

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

An Introductory Lesson

BORN INTO SIN

NOTES:

Through no fault of our own, each of us came into this world spiritually dead, separated from God. We know we were born into this state because we have been born into the human race, i.e., born into the lineage of Adam. Originally, God created Adam in His own image and likeness, but Adam's sin changed the nature of mankind. At that moment, man no longer reflected God's image and likeness; rather, man was imbued with a sinful nature ó a nature that has the propensity to sin, to go astray from God's will and plan. And because each of us has been born into the human race, that sinful nature (aka our *fleshly nature* or *carnal nature*) would be passed down from generation to generation (Gen. 5:1-3). Thus, although the first man had been created in God's image and likeness for a specifically stated purpose (according to Gen. 1:26-28) Adam's sin altered the very nature of every individual born into the human race. Consequently, all humankind was/is born after the image and likeness of Adam, an image and likeness that reflects not only a fallen state (i.e., separation from God), but also an inability to change that state.

We can see this is true [that we are born in Adam's fallen state] in the last part of **Ephesians 2:1 And you ...who were dead in trespasses and sins...** You and I were *born dead in trespasses and sin*. We were born separated from God for all of eternity; and due to our inability to change that destiny, in one sense, we were destined to remain separated. But thankfully, in God's great love for mankind, God has made a way to change this eternal separation by allowing each of us *through faith* to enter into relationship with Him, and with that the possibility of fulfilling the life He desired for us from the beginning. The means to this change is the death of Jesus on the cross. Christ's sacrifice offers each of us an opportunity for spiritual restoration *if* we are willing to believe what

God says about the death of His Son ó that His death paid the eternal penalty for our sin (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:12; I Peter 3:18).

As Jesus hung on the cross, His last words were, òIt is finished.ö He then yielded up His spirit to His Father. That which God required on man's behalf (death and shed blood) had fully been accomplished. Christ's work on the cross was complete. But according to Scripture, in order for an individual to access the benefit of Christ's death, he must *personally believe* what God says about the death of His Son. A person must have FAITH to access this *free gift of eternal life* (Acts 16:30, 31).

WHAT DOES ETERNAL LIFE MEAN?

Eternal *life* is the opposite of eternal *death*. But, with respect to mankind, death never means ceasing to exist. From the beginning, Man was created to be an eternal being. We know that Adam was created in union with God, and that it was Adam's sin that brought about death or separation from God (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, sin took away eternal life, and brought about eternal death, which simply means *being eternally separated from God*. And though eternal separation from God was not God's intention for man, He knew that Adam would sin, and bring about this separation. Therefore, from the very beginning, God's plan was to redeem man out of eternal death through the death of His Son. According to Revelation 13:8, this was God's plan from before the foundation of the world.

IS ETERNAL LIFE A FREE GIFT?

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, 9 it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. According to this passage, how is a person saved?

Can it be stated any more clearly than it is stated here?

As we can see, one of the facets of salvation is *deliverance out of eternal death into eternal life*; but this cannot be accomplished by anything that *we do*. That is, you and I cannot *earn* this facet of salvation through our own good works/actions/deeds. Instead, we can *only believe what God has said in His Word about the way and means of this salvation*. God's Word clearly demonstrates that this

salvation would only be accomplished through the death and shed blood of Jesus Christ. (This will be explained in further detail later.) Scriptures make it succinctly clear that *the free gift of salvation* is based on faith, and faith *alone*.

Once a person attains the free gift of salvation through faith, that free gift is something that simply cannot be lost. If we did nothing to gain the free gift, being based upon the finished work of Jesus on the cross, then we can do nothing to lose the free gift, as it is based upon **His completed work**, which cannot be undone. It is eternally secure! And this is demonstrated in the original Greek language in passage above (Eph. 2:8, 9). The way the verb tense is stated in the Greek (ί you *have been saved*ί) indicates that ó from God's perspective ó our *having been saved* has been fully accomplished in the past and presently exists in a completely finished state. Nothing can change it! Once an individual responds to God in faith, and thereby receives this free gift, nothing can be done to change it. So, yes, an individual who puts faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross for his sins is eternally secure in that gift of salvation.

In all of this, *faith* is the operative word here. *Faith is simply believing what God has said in His Word*. We will look more in depth at what faith is a bit later in this study, but for now, please understand that faith must be based upon God's Word, not on anything else.

ONCE SAVED, WHAT THEN BECOMES OUR PURPOSE?

Once an individual has been brought into eternal union with God through receiving the free gift of eternal life, the story does not end there. In fact, this really is just the beginning point! Once saved through faith that individual is to engage in good works! Let's look at the verse that follows the passage we read at the beginning of this section. **Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** What have we been created in Christ Jesus to do?

Can it be stated more clearly than that?

We have been saved through faith, apart from any work that we ourselves can do, having been given the gift of faith. In this way, not one of us can boast of his/her salvation. We have been saved

through faith in *the finished work of Another*. (Thank You, Jesus!) But, please don't miss this ó we *have been saved for a purpose*. (Much of this study is designed to understand this purpose ó what it is, who it is for, and how it can be pursued.) Paul offers clear insight into these questions by noting in this passage that God has prepared works for each of us to ðwalk inö. Just as Christ accomplished His work on our behalf, now ðin Christö (and ONLY *in Christ*) we are to accomplish the works which God has ðprepared beforehandö for each of us.

Let's take a moment and reread the three verses from Ephesians altogether. **Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

Please consider and write answers to the following questions:

According to this passage, how have you been saved?

And having been saved, what have you become?

Based upon that, now what are you to do?

When were these good works prepared for you?

Do you have any questions about this?

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

So what *is* a good work? What would good works *look* like? Is there a benefit for *doing* good works? And how would you *know* that you are doing the good works that God wants you to do?

Let's take a brief look at each of these questions.

1.) **What is a good work?** From God's perspective, a *good work* is *something done as a result of something God said in His Word*. This could involve an inward change or an outward action, either of which would have to be based upon believing what God has said in His Word. In order for a good work to be seen by God as a good work, it must emanate out of faith.

Based upon this explanation, please write an example of a good work:

2.) **What would good works look like?** Truthfully, a good work may or may not be seen by the human eye! Sometimes only God sees it; other times others may see it (and frankly *should see it* according to Mt. 5:16). Here is an example of an inward good work that others may *not* see: God's Word says I am not to grumble or complain (I Pet. 4:9; I Cor. 10:8-11). That means that I must not grumble and complain, but grumbling may be something that I do easily and frequently. I know that I need to change my attitude toward something that causes me to grumble, so that I would *stop* grumbling. This would be an *inward change* that I would need to make. As I struggle through making that change, *God sees even my struggling as a good work* because my struggle would be based upon believing *and* obedience to what *He has stated in His Word*. Others may not see the work that I have been doing inwardly, but God will have seen it and will count that as a good work!

On the other hand, outward works might seem a bit easier to identify. Albeit, one Scriptural criterion for a work to be a *good work* is that the work has been done *to please God and not done to please man*. The important thing in this whole arena of good works is whether or not you are striving to *please the Lord* in doing it! *And* that you are doing it because *you believe what God has said in His Word*. A work *must* emanate out of faith in order for it to be a good

work. (This is why it is so important to know what God's Word says!)

What is something that you know God wants you to do? Where do you find that in His Word?

3.) **What benefit is there in striving to accomplish the good works that He has prepared from beforehand?** Oh! The benefit is great in every respect! And honestly, believing this truth is *ó* in itself *ó* faith that pleases God (Heb. 11:6). Throughout the Scriptures, both in Old Testament and in the New, God clearly states that He will reward His people for doing works (cf. Rev. 22:12). Therefore, it becomes of utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of what good works are!

So again, what are the two facets of a good work in the explanation stated in #1 above?

4.) **How can you know if you are accomplishing that which God has designed for you to do beforehand?** In a way, this in itself takes faith! God does not speak audibly to us in order to reveal what He wants us to do. He has *already* spoken through His Word! Everything that God wants to say to us He has already said. Now we need to *listen* to what He has already said! Of course, this would be through careful and diligent study of His Word making sure that we are handling accurately the Word of God. **II Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.**

Accepting the fact that *God finds pleasure in rewarding His children* *ó* understanding and believing this fact *ó* is NOT something to be avoided as some Christians seem to think it should be. That God finds pleasure in rewarding the *faith*-fulness of His Children is something He desires His children to understand, believe and act upon *ó* according to the Scriptures. It should be noted that the

Scriptures reveal that *Moses acted* in a particular way concerning Pharaoh and Egypt *because he was looking to the reward* (Heb. 11:26). A careful look at the entire 11th chapter in the Book of Hebrews will reveal a sketch of OT saints *all of whom acted upon their faith*, as they looked forward to the benefit of God's commendation in the end (i.e., a reward). Believing that God is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him in itself *reveals faith in what He says*. This is the type of faith that pleases God (Heb. 11:6)!

What do you think about this?

Lest you think that the pursuit of a reward is based in selfish ambition, or self-centered motivation, please consider that believing what God's Word says about these things is *not selfishly motivated*, as it takes faith to *wait* on God to fulfill His promises concerning the reward. We act in a prescribed way now (based upon what His Word says), so that in the end, we will receive the promised reward. The reward that God promises is not wealth, power and popularity, or anything else we might desire in the here and now (as is so often taught), but rather the reward has to do with the future time when Jesus comes to rule the earth as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Hopefully this study will go a long way in helping us to come into a better understanding of these things.

And understanding that our purpose as a Christian is to *faithfully* obey what God says in His Word, knowing that He will reward us in the future is what this study is all about! Keep in mind what the writer of Hebrews says pleases God ó **Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**

Write out any questions you have about this lesson.

Part I

Fundamental Concepts of Christianity

It is in this portion of our study that we will look at:

- Some fundamental concepts related to our overall salvation.
- How faith and good works fit together *correctly* in the scope of salvation, and
- What the reward is for doing good works.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Part I – FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY

Lesson One: Understanding the Basics of Faith, Works, and the Reward

NOTES:

Last week we glimpsed the concepts of *faith*, *works* and *reward* as the underlying subject of this study. Since these concepts are foundational in our understanding of Scripture ó particularly with respect to the overall scope of our salvation ó this week we will take a more in depth look at each concept. In the subsequent two weeks that follow in this section of our study (Part I), we will add the concepts of *how obedience fits into the overall scope of salvation*, and then take a more in depth look at *how the reward fit into the overall scope*. One of our primary goals in this study is to see how these concepts are presented in Scripture (and therefore should be understood), regardless of what *we have always thought*, or how we have *always been taught*. As we study, please be praying that you see these things ***according to what Scripture says***, and not according to what any other person has to say about it! (That last phrase would also include me as the writer/teacher of this study. Scripture always has the last word on any topic.) As we begin, be sure to have a pen or pencil in hand to answer the questions as we come to them.

WHAT IS SCRIPTURAL FAITH?

From a Scriptural standpoint, *what is faith*? The English noun *faith* is translated from the Greek word *pistis*, which is from the root word *peitho*, which means to *give assent*, to *agree with*, to *have confidence in*. The English verb *believe* is translated from the Greek word *pisteuo*, which is also taken from the root word *peitho*. Since both words are taken from the same root word in the Greek, both would refer to exactly the same thing. When either a noun or a verb is taken from the same root, there can be no change in its underlying meaning, the only difference is in the grammatical usage of the word. Below are two passages that exemplify the way this root word is used in grammar of an English translation: **Romans 10:17 So**

faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. The word *faith* is the noun of this sentence. This passage reveals from where faith comes. According to this verse, where does faith come from?

Then in this next verse we see the word used in a verb form: **Acts 16:30 and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”** This passage reveals the initial action that must be taken with regards to salvation. What is the initial action that must be taken with regards to salvation?

If faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and we are to believe in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, then what must be true about our being saved? (The answer to this question may take some thought, but you can do it!)

A person can have faith about anything he chooses to have faith about! For example, when someone gets on an airplane, whether they think about it or not, they are exercising faith in the fact that the *law of aerodynamics* will for a period of time supersede the *law of gravity*. While this is a rather generic example of faith, it is not an example of *Scriptural* faith. *Scriptural faith deals with the things of God, not the things of the natural world.* And when we are dealing with things pertaining to God, it is expedient to follow the direction of Romans 10:17, shown above. Scriptural faith is only based on what God has said in His Word.

Therefore, to have *Scriptural faith*, one simply needs to believe what God has said about something. (The truth of the last sentence cannot

be over stressed!) Additionally, if we are to have *Scriptural* faith, then not only must we *believe* what the written Word says, but implicit within this is also the need to *know* what the written Word says. In one sense, it really is as simple as that. Last week in our OVERVIEW of this study, we saw how simple Scriptural faith is with respect to salvation by grace through faith.

HOW IS FAITH PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE WITH RESPECT TO SALVATION?

It is by God's grace that any of us are saved, as God has given each of us the gift of faith. Our free gift of eternal life is only by His doing, not by anything that we do ourselves. Last week we saw in Ephesians 2:8, 9 the Apostle Paul made it clear that the salvation in which we presently stand is *salvation by grace through faith*. Paul clearly revealed that our own works *cannot* enter into this salvation in any way, shape or form. It truly is a gift of God! We can also see this same idea in the following passages: **Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...** According to Ephesians 2:5, what was our condition prior to being saved?

And then here: **II Timothy 1:8b ...according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...**In your own words, *Who* did this work of saving us; and who did not do it?

So, how does one receive salvation by grace? We glimpsed this passage last week, but it bears being repeated here. The NT story of the Philippian jailer makes the -how to receive salvation very clear: **Acts 16:30 And after he brought them out, he [the Philippian jailer] said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they [Paul and Silas] said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of**

the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. In v. 31, how did Paul answer the question of how one is saved?

And in v. 32, exactly what did Paul speak to them?

So here we see that Paul explained *the Word* to them, and they *believed the Word*, and were saved. It is as simple as that! But by no means does Scriptural faith stop there. There is more to the picture.

Now that we have seen how simple *Scriptural faith* is with respect to our *salvation by grace through faith*, let's look to see (and try to understand) the rest of the picture. Again, last week we saw the verse that followed Ephesians 2:8, 9. Immediately following these two verses Paul explains what is expected of an individual once he has been saved by grace through faith: **Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workman-ship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** So according to this verse, what is God's expectation for the saved individual?

It should be noted here that the good works that we are to walk in (once we are saved) are categorically the same for every child of God. Categorically, these works would include to study and know God's Word in order for the transformation to take place within each of us (Rom. 12:2).

HOW DO WORKS FIT INTO FAITH?

Since we have seen that Scriptural faith simply means to believe what God says about a matter, then it would be upon a *faith-ful* Christian to see how works fit into the *overall scope* of salvation, as it is presented in God's Word! We should *want* to understand what God's Word says about the works of a Christian, in order to be found faithful to His Word. So, in addition to what we read in Ephesians 2:10, let's look at another verse that deals with the works of a Christian: **Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work**

heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Here, Paul relates the work that a person does heartily for the Lord to the reward of the inheritance. Within the overall scope of salvation, this deals with things beyond the free gift.

Let's think about an inheritance for a minute. We all understand that an inheritance is a *family* matter. This would be true in Scripture as well. What do you think this would imply for us, as Children of God?

And what does verse 24 say the inheritance is?

So we see here that we are to *work* heartily for the Lord knowing something. What are we to know?

Did you know that?

Yes, the work that a Christians does needs to be done *as for the Lord rather than for men*. In other words, our works are to please the Lord, rather than to please man. And then we will remember from last week, our good works must emanate out of our faith, and our faith comes from hearing God's Word.

So, how do works fit together with faith? One passage that may help us to understand the answer to this question is found in **Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes** [the verb form of the noun faith], **to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it [in the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."** We see here that the righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*! This passage reveals that the righteous man (one who has been justified through faith in the death of Jesus)

must *live by faith* (i.e., continue to live by faith in what God says beyond the death of Jesus).

Can you see the continuing nature of faith? Since we have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (just as the Philippian jailer did), then shouldn't we want to continue believing what God says in the rest of His Word? We must continue to live by faith, as we see it must be *from faith to faith*. Our lives must be rooted in ongoing faith.

So how would a person who has been saved by faith continue to live in faith? Will you write out some thoughts/ideas about this?

One thing in all of this that must be noted is that whether we live day in and day out by ongoing faith or not (it is a choice we make), our free gift of eternal life is not altered in any way, as this gift is based upon Christ's finished work on the cross. But, our actions on a daily basis (after receiving the free gift) *do* affect something else! It affects our potential reward of the inheritance. And *this* is what we want to strive to understand throughout the remainder of this study ó How does going *from faith* in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ *to faith* in things beyond salvation affect us, with respect to the reward of the inheritance?

We have seen that once we have been saved there is an expectation on God's part for us to do good works. We have also seen that we are to do these good works heartily for the Lord, not for man; and that these good works (done in faith for the Lord) will bring about the *reward* of our inheritance. So if this is all true (and it is true, as we have seen this from God's Word), then wouldn't it be important for us, as a Child of God, to understand how this all fits together?

HOW DOES THE REWARD FIT INTO A LIFE OF ONGOING FAITH?

God's Word has much to say about the doctrine of (teaching of) rewards ó a just recompense for the type of life we lived *after* receiving our salvation by grace through faith. And that would make sense if you would think about it. God is a God of LOVE as much as He is a God of JUSTICE. One characteristic of God in no way nullifies another characteristic of God. So it is upon us to strive to

understand specifically *how* these two characteristics of God are presented in Scripture, so that we can have Scriptural faith in regards to it. We will need to come to a Scriptural understanding of how God's love works in conjunction with His justice. Most Christians know **John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.** But not many Christians focus on this passage: **Romans 14:10b ...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God... ..12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.** Or this passage: **II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

These are just two of the many passages we could go to in order to reveal that there will be an accounting at the end of a Christian's life, at a specifically chosen time and place, which the Word of God refers to as the Judgment Seat of Christ (JSOC). It is here that Jesus will don the robe of a Magistrate and will judge us according to our works, whether good or bad. Here is the reward; here is the just recompense.

In this study we will spend a good amount of time hearing what God says about these things with respect to our life *after* receiving the free gift of salvation. We will see what is meant by *the righteous man must live by faith*.

Please pray for your own understanding of these things, as you humble yourself before God. Ask Him to give you understanding according to what He wants you to understand from His Word! Ask Him for more faith.

As we close our lesson for this week, please thoughtfully consider the remaining portion of the Colossians verse we looked at: **Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.**

Do you have any comments or questions on this lesson?

Part I – FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY

Lesson Two: How Obedience Fits into Salvation

NOTES:

Last week we took a close look at *salvation by grace through faith* and began to see how faith, works and the reward fit into the overall scope of salvation. We saw that through faith (and faith alone) in the finished work of Jesus on the cross an individual is saved, being brought into the Family of God as His child, thus becoming part of the Body of Christ. That individual now possesses the free gift of eternal life (eternal union with God), as opposed to remaining in the place of eternal death (eternal separation from God).

Last week we also touched on the fact that *subsequent* to a person becoming a child of God (through faith), there is an expectation of faithfulness on the part of the child with respect to the works that God has prepared for him/her from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 2:10). This is the topic of Scripture we will focus on this week ó *what is expected of a child once he is in the family*.

We have come to see that becoming saved is not the end of God's plan for us spiritually; but in reality is just the beginning. In Romans we saw that *the righteous man must live by faith – it is from faith to faith*. Only at the point of being saved can a person begin to move within the spiritual realm of faith and obedience. Only at the point of being saved a person can begin to *believe* and *obey* God. So the question becomes:

ONCE SAVED, IS IT *NECESSARY* TO OBEY GOD?

Before we can answer this question we would have to know what the word *obey* means. The Webster Dictionary gives this definition for the word: *obey – to give ear to; to execute the commands of; to yield submission to; to comply with the orders of*.

According to this definition, there would be two sides to obedience. On the one side, there would be someone giving the commands or orders; on the other side, there would be someone to do the commands or orders. And in this, it would be essential for the one who is expected to obey to *know* what he is or is not to do. For example, if a child is expected to obey his father, what would the father need to do first?

Of course, it would be necessary for the father to verbalize his expectations to his child. And a *good* and *loving* father would not only systematically verbalize his expectations, but in his love for the child he would also give his child everything he needs to carry out those expectations. Then, in addition to all of this, a good and loving father would systematically encourage his child toward obedience through the means of telling his child of:

- the benefits in obeying his expectations, as well as
- the outcome in not obeying his expectations.

OUR CHILD-TRAINING

This is all a part of child training in our natural lives; but we can also see this is true in our spiritual lives: **Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?**

The first part of Webster's definition for the word obey is "to give ear." The same is true for the Scriptural definitions in both Old and New Testaments, as the word *obey* in both Testaments has to do with *hearing*. In the OT the Hebrew word is *shama*, which literally means to *hear intelligently; to hear with implication of attention, obedience*. This implies that an individual would listen carefully, with the intent of acting in agreement to what they hear. Here is an example: **Deuteronomy 27:10 "You shall therefore obey [shama] the LORD your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."** How does the definition of the word *shama* come into play in this verse?

This idea can be seen hundreds of times throughout the OT. And it is no different in the NT. In the New, the English word *obey* is translated from one of two different Greek words. (This is where it really gets interesting!) One of the Greek words for *obey* is found in **Romans 6:16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey [hupakouo], either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?** This verse shows that as a child of God we have a choice to make as to obedience, and that our choice has consequences. According to this passage, what can we choose between?

And according to this passage, in making the choice what is the consequential outcome of either?

Here the word *obey* is translated from the compound Greek word *hupakouo*, which means *to hear under (as a subordinate), i.e. to listen attentively; by implication, to heed or conform to a command or authority: hearken, be obedient to*. Again notice here what is implied through this compound word *ó* there is one *subordinate* to another, and the subordinate one is to *hear* the one he is subordinate to. Implicit within this is an expectation of *conforming* to that which is heard. Hence, we have the same understanding from the Greek word that Webster gives the English word!

The other Greek word that is translated *obey* should be familiar to us from our study last week. It is used here: **Galatians 3:1a O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey [peitho] the truth...?** The word *obey* in this verse is the Greek word *peitho*, which as we saw last week is the root word from which we get our English words *faith* and *believe*! (Interesting!) Reread the verse. Again, there is a choice here. According to this verse, what would be the thing we can choose to obey or not obey?

The thing that is so interesting about seeing the English word *obey* translated from either of these two Greek words is that both of these Greek words bring together the very thing that we learned last week about *faith* and *hearing*. *Hupakouo*, has to do with putting oneself *under the hearing of another!* And *peitho*, has to do with *being persuaded to believe something that has been spoken by another*. We have seen that **faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ** (Rom. 10:17), and now we see that in hearing the Word, there is an expectation of obedience. This really makes sense if you think about it. Would you put this picture into your own words?

According to what we have learned, can a person truly obey God if he does not know God's Word? Why or why not?

If *hearing* and *believing* are necessary for *obeying*, can obedience come about apart from faith?

And can faith come about apart from hearing God's Word?

Can you see how this all fits together? Do you have any questions about it?

And so we can see then that these concepts cannot be separated. In order to obey, you must *believe*; and in order to believe, you must *hear*. It really is as simple as that! And so now let's consider this question: Would obedience be expected of someone who had not

yet believed in the death and shed blood of Jesus on the cross? Why or why not?

After a person has become a child of God through faith, then would obedience be expected? Why or why not?

God's Word says that *the righteous man must live by faith*; living *from faith to faith*, and that *without faith it is impossible to please God*, so can you see how necessary it is to obey God after you receive salvation by grace through faith?

Have you ever thought about that before? Will this change anything about your life now?

If an individual puts himself in a place where he desires to hear and know God's Word, then what do you think would be the demeanor that person would exhibit with regards to God's Word?

As we have seen our willingness to do what God says is only one facet of the picture. If God expects obedience from his children (and He does), then of necessity, God would systematically reveal to His children what His expectations are so that we would know exactly what we are to do or not do. Right? And so He has! **Psalms 18:28 For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.** And, **Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.** God has made His Word available to us, hasn't He? And He has been quite generous about it. Now it is

upon us to take hold of His Word through diligent study, so that we can be found faithfully obedient to what He says.

And not only has our Father given us His Word, but He has also given us everything necessary to be successful in obedience. **II Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.** According to v. 3, What has given to us everything that pertains to life and godliness?

According to the last half of v. 2 through what are these things attained?

And through this growing knowledge of His Word, according to v. 4, what else has He given us?

And so we have seen that God has given us His Word with the expectation that we are to obey it, and in our growing knowledge of His Word He has given us all we need for life and godliness which are in accord with the exceedingly great and precious promises He has laid out for His children to take hold of, promises that have to do with a time yet future. (More on that later.)

And not only all of this, but *as we would allow Him*, He will be active in our lives as a loving Father training us as children for a purpose beyond the free gift of salvation, towards something that He so desires us to earn! We can see that here: **Hebrews 12:5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?**

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Herein we can see the Father/Child relationship at work. The Father disciplines His Children because He loves us! He does it for our own good that we might share His holiness (v. 10), as He systematically teaches us what He expects from us, all the while revealing to us the reward of obedience and the consequences of disobedience. More on the reward next week.

Do you have any questions or comments about what you have learned?

Part I – FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY

Lesson Three: How the Reward Fits into Salvation

NOTES:

Last week we sought to understand more clearly how obedience fits into salvation. We saw from a Scriptural standpoint that the word *obedience* is inseparably connected to *hearing* and *believing*. We realized that obedience cannot take place apart from believing what God says; and believing cannot take place apart from hearing God's Word. (Of course, it goes without saying that a *correct engagement with God's Word is essential* in all of this!) Obedience then becomes the working out of our faith, the working out of what we believe.

The Children of Israel coming out of Egypt are a good example of the necessity of working out what we hear from God's Word through obedience, and why. The problem was that they *didn't* obey. **Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also** [contextually, the first generation of the Children of Israel]; **but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.** Notice the reason for the importance of uniting what we hear with faith. It is because there is a *profit* to it. However, the Children of Israel were not profited by it because *what they heard was not united with faith*. In other words, they didn't believe what God had told them, therefore they didn't obey; and because they didn't obey *they were not profited by what was told to them*. This is the concept we want to understand in this week's lesson.

A couple of weeks ago we learned that the inheritance ó which is on offer to us as a child of God ó is a *reward* (Col. 3:24). This week we want to understand that the *profit* for the child of God ***is*** the inheritance. Simply stated, God rewards *faithful* obedience. So, let's consider the question: Does God want us to *profit* by the things that He says? And if so, *how* would we profit? What is the reward? And what would be the loss if we were not obedient?

DOES GOD WANT US TO PROFIT?

The answer to this question must be found within the pages of Scripture. Here are a couple of passages from each of the Testaments:

OLD TESTAMENT:

Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, Or loathe His reproof, 12 For whom the LORD loves He reproofs, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights. 13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. 14 For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.

Isaiah 48:17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.

NEW TESTAMENT:

Philippians 4:15 And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

I Timothy 4:7b...On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it [the profit] holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

These are just a few of the many passages we could have gone to in both the Old and New Testaments, where the word *profit* is used, or the idea is implied. According to this, do you think God wants us to *profit* by what He says in His Word? And what in these verses make you think so?

HOW WOULD ONE PROFIT BY WHAT GOD SAYS?

In considering this question, it might be good to also consider the reverse of the question: *What would cause one to miss out on profiting from what God's Word says?* This is one point wherein it would be to good remember what we have learned about the importance of hearing God's Word correctly and believing it. The chart below compares both sides of the issue. The left side of the chart depicts what it takes to be benefited from God's Word, and the right side of the chart depicts how an individual would miss out on the benefit. When looking at this, please remember that both sides of the chart are dealing with things concerning the saved people within the family of God. And also remember that the word *gospel* means *good news*.

THE POSITIVE SIDE	THE NEGATIVE SIDE
<i>Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."</i> <i>Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.</i> <i>Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."</i>	<i>Hebrews 4:2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.</i> <i>Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."</i>
1) Hear	1) Hear
2) Believe	2) No belief
3) Obedience	3) Disobedience
4) Righteousness which receives a reward according to his works	4) Unrighteousness which has no reward according to his works

According to these things, do you think Jesus will declare well done to an individual at the JSOC if it has not been well done in his or her life?

We could also read what Jesus said about *what it takes* to become His disciple and the resulting *profit*: **Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me [i.e., be His disciple], let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. 26 For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS...”**

Is Jesus dealing here with the free gift of salvation by grace through faith or is He dealing with things beyond the free gift? How would you know?

In v. 27 Jesus describes *when* the profit will be realized ó it is when He *comes in the glory of His Father with His angels*, in order to *recompense every man according to his deeds*. This recompense will take place at the judgment seat of Christ (JSOC), immediately after the resurrection/rapture of the Church, wherein only *and* all Christians will be present. Jesus’ words take the focus off the realm of prosperity (or lack thereof) the material realm, and puts it into the spiritual realm, where it scripturally belongs. So,

WHAT IS THE REWARD?

There are really many places in Scripture we could go to in order to grasp a better understanding of what the profit/loss would be for a child of God. But here is one place: **I Corinthians 3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself**

shall be saved, yet so as through fire. According to v. 11 what is The Foundation which is laid?

Figuratively speaking, what are the two categories of building blocks that can be used to build upon the Foundation?

And what are the two potential outcomes at the JSOC for the quality of works that have been built upon the Foundation?

In this passage, the *gold, silver and precious stones* illustrate *profit*; the *wood, hay, straw* illustrate *loss*. *Fire* illustrates the element used for judgment. And the only people present at this judgment seat are those who are described in v. 11. Who are those?

In Part I, Lesson One we saw that *we will all appear* before the JSOC and give an account of what we have done in our lives (II Cor. 5:10). We also know of the *present* work of Jesus as our High Priest, as He offers a cleansing of sin if we confess our sins (I John 1:9). But it is good to know that in the end there will be an accounting wherein each child of God (each saved person) will be recompensed according to the way he lived his life once becoming saved.

At the end of Lesson One we read Col. 3: 23-25. Let's look at this passage again, paying particular notice to what is *received* by the one *who does his work heartily for the Lord* (v. 24), and what is received by the one *who does wrong* (v. 25): **Col 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.** In verse 23 we are told to work heartily for the Lord; and in vv. 24, 25 there is a stated reason for doing so. The stated reason for doing so is that we

will receive something. On the positive side of things, if we do our work heartily for the Lord, what will we receive?

On the negative side of things, if we do wrong, what will we receive?

And how are these consequences meted out?

This is a good opportunity to put into practice what we have learned from our study in the past weeks. In this lesson, we have *heard* something from the Word of God (Col. 3:23-25). In fact this is the second time we have looked at this passage in these three weeks. But even in hearing this from God's Word, some children of God simply do not want to hear, and therefore, when they hear it, they choose not to unite it by faith, even though it is so clearly stated by the Apostle Paul under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At the JSOC, God will *reward* His children for their actions. This reward can be positive or negative, depending upon how the individual lives his life after becoming a child of God. (That's what it says, right?)

Though these things are laid out so clearly, some Christians simply choose not to believe it. Paul gives us a glimpse of the type of Christian who will not believe these things: **II Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine** (i.e., sound teaching), **but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.** Because of their *own* desires, these people will be unable to go *from faith to faith*. They will have come to faith in Jesus' death and shed blood, and will be a child of God, but they will not go on to faith in things beyond His death. And when there

is no ongoing faith, there can be no obedience. All in all, what will that mean for a child of God?

As we close, please be encouraged by the Words of Jesus to have ears to hear

Matthew 11:15 “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Matthew 13:9 “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Matthew 13:43 “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Mark 4:9 And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Mark 4:23 “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Mark 7:16 “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Luke 8:8 “But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Luke 14:35 “It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

From this list of verses, what is evident about God with respect to His people?

And then here is a list of seven statements the Apostle John makes in the Revelation (which God inspired him to write). Every single one of these statements is connected to an overcomers promise ó something the faithful child of God will receive as the reward for hearing (and obeying) what the Spirit says.

Revelation 2:7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes...

Revelation 2:11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes...

Revelation 2:17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes ...

Revelation 2: 26 “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give... 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 3:5 “He who overcomes... ...6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 3: 12 “He who overcomes... 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 3:21 “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

How important do you think it is to hear what God says to His children?

And isn't hearing and obeying all wrapped up together anyway?

Do you have any comments or questions about this lesson?

Next up: Part II ó God Gave His Word