

## CONDITIONS OF ENTRY INTO HEAVEN

Christians must never take their faith or their salvation for granted thinking they qualify for heaven simply because they believe in God and have faith in Jesus and His atoning blood to save them. Faith alone will not get anyone to heaven. There are many conditions of entry into heaven laid down in scripture which must be complied with before anyone can enter in. While the benefits of the gospel are solely on the basis of personal choice, complying with the conditions for appropriating those benefits are part of the cost of that choice. Salvation is a paradox – it is both free and costly. Free, because Jesus has already paid for it with His life's blood, yet there is a cost in terms of its impact upon those who would follow Jesus. Jesus' followers are called disciples, and if anyone does not conform to the standards Jesus has laid down for discipleship, they will forfeit their place in heaven and have no part in God's eternal kingdom (CP Lu 14:34-35).

This is called the parable of savourless salt. It is the last of three parables Jesus told in Lu 14 to impress upon His followers the qualifications of discipleship. This is a stern warning to Christians to not only be hearers of God's word, but to be doers also. Jesus likens Christians to salt, which seasons and preserves. Christians are to be seasoning agents in society to counteract the corrupt world system. Those who no longer contain the characteristics to withstand the corrupt world system are like salt that has lost its seasoning and preserving qualities; they no longer fulfil God's purpose. And like salt that has lost its flavour no longer has any value, they too are no longer of any value. It is not enough to hear God's word; it must be put into practice (CP Mt 5:13; Mk 9:49-50).

This clearly refutes the teaching in the church that *once saved* means *always saved*. If it were not possible for once-saved Christians to fail God's grace, then these scriptures and the others which follow that teach the same thing, would not be in the bible. There must be no confusion in the minds of Christians as to what Jesus really means when He said: "*follow me*" (CP Lu 14:26-27). The word *hate* here is an idiom of preference. It does not mean that Christians are to literally hate their parents and family members, but that they are to love them less than they love Jesus (CP Mt 10:37-39). What this teaches is that there must be no consideration given to family ties that would deflect Christians from total consecration to the service of God and complete surrender to the authority of Jesus. Christians must not be centred on family or self. They must live lives of self-abnegation, renouncing all worldly pleasures and selfish ambitions, denying all self-gratifying desires, and continue willing to self-sacrificially serve God daily to end of their earthly life. Not only when it suits them or when it is convenient or popular, but also when it does not suit them, and it is inconvenient and unpopular (CP Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lu 9:23). Christians have to put the interests of God's kingdom above all else and subjugate all selfish desires and pleasures that are contrary to God's word (CP Col 3:1-4).

There can be no compromise because the choice between Christians denying themselves, and living for their own selfish desires, has to be made daily. And that choice will determine their eternal destiny – heaven or hell. These seem to be harsh conditions, but Jesus has laid them down and no one can enter into heaven any other way. This is what Jesus means in Lu 9:23 when he said; "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*". What Jesus is teaching here is very plain to understand, and it must be heeded (CP Mt 10:39; 16:25; Mk 8:35-37; Lu 9:24-25). *He that findeth his life shall lose it; He that loses his life for my sake, shall find it* means that whoever lives a life of self-gratification will lose it – they will forfeit their place in heaven. Whoever puts to death the sinful deeds of the body, will ensure their place in heaven (CP Ro 8:12-13; 1Cor 6:9-11; Eph 4:20-32; Col 3:5-10). If through fear for any reason Christians deny Jesus, He will also deny them before God, and they will be damned for eternity (CP Mk 8:38; Lu 9:26; 2Ti 2:11-12; Rev 21:8). The *fearful* in Rev 21:8 are professing Christians whose fear of man overrides their loyalty to Christ and the truth of His word. Their personal feelings and status among men mean more to them than proclaiming God's word and witnessing to His saving grace. *Fearful* means to be timid, afraid, faint-hearted. Jesus placed these first among those consigned to the lake of fire – the final destiny of all the wicked who ever lived – because they profess to be Christians, but they compromise God's word rather than proclaim it (CP Psa 119:46; Mt 10: 32-33; 13:20-21; Rev 3:5).

Now let us look at the first and second parables of the three Jesus told in Lu 14 to impress upon His followers the qualifications of discipleship. The first is in V28-30 (CP Lu 14:28-30). This is called the parable of the tower builder. Here Jesus illustrates the absurdity of following Him without first counting the cost. Only manifestly true Christians – those who start and finish their journey with Christ – will have part in His eternal kingdom (CP 1Jn 2:13-17; 4:4; 5:4-5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:10-11). The second of the parables in Lu 14 is found in V31-33 (CP Lu 14:31-33). This is called the parable of a king going to war. Here Jesus illustrates the impossibility of being saved unless one forsakes all for Him. The word *forsaketh* in V33 means to bid farewell, to assign to a different place, to take leave of, to dismiss, renounce. It carries the notion here of putting something aside to prevent it becoming a hindrance or gaining excessive control. V33 is one of the most misunderstood verses in scripture. Most Christians believe that it means they have to be *willing* to forsake all for Jesus, but Jesus said they *must* forsake all for Him (CP Mk 10:17-27). The rich young ruler here wanted to be saved – he came running to Jesus and knelt before Him but he did not get saved because he would not forsake all for Jesus. This does not mean that Christians have to sell or dispose of their wealth and possessions as a condition of salvation, but that they must place all their wealth and possessions at the service of God once they are saved.

Unless Christians forsake all for Jesus they will have no part in His heavenly kingdom (CP Lu 9:57-62). These passages teach above all else that anything less than total consecration to the service of God, and complete surrender to the authority of Jesus eliminates one from the kingdom

of heaven. The first incident teaches that emotional enthusiasm that has not considered the cost of abandoning material security to follow Jesus, is insufficient to get one into heaven by Christ's standards. The second incident teaches that loyalty to Christ must take precedence over all other loyalties. Following Christ must take priority over everything else. Jesus is not being insensitive to the propriety of funerals here, but is teaching against putting off the work of God "... *but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*". Christians have the urgent task of proclaiming the gospel to those who are lost (CP 2Ti 4:1-2). This is more important than arranging funerals for spiritually dead people who have died. The third incident teaches that once they commence in the service of God, Christians cannot turn away. Service to God demands their undivided attention, and if they are not prepared to single-mindedly serve God, they will forfeit their place in heaven (CP Mt 12:30).

Jesus is teaching here that there is no neutrality in Christianity. If Christians are not actively involved in doing God's work for Jesus, then they are actively involved in doing the work of the devil against Him. As stated at the beginning of this study, merely believing in God, and having faith in Christ and His atoning blood will not get anyone to heaven. Only faith acted upon to produce works will ensure a place in heaven once Christians have committed their way to Christ (CP Mt 5:16; Jn 15:8; Eph 2:10). The only faith that can save is that demonstrated by works. Works are the outworking of God's word in Christians (CP Jas 1:22-25). This is directed to those in the church who profess faith in Christ and His atoning blood, believing that is all that is necessary for salvation. V22 clearly refutes that thinking "... *but ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*" This means that whoever thinks that faith alone will get them to heaven are deluding themselves thinking they are saved (CP Jas 2:14-26). Just believing in God will get no one to heaven – demons also believe in God. But they are not going to heaven.

Christians are not justified by works, but because they are justified by faith, they do the works. This proves their consecration to the service of God and yieldedness to the authority of Jesus. Christian works are acts of faith, which means they flow from faith or are combined with faith. Faith and works cannot be separated (CP Tit 3:8; He 11:17-19; Jas 2:21-25). Every act of obedience to God's word is an act of faith and works combined to maintain the Christian's justification before God. Abraham demonstrated his faith by his works. He believed God and acted on that belief and proved his faith. Had he not obeyed, it would have demonstrated that he had no faith in God or His word (CP Gen 22:1-18). Abraham's faith was made perfect in God's sight by his works – being prepared to sacrifice Isaac as an act of obedience to God. God expects the same of everyone who says they believe in Him and His word. If Christians do not act out what they say they believe, then they are in fact repudiating God's word, and in effect calling Him a liar (CP 1 Jn 5:10). Those who say they believe in God

and His word, and do not act out that faith, will forfeit their place in God's eternal kingdom. Faith without works is dead faith, and it will produce neither salvation nor anything else that is good (CP Ro 14:23; He 3:12, 19; 4:1-2; 11:6). It is futile for Christians to think they are saved and going to heaven who profess faith in God's word, but their actions mirror unbelief. They are only deluding themselves thinking they please God yet are not walking in faith and trusting implicitly in His word. God has obligated Himself only to save those with faith "... *but without faith it is impossible to please Him ...*" (CP Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:13).

No one will be saved who is not doing the work of God's word. Many bible commentators teach that hearers who are not doers of God's word have never been truly converted to Christ, and that the miracles they claim to have done are of the devil – not God. But that is not correct for only spirit-filled Christians can cast out demons, prophesy, and do wonderful works "in Jesus' name" (CP Mk 16:17-20; Jn 14:10-14; Ac 2:16-18 (Joel 2:28-29); 1Cor 12:1-11). Those to whom Christ referred in Mt 7:21-27 are Christians who will forfeit their place in heaven for failing to persevere in faith (CP 2Ti 4:10; Rev 2:1, 4-5; 2:12, 14-16; 2:18, 20-23; 3:1, 2-3; 3:14-19).

Christians have not been given the light of divine truth to keep it to themselves. It must be outworked in their lives for all to see and hear (CP Mt 5:14-16; Mk 4:21-25; Lu 8:16-18; 11:33-36). These scriptures all teach the parable of the lighted candle. While they may vary slightly to some extent, the core teaching is the same: Jesus is admonishing Christians to put into practice what they hear. It is not to be hidden, but used in the service of God. What Christians do with the truth they receive will determine whether or not they will be given more or lose that which they already have, and forfeit their place in heaven as well (CP Mt 25:14-30). This is called the parable of the talents. What it teaches has a double application also, like the parable of the lighted candle: what Christians receive in the future kingdom of heaven will be determined by what they possess of the kingdom now. The basic teaching is that God has given every Christian spiritual gifts and graces according to their respective abilities and that these gifts and graces must be put to use in God's service (CP Ro 12:3-8; 1Cor 12:1-31; 2Cor 5:18-20; Eph 4:7-16; 1Pe 4:7-11). God means Christians to use these gifts for the extension of His kingdom – they are not for Christians' profit but for God's. Christians who do not use their gift or grace for God's glory are symbolized by the slothful servant in the parable who hid his master's talent in the ground.

There is a tendency among some bible scholars to downplay the punishment the slothful servant received. They teach that symbolically it compares only to loss of rewards in heaven or that outer darkness simply refers to the outer limits of heaven. But that is not correct. Hell is alluded to many times in the New Testament in association with darkness (CP Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2Pe 2:4, 17; Jude 6,13). The plain teaching in these scriptures is that all the places of punishment associated with darkness refer to hell, not the outer limits of heaven, nor merely loss of rewards in heaven. There will be no darkness, and no weeping or wailing and gnashing of teeth in heaven (CP Ro 14:17; Rev 21:4, 23). The slothful servant was not punished because he

failed to return a profit to his master, but because underlying his failure to return a profit, was his prior intention not to even invest his master's money (CP Mt 25:24-25). The servant's intention not to invest his master's money is reminiscent of the guest in the parable of the marriage feast in Mt 22 who predetermined not to put on a wedding garment (CP Mt 22:2-14). The king, having to turn to other guests, both bad and good, to take part in the marriage feast, illustrates God turning to all men, and not to Jews only, to be a part of His kingdom. Notwithstanding though that anyone at all could take part in the marriage feast, those who did were under the King's authority and had to comply with the conditions of entry he had laid down. They had to wear a wedding garment, and the other guests all complied with that condition except this man (CP Mt 22:11-12). In the Greek construction of this passage it shows that not only was the man not wearing a wedding garment, but that he had no intention of even putting one on. He wanted to partake of the king's provision, but on his terms, not the king's. This was a gross insult to the king, accounting his authority for nothing. The man's punishment was the same as the slothful servant's in the parable of the talents.

Jesus is teaching us here that in the present earthly aspect of the kingdom of heaven there are many professing Christians like the wedding guest. They want to partake of the kingdom benefits, but on their terms also, not God's. Wearing the wedding garment in the parable and being yielded to the authority of the king, is symbolic of Christians being completely yielded to Christ in continued obedience to God's word. Thus, if Christians are not doing the work of God's word, they cannot partake of His kingdom benefits, and just as the man without a wedding garment in the parable could not partake of the feast and was cast into outer darkness, so Christians who are not totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus will be cast into hell. The punishment the wedding guest here and the slothful servant in the parable of the talents received is synonymous with unfaithful Christians being cast into hell.

It cannot be stressed enough that Christians merely believing in God and professing faith in Christ and His atoning blood to save them, will not make it to heaven (CP Lu 19:11-26). This is called the parable of the pounds. It sets out what Christians are to do in the time preceding Christ's return. The word *occupy* (KJV), means be busy, do business, trade with. This is a specific command which has to be obeyed. The pound which all the nobleman's servants alike were given, symbolizes the word of God which all Christians alike have been given (CP 2Cor 5:17-19). As the servants had to trade with the pound for the nobleman's profit, so too Christians have to do the work of God's word for the advancement of His kingdom. The servant who hid his pound had the same reason for not investing it as the slothful servant in the parable of the talents, who hid his talent. They both lost what they had and suffered the same punishment. The simple teaching in

these parables is that worthy Christians will be rewarded: unworthy Christians will be punished – doers of the word will go to heaven while merely hearers will be cast into hell (CP Jn 15:1-6).

Here Jesus likens Christians to the branches of a fruit-bearing vine. There can be no mistaking what Jesus is teaching here: fruitless Christians – like branches that bear no fruit are cut off from the vine and burned – will be cut off, severed from God and cast into hell. Christians' fruitfulness is a result of Christ's life being reproduced in them, but they must abide in Him to be fruitful. To abide in Christ means to be totally consecrated to the service of God and completely surrendered to the authority of Jesus (CP Jn 8:31-32; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 14; 1Cor 7:19; 1Jn 2:3-6, 24; 5:2-3). As the vine is the source of life for the branches, so Christ is the source of life for Christians. Christ demands that Christians' fruit be commensurate with what He has invested in them (CP Jn 15:16; Eph 2:10; 2Ti 3:16-17; Tit 2:14). God has ordained Christians to serve Him and He expects every one of them to bear fruit for Him (CP Php 2:12). This is not teaching salvation by works, but that Christians are individually responsible for obedience to God's word in the process of sanctification – being set apart for God (CP Mt 6:19-20; Jn 6:27; 2Cor 13:5; 1Ti 6:17-19; 2Pe 1:10; Jude 1-3). *Fear and trembling* in Php 2:12 refers to the attitude with which Christians are to pursue their sanctification. It involves a healthy fear of offending God, and a dread of sinning against Him and the consequences that may follow (CP Ps 2:11-12; 13:1-5; 85:9; 119:119-120; Pr 3:7-8; 9:10; 14:27; 16:6; Ecc 12:13; Isa 66:1-2; Lu 12:4-5; 1Cor 9:26-27; 10:12-14; Eph 6:5-8; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31). While Christians are responsible for working out their own salvation, it is God who actually produces the good works and the fruit in their lives (CP Hos 14:8; Jn 15:4-5; 1Cor 12:6; 2Cor 3:5; Php 2:13; 1Ti 1:12). Of course God can only produce good works and fruit in those who are abiding in Christ.

When Christians are born again, their experience is not limited to the initial act of spiritual renewal when they commit themselves to Christ. It is an on-going work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit throughout the entirety of their Christian walk, transforming their lives as they surrender themselves to the Lordship of Christ and the authority of God's word. Being born again expresses the change wrought in Christians' lives by the Holy Spirit after their conversion to Christ (CP Jn 3:3-7; 4:13-14; Ro 12:1-2; Eph 4:17-32; 5:25-27; Col 3:9-11; Tit 3:5; Jas 1:18-25; 1Pe 1:23-25; 2Pe 1:1-4; 1:5-11; 1Jn 2:27). These scriptures all teach that once committing their way to the Lord, Christians must be actively involved in their own spiritual growth. They must no longer be conformed to the world system that is without God, but are to be transformed by a renewed mind committed to the ideals of the kingdom of God. Let us read 2Pe 1:1-11 again (CP 2Pe 1:1-11). In V8, 10 and 11 here we learn that Christians can experience all the things of V3-4 which ensure their place in heaven, but they can forfeit that place through negligence. It is only by developing the graces listed in V5-7 that Christians ensure a place for themselves in heaven, "... *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (CP V11). In V9 Peter teaches that if the graces listed in V5-7 are not

evident in Christians it is because they have deliberately failed to develop them (CP V9). In the Greek construction of this verse, the word *forgotten* points to a deliberate act. It suggests that Christians, by failing to make the effort to grow in grace as instructed in V5, have in effect turned their backs on the stand they made for Christ when they were first saved. The phrases “*giving all diligence*” in V5, and “*give diligence*” in V10, demonstrate that Christians must be actively involved in their own spiritual growth (CP 2Pe 1:5, 10 with Lu 13:23-27; Jn 6:27; Ro 12:1-2; 1Cor 9:24-27; 15:58; 2Cor 7:1; Eph 4:1; Php 2:12; Col 3:1-7; He 6:10-11; 10:22-36; 12:1-2; 2Pe 1:5-11; 3:17-18; Rev 2:1, 4-7; 2:12, 14-17; 2:18, 20-29; 3:1-6; 3:14-22). Those scriptures also teach that the onus is on Christians to be actively involved in their own spiritual growth. There is no such thing in God’s order as a lukewarm, or “nominal” Christian. Those who do what the scriptures say will never fall into sin and fail God’s grace. Failure to persevere in the development of Christian character and to practice what they know, leads Christians to be barren and fruitless, which will result ultimately in their rejection by God (CP Mk 11:25-26).

Here we learn that unforgiveness also excludes one from heaven. Again the teaching is unmistakable: if Christians do not forgive those who sin against them, neither will God forgive their sin. And without God’s forgiveness, one cannot be redeemed. Forgiveness is therefore, a matter of life or death for Christians (CP Mt 18:23-35). This is called the parable of the unmerciful, or unforgiving servant. Jesus told it in response to Peter’s question in V21-22 as to how many times he had to forgive someone who sinned against him (CP V21-22). Jesus’ reply that Peter had to forgive them four hundred and ninety times – *seventy times seven* – simply underlines the fact that Christians cannot ever afford not to forgive others, regardless of how often they offend. Forgiveness has to be a constant attitude with Christians if they want to be forgiven themselves (CP Mt 6:14-15; Lu 6:37). Scriptures are clear: the forgiveness of God though freely given to Christians, nevertheless remains conditional according to Christians’ willingness to forgive others. If they do not forgive, they will also be punished like the unforgiving servant in the parable, “... *so likewise will my heavenly father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every brother their trespasses*”. In return for God’s forgiveness of their sins, Christians have to forgive those who sin against them (CP 1Pe 3:8-9).

Peter teaches here that having received mercy and forgiveness themselves from God, it is the calling of every Christian to bless others with the same mercy and forgiveness, in order to inherit a blessing. The blessing is the inheritance to which Christians are called – everlasting life (CP Jas 2:13). James teaches here that those who show no mercy or forgiveness toward others, after having received God’s mercy and forgiveness themselves, will forfeit their place in heaven (CP Mt 6:9-15). Forgiveness is the key to answered prayer. In V9-13 here Jesus is teaching the

disciples how to pray, and in V14-15 He stresses the need for forgiveness as a condition of answered prayer (CP Lu 12:41-48).

This is called the parable of the unfaithful servant. Here Jesus teaches that those who profess to love God but are indifferent and careless about the things of God, will forfeit their place in heaven. They will be eternally damned along with unbelievers (CP Mt 11:21-24 with He 10:29-31). Just as there are degrees of rewards in heaven (CP 1Cor 3:13-15), so too there are degrees of punishment in hell. Those who know God’s word and do not do it, will receive greater punishment than those who do not know. They will both be in hell, but the professing Christian’s punishment will be greater, as Jesus so clearly teaches, “... *and that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes ... but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*” (Lu 12:47-48). Now let us look at five more parables which also highlight the folly of Christians believing they are saved who are not doing the work of God’s word (CP Mt 24:42-44). This is called the parable of the goodman of the house (CP Mt 24:45-51). This is called the parable of two kinds of servants – one faithful and wise, the other unfaithful (CP Mt 25:1-13). This is called the parable of the ten virgins (CP Mk 13:33-37). This is called the parable of the watchful porter (CP Lu 12:35-38). This is called the parable of the watchful servants.

The core teaching in all these parables is faithfulness, preparedness, and watchfulness in view of Christ’s coming again – whether it be prior to the tribulation to take all the saints of God to heaven with Him as some believe, or it be after the tribulation at His second coming. These teachings are relevant to Christians at all times. In all six parables Jesus links behaviour to belief. If Christians believe in the imminence of Christ’s coming again, they must act accordingly. They cannot live to suit themselves, but must persevere in faith doing the work of God’s word. The parables all echo what Jesus said in Mt 7:21-27 that not everyone who calls Him Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who have prepared themselves for His return will enter in; the kingdom will not be open to those who profess to belong to Him, but have no divine resources within.

All of the foregoing needs to be recorded in this study because it is what scriptures teach, but the most important teaching of all is love. Love is the key to eternal life. If Christians love God and their neighbour as they should, they will never fail God’s grace (CP Mt 22:34-40). These two commandments are the sum of all divine revelation and responsibility. Christians’ love for God is demonstrated by their love for each other (CP Jn 13:34-35). Christians’ love for each other has to be unconditional and self-sacrificial as Christ’s love for them (CP Jn 13:1-17). It is only Christians’ love for one another manifested like this that will ensure their place in heaven (CP 1Jn 3:10-11; 4:7-11; 5:1-3). Notwithstanding that Christians may profess to love God, they are deluding themselves thinking they are saved if they do nothing unconditionally or self-sacrificially for their

brothers and sisters in Christ (Jas 2:14-16; 1Jn 3:16-19). God says that it is only Christians' unconditional and self-sacrificial love that gives of itself for others, especially Fellow-Christians, that proves their love for Him, perfects His love in them and assures them of their place in His eternal kingdom (CP Ga 6:9-10; 1Jn 4:12, 16-19). John is stressing Christians' love for one another as the test of their Christian life (CP Jn 15:12-17; 1Jn 2:10; 3:14).

John traces the love Christians should manifest for one another to its source in the nature of God in 1 Jn 4:7-11 as revealed in Him giving up His son to death to provide salvation for His enemies (CP Ro 5:8-11; Eph 2:12-13; Col 1:20-22; Tit 3:3-7). Christians are to show they are God's children by manifesting attitudes and actions like God's to one another. It is only the expression of their love for each other like this that God's love is made perfect in them. The effectiveness of God's love in Christians demonstrates itself in their love for each other (CP Ro 12:9-10; 13:8-10; 1Pe 1:22). This is the perfect love that John said in 1Jn 4:18 casts out fear, which is virtually what 3:14 also teaches. Let us read those scriptures again (CP 1Jn 3:14; 4:18). The fear that perfect love casts out, is the fear of being eternally damned for not loving others. Christians in whom love for others is not manifest will be eternally damned (CP 1Cor 13:1-3; 1Jn 2:9-11; 3:10, 14-15; 4:20-21). Christians in whom God's love is perfected do not have this fear; they have passed from death to life (CP Jn 14:23; 1Jn 3:14). Christians must heed these scriptures; they all emphasize love as the key to eternal life (CP 1Cor 13:1-8).

There are many more conditions of entry into heaven laid down in scripture, but we will look at just one more here before closing this study (CP 1Sam 15:22-24). God wants everyone who professes to love Him to be in complete obedience to His every word. Obedience stems from love (CP Jn 14:23; 1Jn 2:5-6). Obedience means everlasting life; disobedience means eternal damnation (CP Ro 6:16). The whole of what the bible teaches is encapsulated in this verse. Paul is addressing Christians here. He affirms that even though Christians are under grace, it is still their responsibility to resist sin and obey God (CP Ro 6:11-13; 8:12-14; Eph 5:3-10; Col 3:1-17). Christians can yield to sin and go to hell or they can obey God unto everlasting life with Jesus. Christians cannot serve sin

and Satan and expect to rule and reign with Christ in eternity. No one can be a servant of sin and Satan, and a servant of righteousness and Christ, at the same time (CP Mt 6:22-24; Jn 8:31-35; Ga 1:10; Jas 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15).

Jesus makes it quite clear in scripture that if Christians are not totally consecrated to the service of God and completely surrendered to the authority of Christ, they are none of His. Christians are fighting either on the side of Christ and righteousness, or they are on the side of the devil and the ungodly (CP Lu 11:23-26). V24-26 teach that unless after their conversion to Christ Christians quickly fill the void in their lives left by sin with the righteousness of God, their old sinful nature will reassert itself and they will be actually worse off than they were before they got saved (CP Jn 5:14; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 2Pe 2:20-22). The only assurance Christians have of a place in heaven is their total obedience to God's word. Anything less will cost them that place. Whoever is not doing the work of God's word for Christ, is doing the work of the devil against Him. There is no partial obedience to God's word. It is complete obedience or nothing as far as God is concerned (CP De 6:13-15; Josh 24:19-20; Nah 1:2; Rev 22:11-12). In closing here it needs to be restated that Christians must never take their faith or their salvation for granted. Scriptures clearly teach that salvation is not an unforfeitable possession in this life. It only becomes an unforfeitable possession at the end of this life, if one is sowing to the Spirit. The whole duty of Christians is to fear God, keep His commandments and prepare for eternity (CP Ecc 12:13-14; 2Cor 13:5).

Scriptures speak of salvation in the past tense (CP Ac 15:11; Ro 8:24; Eph 2:5-8; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 3:4-7; Jude 3); present tense (CP 1Cor 1:18; 2Cor 2:15); and future tense (CP Ac 2:40; Ro 5:9-10; 10:9-10; 11:26-27; 13:11; 1Cor 3:15; 15:1-2; 2Cor 7:10; Php 1:28; 1Th 5:8-10; 1Ti 4:16; He 1:14; 9:28; 10:39; 1Pe 1:5,9-10; 2:2; 4:18). Scriptures which speak of salvation in the past tense do so on the basis that Jesus has already paid for it with His blood, and it is appropriated by faith (CP Jn 3:16-18, 36; Mk 16:16; Ro 1:16; 5:17-19; 1Jn 5:11-12). But clearly, salvation is future, it cannot become actual until the "redemption of the purchased possession" (CP Eph 1:3-14 with Ro 8:16-25). These scriptures and many others all teach that salvation is fully certain, but it is only fully certain for those sowing to the spirit at the end of their earthly life (CP Mt 7:21-27; Lu 13:22-27; Ro 2:13; Ga 6:7-8; Php 2:12, 2Ti 2:12; Jas 2:22-26; Rev 2:1-7; 8-11; 12-17; 18-29; 3:1-6; 7-13; 14-22; 22:11-12).