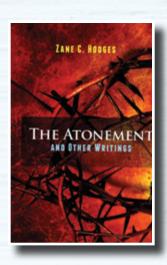
USD \$20.00 Softcover • 272 pages Code: af2

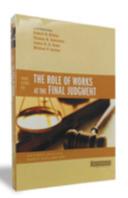
#### **The Atonement and Other Writings**

Zane C. Hodges

This book collects three hard-to-find shorter works by Hodges: *The Atonement*; *Jesus*, *God's Prophet*; and *Did Paul Preach Eternal Life?* Every student of the Bible will have his understanding enriched by these studies.

USD \$15.95 Softcover • 116 pages Code: atm





#### Four Views on the Role of Works at the Final Judgment

Robert N. Wilkin, Thomas R. Schreiner, James D. G. Dunn, Michael P. Barber

Through a discussion of Biblical texts, this book presents four perspectives on the role of works at the final judgment including: Robert N. Wilkin, works will determine rewards but not salvation, and Thomas R. Schreiner, works will provide evidence that one actually has been saved.

USD \$17.00 Softcover • 240 pages Code: fj

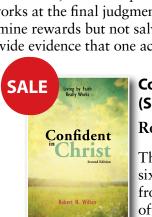


#### The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible

Robert N. Wilkin

An exploration of Biblical terms everyone knows, and yet few understand.

USD \$9.95 Softcover • 221 pages Code: ten



#### Confident in Christ (Second Edition)

Robert N. Wilkin

This book examines sixteen "tough texts" from the NT that are often used to teach salvation by works.

USD \$22.00 \$9.99 Softcover • 278 pages Code: cic2

#### **The Grace New Testament Commentary**

Authors include: Zane C. Hodges, Robert N. Wilkin, Hal M. Haller, Dwight L. Hunt, René A. López, J. B. Bond, and J. Paul Tanner, among others.

Written from a conservative, Dispensational, Free Grace perspective. These two volumes explain all the difficult verses that seem to deny eternal security, eternal rewards, justification by faith alone, and that make perseverance a condition of kingdom entrance.

USD \$29.95

Hardcover • Two Volumes • 1,334 pages

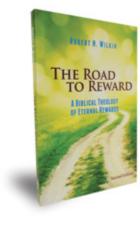
Code: ntc

#### The Road to Reward (Second Edition)

Robert N. Wilkin

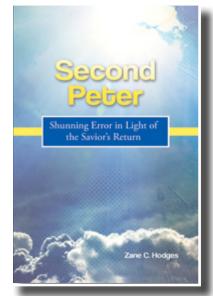
Twenty-five percent new material! If everlasting life is a free gift, and believers are eternally secure at the moment of faith, what is our motivation to live for Christ? Robert N. Wilkin takes us through the Biblical doctrine of eternal rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

USD \$20.00 Softcover • 200 pages Code: rr2



The Grace

New Testament



#### Second Peter: Shunning Error in Light of the Savior's Return

Zane C. Hodges

Second Peter is about growing in holiness in light of the Second Coming. Hodges shows that believers ought to take our Lord's prophetic teaching seriously and should draw from them a sense of deep moral obligation to persevere in the midst of a dying world. As you read through this commentary, you will long for the Savior's soon return!

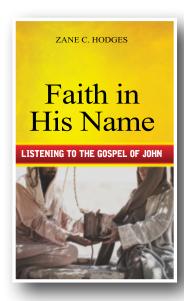
USD \$15.00 Softcover • 142 pages Code: 2pet

#### Faith in His Name: Listening to the Gospel of John

Zane C. Hodges

In this practical and pastoral commentary on John 1:1–6:21, you will be led into a deeper understanding of the purpose of John's Gospel, with its emphasis on the meaning of Jesus' signs and the power of His Word.

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 180 pages Code: fhn





#### Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

100+ pages. Two issues each year. Scholarly yet practical articles and reviews.

USD \$18.50 / \$9.25 for new or gift subscriptions. Code: jotges View website for other special deals.



#### The Epistles of John

Zane C. Hodges

First John is all about fellowship with God, not tests of life. Second and Third John are also explained in this valuable commentary.

USD \$8.95 Softcover • 312 pages Code: 1-3john



#### Best of Zane Hodges DVD

Over 10 hours of Zane Hodges's messages on two DVDs utilizing a combination of video, when available, or audio with transcription.

USD \$40.00 2 DVDs Code: bozhdvd



#### The Epistle of James

Zane C. Hodges

This is the best commentary available on James. The section on James 2:14-26 has helped thousands understand this pivotal passage.

USD \$15.00 Softcover • 128 pages Code: jas



#### **Beyond Calvinism** and Arminianism

C. Gordon Olson

Defends a middle view of salvation between Calvin and Arminius.

USD \$20.00 Softcover • 467 pages Code: bca



#### Secure and Sure

Robert N. Wilkin

Assurance of eternal life is one of the most important, and for many, elusive truths. You can be secure and sure.

USD \$9.95 Softcover • 252 pages Code: sas



#### A Free Grace Primer

Zane C. Hodges

Collects three of Hodges's books, The Hungry Inherit, The Gospel Under Siege, and Grace in Eclipse.

Softcover • 524 pages

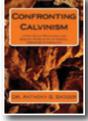


#### Romans: Deliverance from Wrath

Zane C. Hodges

Romans teaches us about deliverance from temporal wrath and slavery to sin.

USD \$24.99 Softcover • 488 pages Code: rom



#### Confronting Calvinism

Anthony B. Badger

A detailed refutation of the Five Points of Calvinism from a Free Grace perspective.

USD \$24.95 Softcover • 397 pages Code: cc



#### Power to Make War

Zane C. Hodges

This book traces the career of the man, called in the Bible, the "Beast," who will establish a

new world order.

USD \$8.95 Softcover • 135 pages Code: pow



#### Harmony with God

Zane C. Hodges

Repentance is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the church today. If you have questions about repentance, read this book.

USD \$9.95 Softcover • 133 pages Code: hwg



#### Free Grace Theology on Trial

Anthony B. Badger

This book presents a careful, point-for-point defense against the charges made by Wayne Grudem in "Free Grace" Theology: 5 Ways it Diminishes the Gospel and D.A. Carson's Exegetical Fallacies.

USD \$24.95 Softcover • 375 pages Code: fgtt

### The Master List

#### Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

—\$18.50 (renewal) / \$9.25 (new or gift subscription) Other options available on website.

The Grace New Testament Commentary (2 Volumes) —\$29.95

#### Anthony B. Badger

- —Confronting Calvinism, \$24.95
- —Free Grace Theology on Trial, \$24.95

#### Harlan Betz

-Setting the Stage for Eternity, \$14.00

#### **Steve Elkins**

- —The Roman Road Revisited: New Vistas on the Road to Resurrection Living, \$11.95
- —Keys to Kingdom Greatness: An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, \$19.95

#### **Zane Hodges**

- —Absolutely Free (2nd ed.), \$20.00
- —The Atonement and Other Writings, \$15.95
- —The Epistle of James, \$15.00
- —The Epistles of John, \$8.95
- —Faith in His Name: Listening to the Gospel of John, \$15.00
- —First Peter: The Salvation of the Soul, \$10.00
- —A Free Grace Primer (Out of Print)
- —*Grace in Eclipse*, \$15.00
- —The Gospel Under Siege, \$16.00
- —Harmony with God, \$9.95
- —Here Walks My Enemy: The Story of Luis, \$5.00 (hardcover), \$3.00 (paperback)
- —The Hungry Inherit, \$15.00
- —The Journey of Faith: Sermons on Hebrews, \$15.00 \$10.00
- —Luke (Vol 1), \$8.95
- —Luke (Vol 2), \$8.95
- —Power to Make War, \$8.95
- —Power to Stand: An Exposition of Jude, \$9.00
- -Romans: Deliverance from Wrath, \$24.99

- —Second Peter: Shunning Error in Light of the Savior's Soon Return, \$15.00
- —Six Secrets of the Christian Life (Second Edition), \$12.00
- —Spiritual Lessons from the Life of David, \$10.00 \$6.00
- —Tough Texts: Did Jesus Teach Salvation by Works?, \$18.00
- -Zane Hodges JOTGES Memorial Issue, \$7.50
- -What Is the Outer Darkness?, \$14.00

#### Shawn C. Lazar

- —Beyond Doubt: How to Be Sure of Your Salvation, \$15.00
- —Chosen to Serve: Why Divine Election Is to Service, Not to Eternal Life, \$18.00

#### Bill Lee

—Grace Recovered, \$9.95

#### René López

-Romans Unlocked, \$14.99

#### C. Gordon Olson

—Beyond Calvinism and Arminianism, \$20.00

#### Lawrence Vance

—The Other Side of Calvinism, \$29.95

#### **Bob Wilkin**

- —Confident in Christ (2nd ed.), \$22.00 \$9.99
- —Four Views on the Role of Works at the Final Judgment, \$17.00
- —A Gospel of Doubt: The Legacy of John MacArthur's The Gospel According to Jesus, **\$22.00**
- —Inerrancy for Dummies, \$7.95
- —Is Calvinism Biblical? Let the Scriptures Decide, \$15.00
- —The Road to Reward (2nd ed.), \$20.00
- -Secure and Sure, \$9.95
- —The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible, \$9.95

MARCH/APRIL 2018 For more titles and exclusive online sales go to www.faithalone.org

#### 3 Ways to Order

- By phone (940-270-8827)
- Online at faithalone.org/bookstore.html
- Or complete the order form below



#### ORDER FORM

Prices effective until May 15, 2018
Refunds / Exchanges only within 60 days of purchase date.

		<b>NG ADDRESS</b> (xes if order is over \$30)		BILLING ADDRESS (If different from Shipping Address)			
Office	NAME		NAME			_	
ADDRESS			ADDRESS	ADDRESS			
	CITY	STATE ZIF	CITY	TATZ	E ZIP	_	
	PHONE		PHONE			_	
	EMAIL		EMAIL				
Acr		you know it)	Acct.# (if you know	Acct.# (if you know it)			
METHOD OF PAYMENT A	/ Check □	Money Order □ Credit Card □	<b>I</b>				
<b>Send Check or Mone</b> y Grace Evangelical Societ		Credit Card Information:	Visa ☐ MasterCard [				
I.O. Box 1308 Jenton, TX 76202			CREDIT CARD #	CREDIT CARD #			
			EXP. DATE	CSC# (3 o	digit code)		
			NAME ON CARD				
CODE TITLE				ату	PRICE	AMOUNT	
Extra copies of this magazine are All pers available for \$1/ea, while supplies over wi last. Call for cost of shipping and Bookst		SHIPPING All personal orders \$100 and	SHIPPING CHARGES Media Mail:		SUBTOTAL		
		over will receive free shipping. Bookstores and institutions will be	\$4.00 first item +\$2.50 for each additional item		SHIPPING DONATION		
		charged regular UPS shipping rates.	<b>UPS:</b> \$0-\$20 \$10.00				
			\$21-\$50 \$14.00 \$51-\$99 25%		TOTAL		



#### By Bad Quotes

art of teaching the truth involves pointing out serious error. Here are some particularly bad quotes we recently came across. For example, here is John Piper teaching salvation by faith plus treasuring Jesus:

"You either treasure Jesus above all, or you're not saved. If you don't value Jesus above everything else, you don't have saving faith" (@desiringGod tweet, Dec 22, 2017).

Peter Enns, *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It* (Harper One: New York, NY: 2014).

"What the Bible says often didn't happen—at least not in the way the Bible describes it. And sometimes different biblical authors have very different takes on what happened in the past" (p. 25).

"The biblical writers often disagree, expressing diverse and contradictory points of view about God and what it means to be faithful to him" (p. 25).

Whom did Jesus die for? The world, right? Not quite, says *The Reformation Study Bible*. Below is their commentary on 1 John 2:2 (p. 2269):

1 John 2:2 propitiation. A sacrifice to God meant to take away the enmity brought by sin between God and the worshiper. Only Christ can be an effective propitiation (cf. Rom. 3:21–26).

of the whole world. Christ's sacrifice is not only sufficient for John and his immediate community, but it is valid anywhere in the world for those who believe. It is a sacrifice that requires no addition or supplement. This verse does not mean that the Lord intended the atonement to pay for the sins of all people without exception; rather, it affirms that there is only one sacrifice available for any sinner, namely, the sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice is effectual for all who believe, but the only ones who will believe are those chosen by God for salvation from the foundation of the world, and Jesus made atonement only for this elect people (John 10:11; Eph. 1:3-6). See theological note "Definite Atonement" on p. 1875, **eu** 

Found some bad theology quotes? Send them to ges@ faithalone.org.

faithalone.org MARCH/APRIL 2018 33

# Bible Heroes had Messy Lives



#### By Marcia Hornok

od highlighted certain men and women by name in Hebrews 11 because they lived by faith in His promises, not by what they saw, felt, or experienced. The chapter repeatedly says they focused on eternity, not earth (vv 10, 13-16, 24-27, 35). And yet most of them were seriously flawed.

Noah got drunk.

Abraham lied about his wife. Twice.

Sarah laughed at what God said.

Isaac tried to give God's covenant blessing to the wrong son.

Jacob was deceitful.

Moses hated public speaking and had an anger problem.

Rahab was a prostitute.

#### **JUDGING THE JUDGES**

As for the Judges, Gideon was afraid and asked for proof. Then he got greedy and asked people to give him gold. From it, he made a false ephod which became an idol that Israel worshipped.

Barak refused to obey God unless Deborah helped him.

Jephthah made a rash vow that jeopardized his daughter, involving a sacrifice of her hope for marriage or possibly even her life. Then he started a civil war and defeated his brother, the tribe of Ephraim.

And Samson was a womanizer and broke his Nazirite vow.

Why would these four judges even be mentioned in the faith chapter when they did such egregious things?

A possible reason is that only these four, out of fifteen named in the book, called on God or spoke to the Lord.

Prayer made the difference.

#### **DEPRAVED DAVID**

Hebrews 11 also cites David who had an affair with a married woman and had her husband murdered as a cover-up. An impeachable crime. Yet in Acts 13:22, he was still called "a man after God's own heart." What made the difference?

David confessed his sins and humbled himself before God, writing several emotional Psalms about repentance and forgiveness (Psalms 25, 32, 38, 51).

#### **MORE BAD EXAMPLES**

Recall Adam and Eve who lived in a perfect environment and had conversations with God, but obeyed Satan instead of God and lost Paradise.

Judah slept with his daughter-in-law, thinking she was a prostitute.

Aaron fashioned a golden calf and built an altar before it. One wonders why he wasn't killed.

faithalone.org MARCH/APRIL 2018 35



Again, prayer may be the answer. Moses interceded for him (Deut 9:20).

Miriam criticized Moses.

Naomi was bitter.

Job demanded that God answer to him.

Eli was obese and a bad parent.

Solomon married women who turned his heart away from God.

Elijah wanted to die.

Jonah ran away from God.

Isaiah preached naked for three years (Isaiah 20—perhaps wearing only a loincloth).

With tongue-in-cheek, we could say that Joseph was an ex-con.

Samuel was in foster care from an early age. Jeremiah was depressed.

John the Baptist was antisocial.

The Samaritan woman had loose morals and lived in sin.

Zacchaeus was too short.

Martha worried too much.

The disciples fell asleep while praying.

Peter cussed and denied Christ.

Paul had a disability and argued with other Christians.

And Lazarus was dead.

Yet God used them all to do His will. They wrote Scripture, preached sermons, and spread the good news about Messiah to their world.

#### PERSEVERANCE NOT REQUIRED

Anyone who thinks true believers persevere in following God cannot prove it with Biblical

examples. Likewise, anyone who thinks he or she needs to be worthy to serve God is mistaken.

God specializes in using failures!

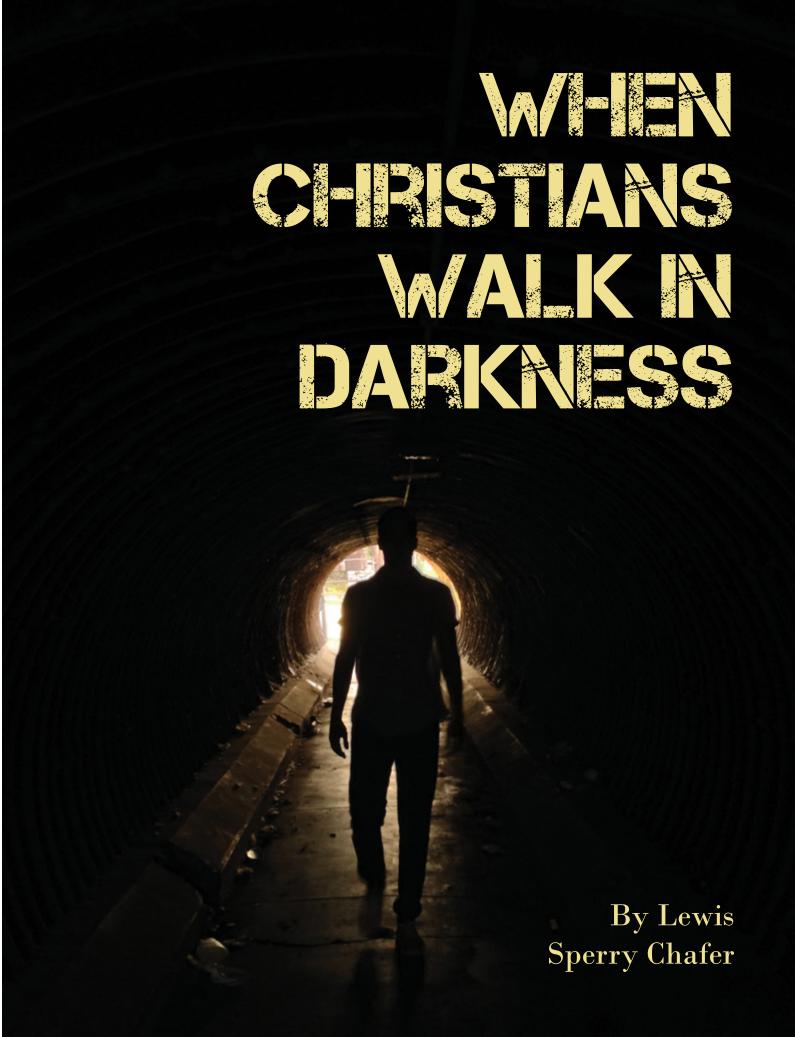
He can't use people who are strong in themselves. His grace is perfected through human weakness (1 Cor 1:18-31; 2 Cor 12:5-10). That way the glory goes to God, not to someone's resourcefulness, intellect, or accomplishments.

In fact, as Hebrews 11 points out, God has only one requirement for His children—faith. Believing what God said. Yes, walking by faith should result in faithfulness, but that is not guaranteed. Lordship proponents would say that Gideon, Jephthah, Solomon, and Paul's former co-workers named in 2 Timothy must have returned to following God before they died, but Scripture indicates no such thing.

The Bible teaches that people don't need to try to be perfect; they need to be forgiven. God's "heroes" know that their destiny is not dependent on their faithfulness in doing the best they can, but on God's faithfulness to keep His promises. Everyone can put faith in that fact.



Marcia Hornok, writer and editor, is married to Ken, retired pastor of Midvalley Bible Church in Salt Lake City.



### S

#### REWARDS MAY BE FORFEITED, OR LOST, BUT THIS CANNOT BE SAID OF SALVATION

irst Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (disapproved).

The context is only of rewards and not at all of salvation.

The word here translated "castaway" is *ado-kimos*, which is the negative form, by the prefix *a*, of *dokimos*. The negative form is translated by three English words in the NT: "castaway," once; "rejected," once; and "reprobate," six times.

Three of the translations of "reprobate" are given a marginal rendering "void of judgment."

Four meanings given to the word by the lexicons are "unable to stand test," "rejected," "refuse" and "worthless."

The less severe form of the word is by the lexicons given first, which corresponds with the meaning given to it in the numerous translations in the Bible.

The moderate meaning of the negative form of this word is demanded in the passage in question for at least four reasons.

(1) The affirmative form of the word *dokimos*, used in the NT six times, is always translated in the Bible and defined by the lexicographers, as well, as meaning "approved," or "to stand test." "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" (Rom 14:18); "Salute Apelles approved in Christ" (Rom 16:10); "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you (1 Cor 11:19); "For not he

that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor 10:18); "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15); "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (Jas 1:12).

If *dokimos* is always "approved," or "tested" as to rewards, it follows that its negative form is naturally "disapproved" or "failure under testing."

- (2) To give *adokimos* the severest possible meaning of being "cast off forever" would be to ignore wholly the meaning in the context. This is of rewards to the believer for faithful service. The passage opens with the words (v 18) "What then is my reward?" And Paul's fear, as has been before stated, is lest through half-hearted ministry he should be disapproved. Salvation is not in question, for salvation is not once related in the Scriptures to *dokimos*, the affirmative form of this word.
- (3) To give *adokimos* the severest meaning in this passage would be to bring it into direct opposition to all the great promises of God concerning His purpose and power in salvation.
- (4) It is to choose a meaning of the word which is remote and in no way the usual use made of it in the Scriptures. Conybeare and Howson render the passage: "But I bruise my body and force it into bondage; lest, perchance, having called others to the contest, I should myself fail shamefully of the prize" (Life of St. Paul, Chapter 12).

First Corinthians 3:15. "If any (Christian's) man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." The whole context, again, is of rewards for



Christian service. The work of God must stand. The child of God will himself be saved, though all his works are burned.

Colossians 1:21-23, "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" (this is the work of God in salvation), "to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight" (depends, not on His salvation, but); "if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard."

#### CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP MAY BE LOST THROUGH SIN

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6).

This passage has to do with loss of fellowship (not salvation) through sin. The cure for a Christian's sin is not in a second regeneration and justification by faith, but rather, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v 9).

This is the believer's way back into blessed joy and fellowship with his Lord, and should never be confused with the establishment of the eternal grounds of salvation. The unregenerate are not saved by *confessing*, but by *believing*.

Thus the Prodigal Son, representing the possible return of the Jewish publicans and sinners under the Jewish covenants and relationships, returned to his father on the ground of confession, and not by a birth, or generation. He was lost and was found, which has not the same significance as being lost and saved. He never ceased to be a son, and was restored to the former relation to his father by confession: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

The same underlying truth will be found in the other parts of the same parable: "The lost sheep" and "The lost coin." Thus a saint of this dispensation, being under the new covenant, may return to his place of blessing by confession (1 John 1:9). David did not pray that his salvation might be restored after his great sin; but he did pray: "Restore unto me the joys of my salvation," and that after his full confession had been made.

#### CHRISTIANS MAY BE CHASTENED (1 CORINTHIANS 11:29-32)

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (judgment) unto himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world.

This passage has to do with a possible eating and drinking at the Lord's table in an unworthy manner, and the table is referred to in this passage as being an outward evidence of the believer's true fellowship with his Lord. He is thus warned against going to that table when there is unconfessed sin in his life, by that act assuming to be in fellowship with his Lord when he is not.

The Father's method of dealing with His sinning child is then revealed. The sinning child may first judge himself, which he does by confessing his sins. If he judge not himself, he must be judged of his Father; but the Father's judgment is always chastisement and never condemnation with the world. The chastisement for the unyielding child, according to this passage, is that he may become "weak," "sick," or may experience "sleep" (physical death).

John 15:2, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." The reference is evidently to true branches, which is not the case in v 6. From the fact that the Greek word *airo* has the meaning "lifting up out of its place," here translated from *airei*, "taketh away," it would seem probable that the reference is to the last form of chastisement mentioned in 1 Cor 11:30. Such branches are taken home to be with the Lord (see also 1 Tim 5:12, "having judgment" which is chastisement for a child of God).

#### CHRISTIANS MAY FALL FROM GRACE.

Galatians 5:1-4: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the

whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Falling from grace, it will be seen from this passage, is not caused by sinning. It is simply departing from the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free. It is returning to the yoke and bondage of the law from which the death of Christ hath delivered us. When we return to the law, the liberty which is ours in Christ is lost, and Christ, as the grounds of liberty, is of no effect. It is all a question of the enjoyment of that priceless liberty in grace.

There is not the slightest hint in the passage that God withdraws His grace, or that any aspect of salvation has been canceled. It is probable that many believers have never had a vision of their liberty in Christ; but this passage is of those who have known such liberty and then have been drawn back into the yoke and bondage of law observance.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

From the foregoing it may be concluded that there is no Scripture, when rightly divided and related to the whole testimony of God, that teaches that a Christian may be lost. Nor is there any such example in the Bible. Of all the incidents and parables, none can be made to teach the loss of salvation. Moreover, if it were possible to lose it, there is no promise, or hint, in the Bible that it could be regained. The Bible reveals nothing concerning repetition of regeneration.



Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952) was the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary. This is from Chap. 10 of his book Salvation: A Clear Doctrinal Analysis (public domain).



San Antonio Conference Attendees (Ken is catching a fly)

### Grace On the Go

#### SHREVEPORT BIBLE CHURCH DECEMBER 3, 2017 BOB WILKIN

To Shreveport Sunday morning, leaving my house at 7 am, arriving at 10:30 am. In the past I have driven over Saturday afternoon and spent the night.

It was a fun adventure. The people really appreciated my message on Acts 28:17-31 entitled, "The Teaching of God's Word Is Unhindered." The last word in the Greek text of Acts is *akolutos*, which means *unhindered* or *without hindrance*. Though Paul was in prison, the Word of God was not.

After church I enjoyed lunch and a time of question and answers with Tim Steed, David Gilbert, Dale Hall, Phil Lynch (aka, PL, Shreveport), Tom Sanders (aka, Colonel Sanders), and Donna Sowers. It was a great time at Imperial Wok. They Wok the walk.

Shreveport Bible is currently looking for a pastor.

#### BAYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH TAMPA, FL DECEMBER 3, 2017 KEN YATES

I spoke at Bayside in Tampa for both of their morning services. I was scheduled to speak earlier in the year, but Hurricane Irma went through Tampa and the church had to cancel. They then invited me back.

For both services I spoke on "getting back to

the basics,"
even though I
used different
Bible passages.
The messages
centered on the
fact that as we
look forward to
the Christmas
season, the great-



**Bayside Community Church** 

est gift we have received is eternal life through Christ. We have complete assurance that that gift is ours when we believe in Jesus for it.

I want to thank all those who gave me rides and fed me while I was there. Everyone was very nice and I enjoyed my time there. I'm looking forward to returning in the future (but maybe not during hurricane season!).



The lovely Rosie and Julie with a bunch of old guys.

#### SAN ANTONIO REGIONAL January 26-27

We tried something new. We divided the Epistle of James into twelve pieces and had each speaker cover one passage. Thus the conference went over the entire epistle.

This approach was super. Many people mentioned they really liked covering the whole book. We plan on following that format for future conferences.

The speakers (Ken Yates, Shawn Lazar, John Lee, Wes Spradley, Lucas Kitchen, and Bob) did a great job.

The audio is available for free on our website: https://faithalone.org/category/audio/

This was the first time at a regional conference where Shawn, Ken, and Bob all spoke. It was nice.

We have several upcoming regionals. We'll meet in the Los Angeles area at Biola University on March 16-17. Then we'll have the national conference in May. Followed by an Orlando Regional held at Florida Bible College, June 8-9.

#### WINTER GES BOARD MEETING PLANO, TX JANUARY 19-20

Two board members, Jerry Pattillo and Bob Bryant, had completed their four-year terms and rotated off. A new board member, Bernie Hunsucker of Grace Bible Church in Charlotte, NC, joined the board at this meeting.

We had another great meeting. We discussed new ministries like radio and a church-based school. Shawn and I will do research over the next



Excited to be at the Hope Center (just behind the rock).

six months and then report back to the board at our August meeting. It is possible we will start radio this year in a small number of cities.

Finances for the ministry are much improved over this time a year ago. December giving was fantastic. Indeed, July-December giving was outstanding. If January-July giving keeps pace, we would end our fiscal year in the black, which is a good thing. While we have reserves, we prefer not to dip into them unless necessary.

Our thanks to Brad Doskocil, Bernie Hunsucker, J.B. Bond (who was unable to make this meeting due to an urgent matter at his church), and Ken Yates for their outstanding service.

#### VICTOR STREET BIBLE CHAPEL DALLAS, TX JANUARY 7

Bob spoke on Rom 3:21-31. "Justification Is by

Faith Alone, Apart from Works." Of course, I was preaching to the choir and so everyone was eating it up.

In the Lord's Supper I spoke on Proverbs 1:20-33, the call of wisdom.



The Lord's Supper at Victor Street.

#### GES'S 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: THE GRACE CONFERENCE MAY 21-24 THE HOPE CENTER, PLANO, TX

We are excited for the next national conference. We loved the Riley Center at SWBTS, but we are confident that you will love our new venue, the Hope Center.

While there are no guest rooms in the Hope Center, there are a dozen nice hotels within 5 miles. The Homewood Suites in Plano-Richardson includes daily breakfast and on Monday-Wednesday night a light supper as well.

Our theme this year is evangelism and discipleship. We have a great lineup of plenary speakers including Tony Evans, Steve Thurman, John Niemelä, David Janssen, Donnie Preslar, Shawn Lazar, Bob Bryant, Ken Yates, Lucas Kitchen, Bob Wilkin, Philippe Sterling, and Wes Spradley. And there will be many more workshop speakers.

#### **SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS UPDATES**

God willing, three new books and one reprint will be available by the national conference.

*Grudem Against Grace* is Bob and Shawn's response to Wayne Grudem's book on Free Grace

Theology. It will be short, to the point, and devastating (in our opinion!).

*Hebrews* is a popular commentary written by Ken Yates.

We'll be printing Zane Hodges's notes on 1-2 *Timothy*.

And finally, *A Free Grace Primer* will be back in print.

#### **REVIEW OUR BOOKS**

Thank you to everyone who has reviewed our books on Amazon.com!

The more reviews we get, the better the ranking. And the more likely people are to buy a book. If you can spare ten minutes and review our books, you'll be helping the cause of grace.

#### **Financial Report**

Dec Budget \$35,750

Dec Revenue \$111,147 (+\$75,379)

July-Dec Budget \$214,500

July-Dec Revenue \$270,936 (+\$56,436)\*

\*Typically, we get far fewer donations in Jan-June, than in July-Dec. We needed a big December to meet our budget. Thank you for your giving!



### Q&A

#### By Staff

#### **ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**

Paul says that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. What Scriptures was he referring to? Isaiah 53? ~TP,

Quite a few, though Paul does not indicate which he has in mind. Here are just some of the OT texts which I believe prophesy about the death of Messiah either directly or using types: Gen 3:15; 22:1-19 (Abraham offering up Isaac); Exod 12:1-28 (Passover is a type of Christ); the entire OT sacrificial system (e.g., John 1:29); Ps 16:8-11; 22:16-18; Isa 53:4-12; Jonah in the great fish for three days (Jonah 2; cf. Matt 12:40); and Zech 12:10. Those are only a few.

~Bob

#### **PROPITIATION FOR ALL?**

I have been reading up on GES's position on propitiation, i.e., that it applies to all people regardless of belief in Jesus. Being a strong believer in unlimited atonement, I am very intrigued by this viewpoint.

I have always been taught that Jesus' work on the cross was *intended* for all people but only *effective* for those who believe, like a gift that is bought for someone but must be received.

I am open to GES's perspective, but I have one big question: If sin ceases to be a problem for people because of Jesus' propitiation, then why is justification necessary? Isn't justification being acquitted of sin? How can someone be acquitted of sin that is no longer an issue?

I understand Hodges's argument that the problem is now one of corruption and the lost person needs God's life. Yet I still don't see how someone can be "justified" if he has no sin issue to be dealt with.



Would you mind explaining to me how you understand justification, given that propitiation is already accomplished for all men?

Sorry for the long message, but I'm just trying to sharpen my thoughts on the subject. I teach high school students every day at a Christian Learning Center, so I want to be accurate in my lessons! ~BDS, email

Great comment and question.

First, in my opinion, the view you were taught is not unlimited atonement. The view you were taught is a form of limited atonement. I've heard the same view expressed by many Free Grace people, including ones with advanced theological degrees.

If Christ's death only takes away the sins of those who believe, then He may have *potentially* died for all, but only *actually* died for those who would come to faith. So it is limited to believers. At least that is what this view is saying.

I believe that is a mistake because John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He did not say that Jesus potentially takes away the sin of the world. The Baptist said that the Lamb actually does it.

Similarly, John the Apostle said that Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). The Apostle was speaking of what Jesus actually accomplished on the cross, not what He potentially accomplished.

A truly unlimited atonement does something actual for the whole world.

Second, why, then, is justification still necessary if Jesus takes away the sin of the world?

For several reasons.

To be justified means "to be declared righteous."

Just because your sin is taken away does not automatically mean you have been declared righteous. A person whose sins are no longer a barrier between him and God is not righteous positionally or experientially.

Positional righteousness requires that God impute to our faith righteousness (Rom 3:21-26). The fact that Jesus took away the sins of the world does

not mean Jesus imputed righteousness to the world. That only happens for believers.

Experiential righteousness requires that we actually live righteously (see Elizabeth and Zacharias, John the Baptist's parents, both of whom are called righteous in Luke 1:6 based on their "walking in all the commandments").

So, just because Jesus takes away the sins of the world does not mean that people are sinless, or that they do not need positive righteousness. Believers and unbelievers remain sinners. They both experience judgment for their sins in this life and in the life to come. But, and here is the point, their sins no longer bar them from God's life and righteousness. Now if they simply believe in Jesus, they gain everlasting life and are justified (declared righteous). (And, also, no one will be condemned because of his sins. Condemnation is based on unbelief, not works. See John 3:18; Rev 20:15).

Keep in mind that as believers you are I are still sinners. We still need forgiveness of our sins day by day and hour by hour (1 John 1:7-9). The fact

that Christ died on the cross for our sins does not eliminate our need to walk in the light and to confess our sins. See my article, "Benefits of Christ's Blood: Restricted and Unrestricted" at faithalone.org.

~Bob

"The fact that

Christ died on the

cross for our sins

does not eliminate

our need to walk

in the light and to

confess our sins."

#### JOHN 17:3 AND THE DEFINITION OF ETERNAL LIFE

I would like to challenge GES with integrating John 17:3 into its explanation of eternal life. John 17:3 is the clearest explanation, definition, of what eternal life is.

And this explanation is from the Lord Himself. This seems to be an understanding GES would be motivated to resolve.

In a Sunday School class I recently taught, I asked the class what eternal life is. Their answers were nowhere near the one given in this verse. This verse, I believe, is a crux that brings together how one receives eternal life and how one understands eternal life for living. "To know Him, the only True God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

~JP, email

I take John 17:3 differently from what most do. I do not think it explains what eternal life is. I think the Lord is explaining what eternal life *makes possible*.

Here is what He said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Notice that He does not say, "eternal life is knowing God." The word "that" is ignored by most pastors and commentators in this verse.

The point is not that everyone who has everlasting life knows God. The point is that everyone who has everlasting life is *capable* of knowing God.

The words used for knowing God in John 17:3 are  $ginosk\bar{o}$  plus *Theos*.

Sometimes knowing God is said to be true of all believers. We know God in our position. See, for example, 1 Cor 1:21 (negative); Gal 4:8 (using a different Greek verb, *oida*); and 1 Thess 4:5 and

2 Thess 1:8 (negative, using a different Greek verb, oida). But notice that only one of those passages uses  $ginosk\bar{o}$ , and it does so regarding those who do not know God.

 $Ginosk\bar{o}$  is used with *Theos* only three other times in the NT, and all three of those times are in John's first epistle.

Clearly in 1 John 4:6-8 knowing God is something that is true only of believers in fellowship with God.

John says, "he who knows God hears us" (1 John 4:6). Not all believers listened to the teachings and exhortations of John and the other apostles as Diotrephes in 3 John 9-10 shows.

John also commanded his readers, "let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). As Zane Hodges has pointed out, the very next verse does not say, he who does not love is not born of God and does not know God. Instead, John continues, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

Not all believers love all other believers all the time (cf. 1 Corinthians; Jas 2:1-10, 15-16).

I think the Lord Jesus is saying that we have everlasting life so that we might know God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing God is not automatic, even for born-again people. Sadly, the fact is that many born-again people do not know God.

I might also point out that John 17:3 does not explicitly mention the condition of everlasting life, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that John 3:16 or 5:24 or 6:35, 47 or 11:25-26 are all much clearer on what one must do to have everlasting life.

Finally, back to your Sunday school question. What is everlasting life? It is the life which Christ gives to all who believe in Him. And we know from John's Gospel two things about that life. First, it is life with God that lasts forever and never ends (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35; 11:26). Second, it is life that has great potential for growth and abundance (John 10:10; 17:3).

~Bob gu

Send your questions to questions@faithalone.org.

## Is Jesus Prominent or Preeminent? (Blog)

#### By Shawn Lazar

love mountains. Given a choice between a mountain cabin, a beach resort, or an ocean cruise, I'll take the cabin.

Sadly, Texas has few mountains. The highest is Guadalupe Peak at 8,749 ft. Guadalupe might be prominent here in Texas, but not compared to the rest of the world.

Mount McKinley (now called Denali) is the tallest in North America at 20,310 ft—more than double the height of Guadalupe.

But the tallest mountain in the world is Mount Everest at 29,035 ft. That's over three times the height of Guadalupe Peak!

Guadalupe may be prominent in Texas, but Everest is preeminent in the world.

#### **FAMILIES**

Do you know the difference between something being *prominent* and it being *preeminent*?

Here's another example.

I have three little kids: Daphne, Zane, and Scout. Compared to other kids, they are *prominent*, they are important. They stand out from the circus because they're my monkeys. I love them in a way I don't love other kids and I have a responsibility to them that I don't have to others.

When I take them to the playground, my eyes are chiefly on them. I keep an eye out for the other children, but my kids are the priority.

But among Daphne, Zane, and Scout, no one child is *preeminent*. I don't have a favorite (at least, not consistently!). One is not worth more to me than the others. I love them all.

By contrast, I have one wife, Abby. She's the one for me. There's no other woman. We're a one-flesh union until death. She is the *preeminent* woman in my life.

Do you see the difference?

Prominent means you are *important*. But preeminent means you *surpass all others*.

#### A CULTURAL IDENTITY

What is preeminent in your life?

Your marriage? Your kids? Work? Career? Making money? Getting praise and applause from the world?

What do you think about most?

What is your Mount Everest?

Is it Jesus?

Is He preeminent in your life, or merely prominent?

For many nominal Christians, and for many immature Christians, Jesus is just one part of a cultural identity. He's a prominent figure, certainly. He's important enough that you go to church on Sundays, say your prayers, and plan to be married by a minister. But you have other priorities, too. And sometimes those other things come first.

For nominal Christians, Jesus shares a prominent role with other important influences. In the competition for their attention, Jesus often loses to football games, concerts, political rallies, career moves, romances, or vacation.

Sometimes Jesus comes first, but only sometimes. He is prominent, but not preeminent.

#### **ALL IN ALL**

By contrast, for Paul, Christ was preeminent: For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain

(Phil 1:21).

Paul did not add Christ as another element to his life. Rather, Christ was his Life! Paul had a new life, Christ in Him:

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

John saw it, too. Jesus was not just an important figure in life, but Life itself:



In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men (John 1:4).

"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25a).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6a).

#### **JESUS FIRST**

Is Jesus your life? Is He absolutely preeminent? Is He your Mount Everest?

If He is, it should radically change your perception of what it means to live the Christian life. Everything will center on Him, and Him alone. Here is how Jerry Benjamin described it:

All things are about Christ, focus on Christ, and for the glory of Christ (*Simply Singular*, p. 6).

Can that be said about you? Is your life *about* Christ? Is it *focused* on Christ?

Do you live it for the *glory* of Christ? In other words, when you think of your life, is

Jesus *preeminent* or merely *prominent*?



Shawn Lazar is the editor of Grace in Focus magazine. His latest book is Chosen to Serve: Why Divine Election Is to Service, Not to Eternal Life.

6 MARCH/APRIL 2018 faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org faithalone.org

**Grace Evangelical Society** 

P.O. Box 1308 Denton, TX 76202

Believe in Him for Life

Change Service Requested

NONPROFIT US POSTAGE

**PAID** 

ABERDEEN, SD PERMIT #200



TEXAS

TO REGISTER VISIT
WWW.FAITHLONE.ORG/EVENTS
BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR OTHER CONFERENCES

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL, MARCH 16-17 Orlando Regional, June 8-9 Coming Soon: Denver, Tacoma, and Charlotte