

**ARTICLES
FROM
THE PERSUADER**

VOLUME III

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ARTICLES FROM **THE PERSUADER** - VOLUME 3

The articles in this book appeared in our bi-monthly paper, **THE PERSUADER**, from 1995 to 1997. They were written by Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, unless otherwise designated. These articles are designed to persuade one to take a fresh look at TRUTH and to RIGHTLY DIVIDE God's Word. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write. If you need more copies of this book or any of our other books please write to the above address. These books are free as long as funds are available to keep printing them. Use the material in this book any way that brings honor and glory to our Lord.

Because of Calvary,
Edgar Lee Paschall

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WHEN DID YOU EXPERIENCE LOSTNESS?

On several occasions at Camp Zion, Bro. Paul Ragland asked this question before he would preach. Every time he would ask it, I would be bothered spiritually because I had never experienced lostness.

The word "lost" means to be separated from God and under His condemnation. This is the condition of every non-believer who has reached the "knowledge of accountability," that point in life where a person is responsible for his own sin. Many refer to this as the "age of accountability" and try to say that when a person reaches a certain age they are accountable.

A person is not accountable based on age but on a time in their life when they have knowledge between good and evil. The only scripture that makes this clear is Deut. 1:39, "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." This verse refers to those Israelites who were under 20 years of age at Kadesh-Barnea who were not sentenced to death when they refused to enter Canaan. (Num. 14:26-35)

Notice, "they had no knowledge between good and evil" not right and wrong as many say. There is a difference between good and evil and right and wrong. Children can and should know the difference between right and wrong as young as one year old, yet, they have not knowledge of good and evil at that age because they can only think "concrete" not "abstract" until they are about six or seven years of age. "Concrete" means "tangible" or capable of being touched. God is "abstract", a Spirit, not capable of being physically touched. Faith is also abstract. Therefore until a child is capable to think in abstract terms they are not able to be saved and have not reached the "knowledge of accountability." In this condition they are "safe" and will go to heaven if they die as II Sam. 12:23 indicates.

The word "knowledge" means to have some understanding about good and evil. "Good" refers to God and "evil" to the devil. Therefore, for one to be saved he must have some understanding about God, not just mimic or repeat what he has heard as a child. Those who make a profession at a young age usually repeat what they have heard and they have no real knowledge or understanding of good and evil. (By the way, the tree Adam was forbidden to eat of was the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" not a tree of "the knowledge of right and wrong.")

At the point one reaches the knowledge of accountability he is "lost" and may not even recognize that fact. It is not enough to be lost or even recognize that you are lost because to be saved you must experience "lostness." Many have come to the conclusion that they are lost because they have reasoned out and concluded from scripture that they are not saved. This is only mental ascent to one's condition which is not enough to produce real salvation.

Godly sorrow or Holy Ghost conviction must have a complete work before one will repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord. (II Cor. 7:10). Repentance is necessary to be saved. Romans 10:13, states, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" and I Cor. 12:3 states, "No man can call Jesus, Lord but by the Holy Ghost." This takes a completed work of Godly Sorrow in three areas: sin, righteousness, and

judgment as John 16:8-11 bears out.

When Godly sorrow has its complete work there will be more than the revelation of the fact that you are not saved thus concluding you are lost. There will be the reality of being lost as you realize you are separated from God in your sin of unbelief, and are in need of the Lord to control your life.

Many who say they are saved have never experienced "lostness"; therefore, they cannot tell you a time and place where they were saved because they really are not saved. Some were bothered and made a profession to get the pressure off them but they have never experienced lostness; therefore, they are not saved. Others prayed a prayer or did what some well meaning preacher or personal worker told them to do, but they have never experienced lostness. Therefore, they are not saved. Oh how sad it will be for those who one day will be cast in the lake of fire, because they mimicked and repeated words they were told to say before they ever reached the knowledge of accountability and hung on to that profession when they were void of knowledge of good and evil and did not experience lostness.

When did you experience lostness? I did not ask when you got saved! If you have ever experienced lostness you will never forget it and that Godly sorrow that produced the experience of lostness in you will have its finished work. But if you have never experienced lostness then you are not saved. II Cor. 13:5 states, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

THE PERSUADER - June-July, 1995

WHEN AND WHERE WAS JACOB SAVED?

We have no trouble answering this question if we will line up our thinking with the Bible and what it states concerning real salvation. Our biggest problem in this Laodicean church age is that we have a tendency to twist the Bible to line up with our traditional thinking. This is not wise!

Many say Jacob was saved in Genesis chapter 28 when he had an encounter with God through a dream. When he awoke he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and knew it not." (Gen. 28:16) It is true that God made a promise to him in Gen. 28:13-15, "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob also made a vow in Gen. 28:20-22, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

You may say that sounds like he was saved to me. But let me ask you some questions

to see if this experience Jacob had lines up with what the Bible has to say concerning real salvation.

First, does one get saved by making a bargain with the Lord? Notice Jacob said, "If God will be with me and etc., then shall the Lord be my God." Does the Lord save man on your terms or His? Salvation is of the Lord and He will never save anyone on their terms. One must come to the end of himself and make a whole hearted surrender to Jesus as Lord before He will save that individual. No one can do that himself. It takes a work of the Holy Ghost to reprove (convict and convince) a man of sin, righteousness, and judgement. (John 16:8-11) We see a New Testament example of this in John 6 where a multitude of people were following Jesus desiring to make Him King. They would have gladly made a bargain with Jesus similar to what Jacob did in Genesis, but Jesus placed upon them the demand of whole-hearted reception of Himself as their Lord in John 6:53, when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And they were not willing to make such a commitment. They said it was too hard for them (verse 60) and turned away from Him and walked no more with Him. (verse 66) Our Lord did not save them on their terms and neither did He save Jacob on his terms in Genesis 28.

Second, did Jacob's life change after Genesis 28? The Bible says a man's life changes. II Cor. 5:17 states, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Jesus said in Mat. 23:25-26, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." There will be a change in one's life when he is saved. We do not see a change in Jacob's life after Genesis 28. He is still the same old conniver and deceiver that he was before, just as his name implies. The name Jacob means supplanter which implies being a conniver and deceiver. (Gen. 27:36)

Therefore, we conclude Jacob did not get saved in Genesis 28. Many would object by saying, "But he had an encounter with God!" There are many others in the Bible who had an encounter with God and were not saved. Samuel is one example in I Sam. 3:4-14 where verse 7 states plainly, "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord." Another was the rich young ruler in Mark 10. Yet again there is the multitude in John 6 which we have already discussed. I could give you more, but if you will not believe these mentioned you sure would not believe some of the others. Tradition denies the Lord showing anything to a lost person, yet the scripture declares plainly in Psa. 25:8 that the Lord "will teach sinners in the way." This states plainly that He will teach a lost person as he travels the narrow way to the strait gate. Theologically the Bible always refers to the "lost" as sinners and the "believers" as being saints. The Lord always has an encounter with the lost in some form or fashion. (John 6:45) If He did not reveal Himself to a person how could he ever believe God is (exists) and seek Him? (Heb. 11:6)

Since Jacob did not get saved in Genesis 28, where did he get saved? In Genesis 32, where we see him coming to the end of self and relying totally upon the Lord. This occurred 20 years after Gen. 28 when he was returning from Laban's house with his wives and children where he is about to meet Esau who had vowed to kill Jacob the next time he saw him.

Jacob divides the people that was with him and the flocks, herds, and the camels into bands and sends them ahead with a distance between each one to meet Esau. Then for

the first time (recorded) he prays (Gen. 32:9-12) unto the God of his fathers but never mentions Him being his God. When he was left alone, God began to deal with him. He wrestled with him in the form of a man. God had to wrestle with Jacob because Jacob still wanted things his way. He was trying to get God to leave him alone. This is just what every man does when the Holy Ghost begins to bring man to the end of self.

I believe Jacob had a backup plan if the plan to appease Esau with the bands of people and cattle did not work. I cannot prove this, but I believe he thought if all else failed he would outrun Esau to spare his life. At some point in time while wrestling Jacob, God touched the hollow of his thigh (the strength of his leg) and then Jacob took hold of God. At which point, God said, "Let me go." But Jacob knowing all hope in self was gone said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." In essence, he was saying, "There is no one else to turn to. You're all the hope I have. I don't want to bargain any longer. I just need you."

At that point, Jacob was saved. God changed his name from Jacob (supplanter) to Israel which means "prince of God" or "prince with God." This occurred 20 years after his first encounter with God at the place he named Peniel which means "the face of God." You can read this in Gen. 32:24-30.

After Gen. 32 we see Jacob a changed man. He shows compassion for those with him where before he was willing to sacrifice them for his own hide. (Gen. 33:12-14) He built his first altar (first recorded) at Shechem. (Gen. 33:18-20) He had his family put away their idols, a sure sign of a changed life--a new creature. (Gen. 35:2)

We conclude that Jacob was saved at Peniel in Gen. 32, twenty years after his first encounter with God at Bethel in Gen. 28. This may not be acceptable to traditional thinking, but it lines up with the Bible and its teaching concerning real salvation. I think I will believe the Bible, God's Holy Word instead of man's traditional teaching.

THE PERSUADER - Aug.-Sept., 1995

LIFE-SUPPORT CHRISTIANS

"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."
I Samuel 2:6

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12:24-25

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Romans 8:13

"[Thou] fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:" I Corinthians 15:36

In the above verses we find a significant spiritual truth involving salvation that is often overlooked or by-passed in the churches today. It involves the law of planting and sowing, and the law of death and resurrection. There are some natural events that prompted the giving of these verses that may not be directly related to the issue that I

want to deal with in this newsletter, but they do not detract from the truths I will set forth.

For example, in the above verses from John 12, Jesus is dealing with His own physical death which is at hand. But the second verse shows that He is taking the opportunity to give a spiritual lesson to the disciples as a result of this. It deals with a man dying to himself in order to gain the life God has for him. In Romans, Paul uses the word 'mortify,' which means 'to put to death,' and he says it produces life. In I Corinthians, Paul is dealing with planting, or burying the physical body after a person dies, but it has a definite relationship to the natural man dying to self, being buried together with Christ, and resurrecting to a new life in Him.

There seems to be in the churches today an unwillingness to let a person die spiritually in order to get eternal life. They are preached to the brink of death but then a false sense of concern towards them causes others to interfere and prevent them from dying. They are kept in a state which can only be described as neither dead nor alive. It is a kind of spiritual 'limbo.'

To make my point and allow the reader to see the truth of this, I will do like Jesus did, and give you a natural example that demonstrates the spiritual truth. It is not as when Jesus put forth a parable, but as when He said, "A certain man...", and proceeded to make application from it.

In this day and time we have reached a place in medicine where doctors have at their disposal many different man-made mechanisms which aid a patient in breathing, circulating blood, maintaining a constant heart rate, and many other functions normally controlled by natural operation of the body. When a patient comes to these doctors and reaches a point where the body is no longer able to perform its required task, the doctors hook them up to one or more of the machines. This is done, I am sure, for the most part, out of a presumed sense of compassion for the patient. The doctors do not want the patient to die. It is also thought by the doctors that this is the patient's only hope. There is a confidence in the equipment. It has supposedly been proven by others to work and so it is accepted. It is what they are taught in medical school. The problem with this is, the patient is often no better than before, and is oftentimes actually worse. They are dependant upon those artificial means to keep them going. In the case of the most severe patients, they are often nothing more than vegetables, with no cognizant abilities. There is respiration, heart beat, normal body temperature, but little more, and even these are maintained for them. They cannot feed themselves, but must be force-fed through tubes. They cannot clean themselves, but must be constantly changed and washed by others. They are totally reliant on outside means to keep them going, and with no understanding that all this is being done. Not only this, but it is a tremendous mental strain on their loved ones who cannot understand why all this is taking place. Added to all of this is the extreme cost of the entire process. The situation has reached such proportions that questions are being raised about whether it is right or wrong to do this. Doctors can keep nearly any patient's body functioning, but does it really do the patient any good? Doctors today have lost touch with what life really is. It is not mere bodily function. Real life is freedom; it is experiencing; it is growing; it is producing; it is contributing.

Let me be quick to say that I am not advocating terminating all those on life-support, nor am I making light of their condition. I am simply using a condition that exists, which I did not create nor can I control it. That is for those who operate in the medical field to deal with. I use it for analogy only. God offers life to all who will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The physical realm is different than the spiritual. I am using this

condition to show the spiritual because folk can grasp the physical easier. I said this in an earlier paragraph. Please don't think I have no care for those who are hooked to machines.

There is a spiritual parallel to this illustration which deals with salvation and the modern practices of dealing with lost folks. When a person comes under conviction and turns to a preacher or other individual who is supposed to be able to help them, they are often placed on a spiritual life-support system. They are given a plan, a program, a prayer, or a promise to claim that is meant to give them life. The lost person is seen as being in distress, and concern for them causes the individual trying to help them to do something for them. Many times the lost person is hooked up to one of these artificial means right away, because our institutions are teaching their students that this is the only way to do things. It is done without thinking; it is a natural reflex. Just as doctors have become more and more reliant on machines, so have Christian workers.

Just as in a patient on life-support machines, the seeker who is given an artificial aid rather than true salvation, will always be dependant on that aid for assurance that they are alive. In a patient who is hooked to a respirator, for example, one will look to the monitor to make sure that the air exchange is proper. You may see the chest rise and fall, but how do you know the flow is right? The body is no longer regulating the rate and flow, so the machine is the authority. In a so-called Christian who has been placed on a life-support mechanism, they may see activity and involvement, but since it is not a natural response, they must always look to the means whereby they got life for assurance.

In earlier times, Christian workers understood that the spiritual realm operates differently than the natural, though as we have said, we can learn spiritual truths from the natural if we have discernment. A lost person's only hope for eternal life is to actually die. Then God can resurrect that individual. Doctors know that if a person is really dead, they cannot be brought back to life. There may be a cessation of bodily function, but the brain must be alive for the doctors to be able to do anything. Even CPR courses will teach one that if an individual's brain has ceased to function, they cannot be revived. But God works on brain-dead folk! Salvation is beyond reasoning in the natural sense. A person must quit trying to hold on to their human logic, cease from all self-effort, and become totally reliant on a miracle of God to revive them. Preachers and workers today have no confidence that God can do this, or else they don't believe that this is how a person gets saved. They say they do, but they operate so much in the physical and fleshly realms that it is obvious they don't really believe it. If they really believed it, they would not allow folks access to the fleshly machinery.

Another problem with the person who has been put on some means of spiritual life-support is that they will have to be constantly cared for by others. They have no spiritual discernment, or awareness in these matters. They will be a drain on the pastor and the church members for as long as they are around. There can be no growth, rather there will actually be a deterioration of that which was there at the beginning. This is why so many who make a profession, but are not saved, have an apparent zeal at the beginning, yet fall away as time goes on. Just as in the case of a sick person who is put on life-support, the machine makes them feel better at first, but after awhile the gain is surpassed by the deterioration of the patient's body and the advancement of the ailment. You have likely seen a person who has been bed-ridden for a long time; they are wasted away. Even so, in the false convert, there is a rush at first, but their strength to operate in the flesh wanes as their lost condition advances. They will either quit the church

entirely, or settle in to a feeble, sickly existence, anxiously looking to the life-support system for assurance that they are actually alive. Or, just like a patient on life-support, they will require more and more aids be hooked up. The false convert will often try to plug into the aid of work and activity to sustain life, and to turn it up higher and higher, but it is of little or no help.

Then, too, whenever someone approaches the life-support machine, the patient in the hospital becomes anxious. 'What are you doing?' 'Is there something wrong with the machine?' 'Are you going to turn it off?' 'Who do you think you are?' 'Keep your hands off that!' You can see why there is such resistance to those of us who preach the way we do. We tamper with the spiritual life-support machinery. For those who depend on the aids for their supposed life, the machines become the central focus of their existence. The machines must be maintained, protected, and plugged in. They even go through periodic upgrades and updating! Modern methods are ever changing to provide for the patient's comfort, and to keep up with the times. Old practices fall into obscurity, and if revived, they are seen as new ideas.

Some will accuse me of confusing folk, but I say, "Let's turn off the machines and see who can breath on their own." There is only confusion as long as the machine is being used. We have all read of instances where the doctors resisted attempts by family members to have the machines which were hooked to their loved ones turned off. "They will not be able to function," they are told. But when the machines were unplugged, the patient was able to maintain on their own! The machine was what was actually causing the confusion. If we turn off the spiritual life-supports, a person who is not dependent on the machinery will not be harmed, and those who are dependent need to die anyhow, if they hope to get real salvation and make heaven. It is the spiritual doctors, who have allowed lost folks to depend on something other than a divine operation of God for life, that are the problem. My proposed cure is not a new cure, it is the old fashioned gospel; it is the balm of Gilead; it is the Great Physician. Let's return to preaching that says a person must have a time and place in their life, when the Holy Ghost of God brings conviction to their heart through the preaching of the Word of God. And that this conviction produces godly sorrow leading to repentance toward God, and results in faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's again tell folks that this is the result of God working in a person both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and results in a new creature, that is, a new creation, in Christ. This is Bible! This is salvation worth having!

- J. M. Grapp

POSTSCRIPT TO ABOVE ARTICLE

J. M. Grapp knows what it is like to be on spiritual life support because he was a member of a Baptist church for 31 years before he was saved. Also 15 of those years he preached God's Word. Write to him if you have any questions about the article above. His address is P.O. Box 172, Pontotoc, MS 38863.

I am amazed at the many today who are on spiritual life support and do not even realize it. And even many times when they realize they are on spiritual life support they just unplug one and plug up another by making another profession without completed conviction (work of reproof of John 16:8-11), thus short circuiting the work of the Holy Ghost.

May we as preachers stop placing men on spiritual life support and let God have His way

in their lives. Then He will get all the glory which is the way it is suppose to be. Salvation is of the Lord!

THE PERSUADER - October-November, 1995

THE SPIRIT'S WORK ON THE SOUL IN PRODUCING FAITH

William Gurnall (1617-79)

This is incomparably the greatest work that passeth upon the soul from the Spirit of Christ. It is called "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe" (Eph. 1:19). Observe with what a heap of expressions the Spirit of God loads our weak understanding, that labouring under the weight of them, and finding the difficulty of reaching the significancy of them, we might be the more widened to conceive of that power which can never be fully understood by us, being indeed infinite, and so too big to be enclosed within the narrow walls of our understandings. Power, greatness of power, exceeding greatness, and lastly, exceeding greatness of His power, that is of God. What angel in heaven can tell us what all these amount to? God (with reverence be it spoken) sets His whole force to the work. It is compared to no less than the "working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places, far above all principality and power" (Eph. 1:20-21). To raise anyone from the dead, is a mighty, an almighty work; but to raise Christ from the dead, carries more wonder in it than to raise any other. He had a heavier grave-stone to keep Him down than any besides, the weight of a world's sin lay upon Him; yet notwithstanding this, He is raised with power by the Spirit, not only out of the grave, but into glory.

Now the power God puts forth upon the soul in working faith, is according to this of raising Christ; for indeed the sinner's soul is as really dead in sin, as Christ's body was in the grave for sin. Now, speak, poor creature, art thou any way acquainted with such a power of God to have been at work in thee? Or dost thou think slightly of believing, and so show thyself a stranger to this mystery? Certainly this one thing might resolve many (if they desired to know their own state) that they have no faith, because they make faith so light and trivial a matter, as if it were as easy to believe, as to say they do; and it were no more difficulty to receive Christ into their souls by faith, than to put a bit of bread into their mouths with their hand. Ask some, whether such a day or time of God's power ever came over their heads, to humble them for sin, drive them out of themselves, and draw them effectually unto Christ; and they may answer you, as those did Peter, when he asked whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed; they said unto him: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." So these might say: We know not whether there be any such power required to the working of faith or no...

The Spirit finds the creature in such a state, as it neither can nor will contribute the least help to such a work. As the prince of this world, when he came to tempt Christ, found nothing in Him to befriend and further his tempting design; so when the Spirit of

Christ comes, He finds as little encouragement from the sinner; no party within the castle of the soul to side with Him, when He comes first to sit down before it, and lay siege to it; but all the powers of the whole man against Him. Hence it is that so many scornful answers are sent out to the summons that are given to sinners to yield. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Never was any garrison more resolved to stand out against both the treaties and batteries of an assailing enemy, than the carnal heart is against all means that God useth to reduce it to His obedience. The noblest operations of the soul are "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). So that, except heaven and earth can meet; sensual and spiritual please one palate; God and the devil agree; there is no hope that a sinner of himself should like the motion Christ makes, or that with any argument he should be won over to like it, so long as the ground of dislike remains in his earthly, sensual, and devilish nature.

...Now the Spirit's addresses are suited to the several faculties of the soul; the principle of which are the understanding, the conscience, and the will. These are like three forts, one within the other, which all must be reduced before the town be taken; the sinner, I mean, subdued to the obedience of faith. And to these the Spirit makes His particular addresses, putting forth an act of almighty power upon every one of them.

1. On the understanding He puts forth an act of illumination. The Spirit will not work in a dark shop; the first thing He doth in order to faith, is to beat out a window in the soul, and let in some light from heaven into it. Hence believers are said to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, which the apostle calleth being renewed in knowledge (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10). By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by Him. The eye of the creature therefore must be opened to see the way of life, before he can by faith get into it. God doth not waft (to cause to drift gently or smoothly through the air or over water) souls to heaven, like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sailing to the port. If so, that prayer might have been spared which the psalmist, inspired by God, breathes forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles: "That Thy way may be known upon earth, and Thy saving health among all nations." As faith is not a naked assent, without affiance (to trust to) and innitency on (leaning upon, reliance, resting upon) Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If therefore thou continuest still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much who Christ is, and what He hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in Him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul.

2. When the Spirit hath sprung with a divine light into the understanding, then He makes His address to the conscience; the act which He passeth upon that, is an act of conviction (John 16:8). "He shall convince (reprove) the world," etc. Now this conviction is nothing but a reflection of the light that is in the understanding upon the conscience, whereby the creature feels the weight and force of those truths he know, so as to be brought into a deep sense of them. Light in a direct beam heats not; nor doth knowledge swimming in the brain affect. Most people under the gospel know that unbelief is a damming sin, and that there is no name to be saved by but the name of Christ; yet how few of those know this convincingly, so as to apply this to their own consciences, and to be affected with their own deplorable state, who are unbelievers and Christless persons! He is a convicted drunkard in law, who in open court, or before lawful authority, upon clear testimony and deposition of witnesses, is found to be such; so he scripturally is a convinced sinner, who upon clear evidence of the Word brought against him by the Spirit, is found by

his own conscience (God's officer in his bosom) to be so. Speak now, poor creature, did ever such an act of God pass upon thee, as this is? which that thou mayest the better discern of, try thyself by these few characters of a convinced person.

(i) A sinner truly convinced, is not only convinced of this sin or that sin, but of the evil of all sin. It is an ill sign, when a person seems in a passion to cry out of one sin, and to be senseless of another sin. A parboiled conscience is not right, soft in one part and hard in another; the Spirit of God is uniform in His work.

(ii) The convinced sinner is not only convinced of acts of sin, but of the state of sin also; he is not only affected with what he hath done, this law broken and that mercy abused, but with what his state and present condition is. Peter leads Simon Magus from that one horrid act he committed, to the consideration of that which is worse, the dismal state he discovered him to be in: "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Many will confess that they do not as they should, who will not think by any means so ill of themselves, that their state is naught, a state of sin and death; whereas, the convinced soul freely puts himself under this sentence of death, owns his condition, and dissembles not his pedigree: I am a most vile wretch, saith he, a limb of Satan, full of sin as the toad is of rank poison; my whole nature lies in wickedness even as the dead rotten carcass doth in its slime and putrefaction; I am a child of wrath, born to no other inheritance than hell flames; and if God will now tread me down thither, I have not one righteous syllable to object against His proceedings, but there is that in my own conscience which will clear Him from having done me any wrong in my doom.

(iii) The convinced sinner doth not only condemn himself for what he hath done and is, but he despairs of himself, as to anything he can now do to save himself. Many, though they go so far as to confess they are vile wretches, and have lived wickedly, and for this deserve to die; yet when they have put the rope around their necks by a self-condemning act, they are so far from being convinced of their own impotency, that they hope to cut the rope with their repentance, reformation, and I know not what bundle of good works, which they think shall redeem their credit with God, and recover His favour, which their former sins have unhappily lost them. And this comes to pass because the plough of conviction did not go deep enough to tear up those secret roots of self-confidence with which the heart of every sinner is woefully tainted; whereas every soul thoroughly convinced by the Spirit, is a self-despairing soul; he sees himself beyond his own help, like a poor condemned prisoner, laden with so many heavy irons, that he sees it impossible for him to make an escape with all his skill or strength, out of the hands of justice. O friends, look whether the work be once gone thus far in your souls or no. Most that perish, it is not their disease that kills them, but their physician; they think they can cure themselves, and this leaves them incurable. Speak, soul; did the Lord ever ferret (to uncover and bring to light) thee out of this burrow where so many earth themselves? Art thou as much at a loss what to do, as sensible for what thou hast done? Dost thou see hell in thy sin, and despair in thyself? Hath God got thee out of this Keilah (as God did David in I Sam. 23: 1-13) and convinced thee if thou shouldst stay in the self-confidence of thy repentance, reformation, and duties, they would all deliver thee up into the hands of God's justice and wrath, when they shall come against thee? Then indeed thou hast escaped one of the finest snares that the wit of hell can weave.

(iv) The convinced sinner is not only convinced of sin, so as to condemn himself and despair of himself, but he is convinced of a full provision laid up in Christ for self-condemned and self-despairing ones. "He shall convince the world of sin, and of

righteousness." This is as necessary an antecedent (event preceding another) to faith, as any of the former. Without this, the soul convinced of sin, is more like to go to the gallows with Judas, or fall on the sword of the law as the jailer attempted to do (when he thought his condition desperate), than think of coming to Christ...

3. The third and last faculty is the will. On this (for production of faith) the Spirit puts forth an act of renovation, whereby He doth sweetly but powerfully incline the will which before was rebellious and refractory (obstinate, resistant), to accept of Christ, and make a free deliberate choice of Him for his Lord and Saviour. I say a free choice, not only cudgelled (to strike or beat with a short heavy club) into Him with apprehensions (dread) of wrath, as one may run under an enemy's penthouse in a storm, whose door he would have passed by in fair weather, and never looked that way. Speak, soul, dost please thyself in choosing Christ? Dost go to Christ, not only for safety, but delight? So the spouse: "I sat under His shadow with great delight." I say a deliberate choice, wherein the soul well weighs the terms of Christ. Like Ruth, who when Naomi spake the worst she could to discourage her, yet liked her mother's company too well to lose it for those troubles that attended her. Speak, soul, hath the Spirit of God thus put His golden key to the lock of thy will, to open the everlasting door of thy heart, to let Christ the King of glory in? Hath He not only opened the eye of thy understanding as He awakened Peter asleep in prison, and caused the chains of senselessness and stupidity to fall off thy conscience, but let thee out of the prison of impenitency, where even now thou wert fast bolted in; yea brought thee to knock at heaven's door for entertainment, as Peter did at the house of Mary, where the Church was met? Be of good comfort, thou mayest know assuredly that God hath sent not His angel, but His own Spirit and hath delivered thee out of the hand of sin, Satan, and [vindictive] justice.

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THE PERSUADER - December, 1995-January, 1996

When And Where Was Paul Saved?

Many quickly say, "That is an easy question. Everyone knows he was saved in Acts 9." Let me ask you another question. Was it when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus or three days later on the street called Straight? Before you answer that question, you need to examine Paul's own testimony in the Bible. (Acts 22)

Several years ago as a young preacher, I preached a message on Seven Reasons Why Paul Was Saved On The Road To Damascus. Today I cannot even remember the seven reasons. The reason I preached that message was because I had heard someone else preach a similar message. From my thinking and understanding of the scripture at the time, I thought it was a good solid message that would help others. But since that time, I have studied the scripture and in so doing, I came across Paul's testimony in Acts 22 where he told about Ananias coming to him and what he said in verses 13-16: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of

what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Take a careful look at verse 16. Ananias, who had been sent by the Lord to Paul, (Acts 9:10-12) told Paul (Acts 22:16) to "wash away his sins by calling on the name of the Lord." This verse reveals that Paul's sins had not yet been washed away. Therefore, by his own testimony, Paul was saved on the street called Straight in Damascus three days after encountering Jesus on the Damascus' road.

If we would be honest we must too admit most of what we preach and practice is due to tradition. Col. 2:8 warns not to be spoiled or captured by tradition. You may say, "But I have many reasons to believe he was saved on the road to Damascus. Let us look at some of them.

First reason: Paul called Jesus, Lord in Acts 9:5-6 and Rom. 10:13 states that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Lord" can be used as a respectful title. The same Greek word "kurios" was translated "Sir" in John 4:11,19 as the Woman at the well gave Jesus a title of respect. Also Paul called Jesus "kurios" (Greek). Many use Rom. 10:13 as a basis of salvation without understanding what it means "to call Jesus Lord." I Cor. 12:3b states, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." This means that the Holy Ghost must work His work of reproof (Holy Ghost conviction, John 16:8-11) which brings a person to the end of himself thus working repentance so the individual worked on can repent. At this point "Lord" is no more a title of respect, or just a word, but a commitment to Jesus as his Lord (Master; controller). This did not happen to Paul on the Damascus road.

Second reason: When Ananias came to Paul, he called him "brother" (Acts 9:17), because he was saved. Paul in the synagogue in Antioch addressed those present as "brethren" and they were not saved. (Acts 13:26) The same thing occurred in Acts 22:1 where he gives his testimony to a multitude of Jews and they were not saved for they rejected him when he mentioned going unto the Gentiles in Acts 22:21-23. Again he called the Sanhedrin "brethren" in Acts 23:1 and they were not saved. His use of "brethren" was in the sense of them as well as himself being a descendant of Abraham. Ananias could have called Paul "brother" for this same reason or he could have done so knowing the Lord was going to save him because of what He had already told him in Acts 9:15-16. But by Paul's own testimony in Acts 22, Ananias called Paul "brother" in verse 13 before his sins had been washed away (verse 16).

Third reason: He had to be saved before he was baptized. I agree. Paul fills us in on what Ananias said in Acts 22 while Acts 9:18 leaves out the details. Paul was saved before he was baptized and his baptism did not wash away his sins.

The Word of God destroys a lot of tradition. I have no problem (now that this Scripture has been opened to me) with when and where Paul was saved. It was on the street called Straight three days after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. You may ask, "What was he doing those three days?" Just what our Lord describes in Luke 14:25-33--counting the cost.

Paul tells us of this in Phil. 3:4-8. For three days after he came face to face with the reality of who Jesus was, he had to count the cost. He knew what he had inflicted upon the followers of Christ. Some he had killed. Some he had put in prison. He was a great persecutor of the followers of Christ. As he sat there in Damascus on the street called Straight, he had to decide whether he was willing to suffer as a follower of Christ. Was he willing to go to prison? For three days he counted the cost and came to the conclusion

that Christ was worth more than all his Jewish pedigree. Let me say, the only way he came to that conclusion was by the work of the Holy Spirit. And just at the right time God had His human instrument, Ananias, come with a message from Him. (The human instrument has to cross every person's path that will be saved. This is God's way. (Acts 8:31; Rom. 10:13-15; I Cor. 3:5)

The cost must be counted. In John 6, Jesus placed demands upon a large multitude and they were not willing to pay the price. They walked off and we never find a place where they were saved. (John 6:53, 60, 66) Also the rich young ruler was not willing to sell his goods and give to the poor. (Mark 10:21-22) He rejected the Lord Jesus, because he was not willing to pay the price. But Paul was willing and he got saved. What about you? Are you willing to count the cost and forsake all that Jesus may be your Lord and Saviour? Notice I said Lord and Saviour, not Saviour and Lord. He must be your Lord before he will be your Saviour!

When and where was Paul saved? He was saved on the street called Straight in Damascus three days after his Damascus road experience. You do not have to take my word but you need to believe God's Word!!!

THE PERSUADER - February-March, 1996

WHEN IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE?

I have heard preachers say when giving an invitation, "If you prayed that prayer (the prayer they repeated after the preacher) then your name was just written in the book of life." That statement is wrong for several reasons. First, one is not saved by praying a prayer, but by grace through faith. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10) You may have been praying when you were saved, but it was not the prayer that saved you but the condition of your heart which had been prepared by the Holy Ghost.

The second reason that statement is wrong, it is not supported by the Bible. In fact Rev. 17:8 refers to the names of the saints being written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. God in His foreknowledge wrote them down in eternity passed, not when saved.

Another reason that statement is not true is because Rev. 20:15 states, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is at the Great White Throne Judgment where all who rejected light (those whose names are not in the book) will be cast into the lake of fire. If one's name is written in the book of life when he is saved, answer this question: How do babies' names and those who have not reached the knowledge of accountability get in the book of life? Their names have to be there because Rev. 20:15 states plainly, all not in the book of life will be cast into the lake

of fire. Surely you are not one who believes that God cast the unaccountable into the lake of fire!

I believe those who have not reached the knowledge of accountability are safe because of grace. Proof of that is found in II Sam. 12: 14-23 where David upon the death of his son (a baby) said in verse 23, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David was saved; therefore, when he died he went to paradise where his baby was. If a man's name was written in the book of life when he was saved, then babies' names would not be written there; therefore, they would be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15)

Still another reason this statement is not so is because it gives rise to false doctrine concerning eternal security. Many who believe you can be lost after being saved use that statement along with passages such as Rev. 3:5, and 22:19. Rev. 3:5: "He that overcometh. . . I will not blot out (erase without a trace) his name out of the book of life." Rev. 22:19: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life. . ." The Lord would never warn a person of something that could never happen. Thus it is possible for one's name to be taken out of the book of life. Yet when he is saved, he is eternally secure. He cannot be lost after saved. You may ask, "How is this possible?"

To answer that question we need to look at God's Word not tradition. We need to learn to rightly divide God's Word instead of shying away from verses that tradition does not deal with.

The Psalmist spoke concerning the wicked in Psa. 69:28, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." God has a book of the living in which every child's name is written that is born into this world. I believe every aborted fetus and every stillborn child's name is also written in the book of the living.

When a person reaches the knowledge of accountability (age he knows good from evil, not right from wrong) his name is subject to being blotted out of the book of the living (called book of life in NT). John 3:36 states the wrath of God abides on all unbelievers. God, who is long-suffering and full of goodness, holds back this wrath granting a space of time for man to repent. (Rom. 2:4) If a person sins away God's day of grace or dies without trusting Jesus Christ as his Lord, his name will be blotted out (erased without a trace) of the book of life.

Rev. 3:5 promises the person who overcometh that his name would not be blotted out. I used to think and was taught that an overcomer was some super spiritual giant. Then I read God's Word in I John 5:4-5 and found out that an overcomer is one "who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." An overcomer is simply one who is saved. Therefore a person who is saved has the Lord's promise that his name will not be blotted out of the book of life. The blood of Christ permanently seals that person's name in the book of life. Concerning Rev. 22:19, a saved person will not take away from the book of this prophecy, thus his name will not be taken out of the book of life.

At the Great White Throne in Rev. 20:11-12, we find the book of life was opened. Why? To stop the mouth of every person who has any excuse that God was unfair to him. When these excuses will be given, the Lord will turn to the place in the book of life where his name had been, but it had been blotted out because he rejected the light and grace of God. (John 1:9; Rom. 1:19-20; Titus 2:11) Then He will cast every one whose name is not found written in the book of life into the lake of fire. (Rev. 22:15)

In conclusion, I want to restate the fact that your name is not written in the book of life when you are saved. But at the instant you are saved your name is permanently sealed in

the book of life and will never be blotted out. Thank the Lord for the saved being eternally secure in His hand. (John 10:27-29) Nothing can separate us from His love. (Rom. 8:35, 37-39)

The question is not so much when is your name written in the book of life? But has your name been permanently sealed in the book of life by Jesus' precious blood? If not, the wrath of God abides on you, if you have reached the knowledge of accountability. My advice: allow the Holy Spirit to complete His work of reproof (conviction) in you that you might be saved, genuinely saved by grace through faith. Then your name will be permanently secured in the book

THE PERSUADER - April-May, 1996

ABRAHAM - THE FATHER OF ALL WHO WALK IN THE STEPS OF THAT FAITH HE HAD

"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4:12

The Bible has much to say about faith and reveals several kinds of faith. Jude refers to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) This refers to the whole body of revealed truth which was delivered once to the saints and Jude says, "Contend for the faith."

Rom. 5:1 refers to a faith that justifies which we could call "saving faith." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In John 2:23-25 we see "intellectual faith" or believing with the head and not the heart. We conclude this by the fact that Jesus did not commit (believe) to them for He knew what was in man (in his heart; saving faith was not present). "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." (John 2:23-25)

Also in John 8:30-44 the Jews which believed on Jesus (verse 30) had "intellectual faith." The reason we know this is because when Jesus put demands upon them in verses 31-32, they got angry and argued with Jesus (verses 33-34) and Jesus ended up stating in verse 44, "Ye are of your father the Devil." They had only "intellectual faith" instead of "saving faith."

Then we see a "seeking faith" in the story of Nicodemus in John 3. He was one of the group of John 2:23-25 which had "intellectual faith" but he was not content with that because he sought out Jesus in John 3:1-2 to find out more about Him. We know that this "seeking faith" led to "saving faith" at some point later than John 3, because in John 19:39 he openly came to claim the body of Jesus. No Pharisees would do that unless "saving faith" had been in his life.

Heb. 11:1 defines faith; "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith, whatever kind, is a gift and not something one works up. John 3:27 states, "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." Also Eph. 2:8 states faith is a gift, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Gal. 3:6-9 gives us a conditional promise--we will be blessed with Abraham if we walk the steps of the faith he did. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal. 3:6-9) Let me say here, man has always, in every dispensation, been saved by grace through faith. There is only one way and not many ways as some teach.

This brings us to a question. What are the steps of faith Abraham walked in? Heb. 11:8 states plainly that he left Mesopotamia by faith. Acts 7:2-4 gives further facts. Even more plainly, the Bible reveals that Abraham did not have righteousness imputed to his account until he was in Canaan nine years. Gal. 3:6, Rom. 4:3, and James 2:23 quote Gen. 15:6 which is pinpointed in time about nine years after Abraham entered Canaan by Gen. 15:1, "After these things."

Since this is true we have another question. What kind of faith did Abraham have that caused him to leave Mesopotamia? Heb. 11:6 declares one must believe God "is" (intellectual faith) before he will come to Him or diligently seek God (seeking faith).

Abraham (really Abram until his name was changed in Gen. 17) recognized that God "is" (intellectual faith) probably through conscience (Rom. 1:19) or creation (Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1-3). Faith, whatever kind it is, will work. (James 2:20) Thus "intellectual faith" leads to a "seeking faith" as Heb. 11:10 bears out. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10)

"Seeking faith" caused Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees but he stopped short of Canaan at Haran where he stayed until he was seventy-five years old. At this time his dad died and the Lord spoke again to get out of this country, leave his kindred, and go to a land He would show him. (Gen. 12:1-3) Thus far "the seed" had not been mentioned. Abraham didn't fully obey because he carried his nephew Lot, but "seeking faith" moved him into Canaan. When in Canaan the Lord spoke again saying, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen 12:7) "Seeking faith" caused him to build an altar and call on the name of the Lord, yet he was not saved as Gen. 15:6 is where he was saved. Many say he was saved here because he called on the name of the Lord using Romans 10:13 as a proof text. One who believes that does not understand that one can call from the head and not be saved because he did not call from the heart (saving faith). I Cor. 12:3 states ". . . no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It takes Holy Ghost conviction for one to exercise "saving faith." Salvation is of the Lord!

After a trip to Egypt and conflict between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, Lot left Abraham. Then the Lord enlarged his promise to Abraham but "saving faith" was not exercised at this point. (Gen. 13:14-17) But "seeking faith" caused him to build an altar (Gen 14:18), fight the battle to deliver Lot (Gen. 14:1-16), and pay tithes to Melchizedek. (Gen. 14:20)

"After these things" (Gen. 15:1) the Lord spoke again, at which time Abraham did not fully understand. Yet, there come a point where "saving faith" was produced in his heart,

he believed, and the Lord counted it to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6)

The steps of faith that Abraham walked were: "intellectual faith", "seeking faith", and "saving faith" which in turn led to "serving faith." Everyone who walks in these steps will be blessed with faithful Abraham. (Gal. 3:9) In fact everyone who has even been saved or ever will be saved walked or will walk in these steps.

Let me add this is not "progressive salvation" as some men have called it. Salvation is instant--one second lost and the next saved. But there are steps of faith that must be walked if one ever comes to the end of himself, which is necessary before "saving faith" will ever be granted so that one may believe (point action) unto salvation.

The principle dealt with in this article is missing among many Baptist. In fact many get rather angry when confronted with this principle. Why? It may be they don't want to admit that the doctrine they teach may be wrong (following tradition) or if they were to admit this principle is correct, then they would have to deal with the possibility that they are lost. Therefore, they had rather stand by their tradition, remain in their pride, and go to hell than get honest and let God do a work in their heart so He can get all the glory.

Be noble and search the scripture whether this is so. (Act 17:11) It may make the difference between heaven and hell!!

THE PERSUADER - June-July, 1996

RIGHTEOUSNESS

The subject for this article of The Persuader is "Righteousness." I will deal with this subject by using the following outline:

1. Required to Enter Heaven

The Lord Jesus said in Mat. 5:20, "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The scribes and Pharisees had self-righteousness, but not God's righteousness; therefore, they were unable to enter the kingdom of heaven. Their standard of self-righteousness was very rigid. Today most would not even come close to their standard of living. If they were not saved then it stands to reason that no man today will be saved by self-righteousness for the scripture says in Romans 3:10; "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."

2. Resounded in Every Generation

II Peter 2:5 refers to Noah as a "preacher of righteousness." In every generation God has had His man heralding forth the righteousness of God as the only way to enter heaven.

3. Read in the Scriptures

Rom. 3:21 states, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." The phrases "the law and the prophets" refers to the OT Scriptures which witnessed (testified; to give a first hand detailed account of) the righteousness of God without the law. This does not mean that men in OT times

were justified by the law because the law was not given to justify man as Rom 3: 20 states plainly, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Man has always been justified by the righteousness of God. This is not a new doctrine because it was witnessed by a two-fold witness, the law and the prophets--OT Scripture.

4. Revealed in the Gospel of Christ

Paul said in Rom. 1: 16-17, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." "Therein" of verse 17 refers to the gospel of Christ in verse 16 which Paul defined in I Cor. 15: 3-4 as the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scripture, referring to the OT Scripture. Isa. 53: 4-11 bears out that God will not put His stamp of approval on our self-righteousness but was satisfied with the finished work on Calvary which reveals, manifests, or makes clear and plain the righteousness of God.

5. Reproved by the Spirit

When Jesus was about to go to the cross He promised He would send another (one of the same kind as Himself) Comforter (the Holy Spirit) whom He said in John 16: 8-11, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The word reprove means to convict and convince. The Holy Spirit convicts of the sin of unbelief (verse 9) and judgment which is hell, the punishment for sin. (verse 11) He also convinces one of his need of the righteousness of God as God's requirement for justification. No man will be saved until this work of reproof is complete of all three, sin, righteousness, and judgment. Many have been convicted of sins yet not of the sin of unbelief, thus they are not saved. Many have been convicted of judgment (hell) but the Lord does not save you to keep you out of hell. He saves you for His glory; therefore, you must be convinced of the righteousness of God before you will ever be justified, and this is a work of the Spirit.

6. Really Jesus

I Cor. 1: 30 states plainly that God made Christ Jesus to be our righteousness. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The language of John 16: 10 reveals clearly that Jesus is the righteousness one needs to be convinced of. When He walked with His disciples they were convinced He was the righteousness of God but after He ascended man needs the Holy Spirit to convince him that Jesus is God's righteousness which is required to be justified. I John 5: 12 states plainly one must have the Son to be saved. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The Son is Jesus who is God's righteousness.

7. Real Problem is Submission

Submission to the righteousness of God was Israel's problem as Rom. 10: 3 states, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Israel as a nation would not submit to Jesus as the Christ (Messiah) and their Lord; therefore, they were not saved. Jesus said to the Jews in John 5:39-40, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Jesus must be submitted to as Lord before one can be saved. He will not be Saviour until He is Lord. Romans 10:13 does not say whosoever shall call on the Saviour shall be saved. Instead it says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I Cor. 12:3 says, "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." This is the work of reproof of John 16:8 that we previously dealt with. One must be convinced that Jesus is the righteousness he needs and submit to Him as Lord to be justified. By the way, this is true in every dispensation. God granted Abraham righteousness in Gen. 15:6 because he was convinced the seed, singular, was more than just Isaac. John 8:56 states, "Abraham saw Jesus' day and was glad."

8. Received by Saving Faith

Rom. 3:22: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." Rom. 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. 4:3: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

It is clear from these Scriptures that righteousness is only "upon", "counted", or imputed to one's account by faith in the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The faith required for this is "saving" faith. I use this term because we are living in a day when many say just believe and you will be saved.

But Jesus declares plainly that those of John 2:23-25 and John 8:30-44 were not saved yet they believed. They had an "intellectual" faith or "seeking" faith but not "saving" faith; therefore, they did not receive the righteousness of God. On the other hand Abraham received the righteousness of God in Gen 15:6 but that was 9 years after entering Canaan. Even though Heb. 11:8 says he left Ur of Chaldees by faith he did not have "saving" faith until years later. He had only "intellectual" faith that led to "seeking" faith and finally brought him to "saving" faith through which he was able to receive the righteousness of God. (See a complete article of this subject in the June-July, 1996 issue of The Persuader.)

9. Results

The results or outcome of imputed righteousness is described in Isa. 32:17 as peace, quietness, and assurance. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Rom. 5:1 states, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The assurance which comes from the Holy Spirit and not from man is described as "much" in I Thess. 1:5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. . ." Also the result is righteous living in this present world as the Holy Spirit guides the justified to practice as Titus 2:12 states, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Self righteousness causes man to clean up the outside by doing certain things or

abstaining from certain things while God's righteousness cleans up the inside first and continues to clean up the outside. Jesus made this very clear to the Pharisees in Mat. 23: 25-26, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

10. Conclusion

Do you have self-righteousness or God's righteousness? Do you have the Son? If you do not, you will never make heaven. Get honest, junk tradition, and allow the Holy Spirit to work a complete work convincing you that the Lord Jesus is the righteousness of God which you need and submit to Him as your Lord with repentance and "saving" faith, all of which is His work because salvation is of the Lord. Then you will have Him, the righteousness of God, which is God's requirement to enter the pearly gate.

THE PERSUADER - August-September, 1996

JEHOVAH RAAH THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23; Isaiah 40: 10-11

In the Hebrew culture, one's name was much more than a mere title. It was descriptive and representative of the one who bore it. It was as an expression or revelation of one's person and character. The same is true with God. His names are a revelation of His true being and person and also show how He works. One of His names is "Jehovah Raah," which is translated in Psalm 23: 1 as "the Lord is my shepherd."

It meant much to Israel when it was said that their God was their shepherd. To them a shepherd was one who gave his life for the sheep and to the sheep. Thus He is represented as a caring God in Isaiah 40: 10-11, "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The word shepherd is translated from the Hebrew word "Raah." Jesus is the Great Shepherd (Raah), the Chief Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John 10: 11) This is not talking about a hireling but a shepherd, one who lived with the sheep, led the sheep, and was willing to give His life for the sheep. This is the Lord Jesus, our Jehovah Raah.

The Shepherd does five things for His sheep.

1. He Gathers.

"...He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom..." (Isa. 40: 11) This refers to salvation as being the Lord's work. He, in His foreknowledge, knows His sheep even though they are not yet in the fold. In Mat. 15: 24 Jesus said, "I am not sent

but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This refers to the Jews who did not have imputed righteousness (were not saved at this time). He also spoke concerning the Gentiles whom He foreknew would be saved in John 10:16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

In the parable in Luke 15:3-7, Jesus refers to a shepherd as not being content until the last sheep is in the fold. Verse 7 lets us know that this lost sheep represents a sinner whom the shepherd was seeking. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke 15:7)

Luke 19:10 says that is the reason Jesus came to this earth robed in flesh was, "to seek and to save that which was lost," lost sheep whom the Shepherd gathers. In John 4:4, the Bible states that Jesus, "must needs go through Samaria." He was seeking and gathering lost sheep, in this case a sinful woman who was found and saved by Jacob's well. In John 1:43, it is stated that Jesus, "findeth Philip." "Findeth" does not mean to happen upon by chance but refers to our Lord, Jehovah Raah having His sights on Philip, came upon him at the right place and the right time as He was seeking and gathering His sheep.

The Lord is my Shepherd, a caring God as He gathers. And like Naomi said of Boaz, who is a type of our Lord, in Ruth 3:18, "The man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." Neither will our Shepherd rest till He finds and gathers His lost sheep. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6)

2. He Gives.

Not only does He gather but He also gives. By this I mean He provides and supplies all His sheep's needs. Isa. 40:11 states, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd..." Psalm 23:1 says the sheep, "shall not want." In verse 5 He states that the Shepherd, "preparest a table before me (His sheep) in the presence of mine enemies." Also in verse 5 He "anointest my (sheep) head with oil; my (sheep) cup runneth over." "Anointed" means to be made fat and speaks of Divine favor or prosperity. "Runneth over" means satisfaction and indicates abundance, not just full, but running over. Jehovah Raah gives. He always provides and will never leave you to want. He provides milk (I Peter 2:2), meat (Heb. 5:14), and water (John 4:14), all of which is found in our Lord, Jehovah Raah.

3. He Guides.

Isa. 40:11c states the Shepherd, "shall gently lead those that are with young." Jehovah Raah knows the nature of His sheep and cares for every one of His sheep. He can not take the young and tender lambs along as fast as He can the old ram. The same principle is spoken of by Jacob as he tells Esau in Gen. 33:13-14 that he will not follow him at his pace because the children and young of the flock could not take it as fast as the men. Therefore, he said he would "lead on softly" as the children and young and tender of flocks can take it for he stated, "If men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die."

This may be the reason it takes time for some to be saved, for the Shepherd knows that should He overdrive them at any time they would wilfully rebel and step out of light (truth, understanding and die without being saved). (Pro. 21:16)

Jehovah Raah leads to pastures of tender grass and beside waters of quietness. (Psa. 23:2) Also He leads in right paths (Psa. 23:3b), paths of righteousness which means

having a right relationship with God and man. This requires right attitudes, actions, and reactions. Right paths are the "old paths" for which Jeremiah told Israel to ask. (Jer. 6:16) "Old paths" are the paths of the Lord's truths, not those of man's tradition. Our Shepherd guides and leads but does not drive nor overdrive.

4. He Guards.

Psa. 23:3a states, "He restoreth my soul." "Restoreth" means to bring back to former state or normal state by repairing or rebuilding. The tense reveals a continuous action which indicates the Shepherd is continuously working in His sheep's lives to restore them to their former condition which they had in Adam before he fell in the garden. This work began before we were even born and continuous in our lives all our days upon this earth (before we are saved and after) so as to conform us to His image. (Rom. 8:29) Thus Romans 8:28 is true. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." He is working all things together for ultimate good for His sheep. Therefore, our Shepherd is guarding and protecting His sheep as they go through life's journey.

He guards when we face death. Psa. 23:4a states, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." We usually refer to this scripture when one has died. This is alright because "all scripture is profitable for doctrine" (II Tim. 3:16), but in context David is referring to his battle with Goliath where he was facing death. "Through" indicates he came out victorious. He did not fear although his life was in danger because he knew Jehovah Raah, the Shepherd who guards, was present with him. Since the Lord, who is the light of the world, was present, death just cast a shadow upon David. And he knew a shadow could not hurt him. A shadow of a car can not run over you. A shadow of a dog can not bite you. A shadow of a sword can not cut you. Neither can death hurt God's sheep, because when Jehovah Raah is present, He is guarding His sheep and all death can do is just cast a shadow. Remember He is always present. (Mat. 28:20)

He guards with His rod and staff. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psa. 23:4b) His rod is used to club snakes and drive off the enemy. The staff is used to correct the sheep when disobedient and bring them back from wandering. The sight of those comforts the sheep because he knows he is being watched over and guarded.

Psa. 23:6a says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Goodness and mercy are God's footmen which go with us day by day "all the days of my life." These footmen make the way smoother for us as we travel life's pathway. They do not begin following us when we are saved but they have been following all of God's sheep from the day they were conceived in their mother's womb. Thus God's sheep are guarded from conception. Jehovah Raah guards.

5. He Guarantees Delivery.

Psa. 23:6b states, "I (sheep) will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." "Dwell" means to be at home. Look at I Peter 1:3-5. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Note in verse 3 those "begotten again to a lively hope" which is "an inheritance reserved" (verse 4)

and the saints also are preserved (verse 5) because they are kept or guarded. Jude refers to the saints (God's sheep) as being "preserved." (Jude 1) When Mom made preserves, she canned them and sealed them, but sometimes the seal on her preserves came loose. Not so with those Jehovah Raah seals, because He guarantees delivery, spirit, soul, and body of all His sheep to heaven because He is Jehovah Raah.

The Lord is my shepherd. This can be a known fact today that will take care of tomorrow's unknown future--"I shall not want." All because of Jehovah Raah.

THE PERSUADER - October-November, 1996

WHAT KIND OF MINISTRY DO YOU HAVE?

". . . Make full proof of thy ministry." II Tim. 4:5

Paul commands young Timothy to "make full proof of thy ministry." This means to fulfill his ministry in every part. Also it means to fully perform all the duties of his ministry. If this command was needed in Paul's day, you can be sure it is needed today.

Every saved person has a ministry. Therefore, this verse has application to every Christian for them to fully perform all the duties of their ministry. This involves following the Lord's will and plan for the ministry He has set each person apart to accomplish.

In context Paul is speaking to a young preacher, telling him to perform all the duties of his ministry. This command should be a warning to every preacher of this day to make certain he fully performs the duties of his ministry. The reason I say this is because there are many in the pulpits of our churches today who do not know what their ministry involves; therefore, they have the wrong kind of ministry.

What kind of ministry do you have? Many would say, "I have a soul winning ministry." It is true the Bible says in Pro. 11:30, ". . . He that winneth souls is wise." The word "winneth" means to influence and persuade, which is what it means to be a witness in the New Testament sense of the word. Even being a witness takes the power of the Holy Ghost for one's message to be effective. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

In the day in which we live the work of the Holy Ghost is either left completely out or short-circuited by many preachers who are performing their ministry according to man's plan instead of God's. And the result is that they have a 'tare-making' ministry which in turn leads to a 'propping-up' ministry. Let me explain what I mean by these terms.

TARE-MAKING MINISTRY

Jesus spoke a parable concerning tares in Mat. 13:24-30. Then he explained the parable in Mat. 13:36-43. He stated plainly in verse 38 that, "the tares (in a spiritual sense) are the children of the wicked one." They look like the real but have no genuine root, therefore, no fruit. Thus tares represent unsaved church members and professors of Christ but in reality they do not possess Him. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that

hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:12) How come they are tares instead of wheat? This could be due to various methods preachers use to pressure decisions from sinners. You may ask, "What methods are you referring to?"

Let me give you an illustration of a couple of these methods that make tares. First, there is the method of "raise your hand and repeat after me." The preacher asks all to bow their heads at invitation time. Then he makes the statement, "Raise your hand if you are not saved." Next he says, "Repeat after me" and he leads the person through a 'canned' prayer. When through with the prayer, the preacher makes a statement something like this, "If you prayed that prayer, you are saved." That preacher just gave the sinner the wrong information and 99% of the time made a tare instead of a saint. Prayer does not save. The Lord Jesus saves and then, only when the Holy Ghost completes His work of conviction. (John 16:8-11)

Many today are against this practice and call that 'easy-believism.' Yet they practice this second method which is just as damning because tares are also made by this method. They use a 'canned' plan such as the 'Roman Road' or 'Four Spiritual Laws' getting everyone they deal with to answer their questions in the affirmative. Finally they bring them to Romans 10:13 and get them to pray. After they pray (usually the sinner prays silently at this point) then the preacher ask the one who prayed if he was saved. The conversation usually goes something like this:

Sinner: "I don't know," with a peace-less look on his face.

Preacher: "Let's go through this again," using the same verses and questions. Usually, this time he stresses the "whosoever" in Rom. 10:13 as referring to the sinner to whom he is talking. The sinner will agree that he is the one to whom the verse is referring. Then he says, "Let's pray again, but this time you pray out loud." The reason for this is that he wants to hear the sinner call on the name of the Lord.

The sinner then prays out loud and when he is through the preacher asks, "Are you saved?"

Sinner: "I don't know," still with an unsettled look on his face.

The preacher raises his voice with sternness in it and points to Rom. 10:13 and says, "The Bible says whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Did you call?"

Sinner: "Yes."

Preacher: "Are you calling God a liar? He said if you called He would save you."

The sinner then usually says he is saved because he does not want to call God a liar, yet the majority of times when this pressure tactic is used a tare is produced. ". . . No man can say Jesus is Lord but, by the Holy Ghost." (I Cor. 12:3) If the Holy Ghost did not complete His work of conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then every time this method is used a tare is made. Is your ministry a 'tare making' ministry?

PROPPING-UP MINISTRY

Many preachers spend a lot of their time propping up their converts or giving them assurance. Let me illustrate some ways this is done. The preacher will have a person who is in doubt as to whether he is saved or not, to pray the so-called 'sinner's prayer,' telling him to just get it settled today. The problem with that is a person must realize (more than recognize; to realize takes a work of Holy Spirit conviction) he is lost before he can be saved. (Luke 19:10) This type of prayer will not work, "Lord save me if I am lost." The preacher who leads you in this way has a 'propping-up' ministry and is not fully performing the duties of the ministry to which God has called him.

Another way is that every time one is doubting his salvation, the preacher begins to play God and tell him he knows he is saved because he was the one who led him to Christ and he was there at the time he called on the name of the Lord. The problem with this is that no preacher can see all of someone's heart. In fact the sinner does not know his own heart. (Jer. 17:9) The reason many continually do this is because they do not want their converts to make another profession because it makes them look bad and hurts their pride. Salvation is of the Lord and not of the preacher, even though the Lord uses a preacher.

Still another way to prop up someone is to turn to the tradition of man to give assurance. One of the most used tradition is that of 'answered prayer.' They tell them if they have an answered prayer, that is one way to know they are saved. But we read in Acts 10 that God heard Cornelius' prayer while he was a lost man. Those who practice such have a 'propping-up' ministry and are not fully performing the ministry God has called them to do.

Some use the 'Word only' prop. Just claim a verse and it will be OK. But I Thess. 1:5 states, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and much assurance." Isa. 32:17 states the work of righteousness will be assurance forever. It is not our job to give assurance, neither to save. If one practices such they have a 'tare-making' ministry and a 'propping-up' ministry or a ministry that is not well pleasing to the Lord. As a result they will have a lot to answer for at the judgment seat if they make it there. (John 10:27,5)

I could give you more illustrations of the practices of 'tare-making' and 'propping-up' in man's ministry. Space does not allow more at this time. If you are interested we have many articles and booklets based on God's Word that we would gladly send you.

Write us concerning your thoughts. Our prayer is that preachers would get back to fully performing the duties of the ministry by doing what Paul said in II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Practicing this and allowing the Holy Ghost to complete His work of conviction will produce saints and not tares. And the amazing thing about the saints is they have assurance given by the Holy Ghost and do not need the preacher to continually prop them up. (Rom. 8:16; I John 5:8-12)

This way the Lord gets all the glory, which is the way it should be.

THE PERSUADER - December, 1996 - January, 1997

DOES GOD HEAR A LOST SINNER WHEN HE PRAYS?

For the answer to this question let us turn to the Scripture. The Bible says in John 9:31a, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners." Many have used this verse to say God does not hear a sinner when he prays except, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Is this a true statement? It is true that John 9:31 is the inspired Word of God. But it is also God's Word that tells us in II Tim. 2:15 to "rightly divide the Word."

You can take the Bible and use it out of context and prove anything you want. For

instance in Eccl. 10:19 the Bible says, "money answereth all things." This is not a true statement but in context it is saying, man says money is the answer to all things. The context of John 9:31 reveals a lost man making this statement to a group of lost Pharisees. Neither the sinner nor the Pharisees understood truth. We also read in Acts 10:1-2 about Cornelius, a lost man, who prayed always and later in Acts 10:31, we find an angel had come and told him, "thy prayer is heard." Therefore, it is evident from Scripture that the Lord does hear a sinner's prayer.

I am not saying He will answer a sinner's prayers in the same degree as He will a saint's prayer who is living in the will of God. Men have taken John 9:31 and used that to give them assurance of their salvation. You cannot do that for three reasons: 1) How do you know the devil did not answer your prayer? 2) What if someone else was praying and God answered their prayer instead of yours? 3) How do you know it did not just happen? If you are using answered prayer for your assurance of salvation, you are on dangerous ground. Take those prayers that you know God answered (you may find they are only a few) and allow the Lord to show you that the reason He answered those prayers was to let you know that "God is" and that He is real and really does exist. Then, and only then, will you come to Him. ". . . He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6)

Some say God answers only prayers that deal with your salvation. Let me ask you this, "How does a lost person who has a blinded mind (II Cor. 4:3-4) and a deceived heart (Jer. 17:9) know what deals with salvation and what does not deal with salvation?" So, in a sense, when the Lord answers a lost sinner's prayer it does have to do with his salvation because that allows him to know that God really does exist.

In conclusion, God does hear and answer a lost sinner's prayer as He chooses, so that the sinner might have intellectual faith--that there is a God, that He does exist, and then seek Him diligently that he might be saved. The Scripture brings this out if one will "rightly divide the Word."

I beg you, please do not deny this doctrine. Your eternal destiny may be at stake. Search the Scripture. You are noble if you do. (Acts 17:11) After you have searched, get honest with yourself and follow the Word of God and not the tradition of men. Tradition of men says God does not hear a lost sinner's prayer while the Word of God says to a lost man in Acts 10:31, "thy prayer is heard."

I believe I will just stay with the Word of God and junk the tradition of men. How about you? Your eternal destiny may just depend on your choice.

If you would like to receive more information concerning this doctrine, please write or call us. We would like to hear from you, pro or con. If we can be of help to you in any way do not hesitate to contact us. We love you and will be your friend.

THE PERSUADER - April-May, 1997