

Christ-Centered



Biblical Training

Matthew 6:33; 1 John 2:6;
2 Chronicles 16:9

SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE'S TEACHINGS ON SALVATION AND WHY WE ARE HERE

(There is much-much more.)

by

John Stephenson

Biblical Worldview Ministries

biblicalworldviewministries.com

drawgal@aol.com, 408-376-0368

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REPORT SUMMARY ●¹

(This report is a summary. Much detail derivation from the Scriptures is in the referenced reports. If we presented these derivation details, this report would be tens of pages long. This summary is to help readers gain the major concepts and lead them to further study, including reading the referenced reports. We pray that you will be blessed by reading it. Send us comments.)

We must first realize that God (only of the Holy Bible) has always existed and is infinitely perfect in every way.●² He has absolute control of all things - no exceptions. He is the only one or person who can lead us in absolute perfection. He created us to have a unity relationship with Him so, by His directing our lives, we could live amongst His Perfection, Greatness, and Glory forever. This would result in our fellowshiping with Him and enjoying Him forever. Having unity and fellowship with Him in His perfection, we would also have these with each other. We, therefore, should seek this relationship with excellence, thoroughness, and expediency, as the center of our lives. Apart from this relationship, there is nothing. We must thoroughly comprehend this and train our church people and families with excellence to live in this relationship Greatness toward the maximum.

Thus, the main (only) reasons we are here on earth, in my understanding, are two fold. "The first" is to become a Christian, being joined to and in Christ in marriage with eternal life salvation to live with Him forever. Then, "the second"

1. **GOOD BACKGROUND:** For a good background for why we are here and God's Plan over and for history designed to bring us to maturity in Christ, read my web site report: *God's Plan for History* under "Biblical Worldview." It deals also with the spiritual warfare and how history terminates (endtimes prophecy) with a special sequence. It is a great report for grounding of what God has in mind. ***All Christians should read this report, or one like it.***

2. **GOD'S GREATNESS:** Read our web site report: *The Attributes of God* under "Training." Everyone must know these to help them appreciate God's Greatness.

afterwards, for the main and most important purpose, is to reach a maximum mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living as He walked with the Father. This is so that in eternity (and now), we can know and relate to our infinite perfect God (and Christ) toward the maximum. God, being an infinite perfect being, is to direct every thought and action we will ever have. Only then can we live a perfect life in holiness and righteousness without sin Directing our lives makes Him God, and it brings us (in our obedience) into "perfect" unity and fellowship with Him and each other, according to God's perfect Truth and Greatness.

Because the events of the entire Bible lead us to salvation and becoming mature●³ in Christ, the degree He may lead and guide us (the above in eternity) may be commensurate with the degree of our maturity in Christ that we have at death. This is what I believe.

Whatever is the end result, pursuing maximum maturity in Christ, we will have the best we can have from and with God and that exists. Because God commands that we pursue maturity, we must pay attention and obey Him sufficiently to have "His best" (and for whatever reason(s) He may have).●⁴ (Again, as will be stated many times, there is nothing else.)

We are on earth to pursue maturity because living by love in obedience to God, keeping His commandments, is most essential to live holy and righteously. The Cross of Christ demonstrated the greatest love there is through a most sacrificial service. Thus, we must learn to love demonstrated by sacrificial service. The Church should give and demonstrate much training as we live sacrificially in the help of others.

Understand thoroughly, apart from relating to Him in His Greatness, there is nothing. We, as created beings, have value only when He puts His value in us, and we live it out under His direction. We will obey Him because we love Him for who and what He is, not because we have to or are robots. He will not force our obedience, but will lead us in it so we can respond from our love. Thus, throughout our lives, we need to be outcome and eternity oriented, not mainly or only this-life oriented. We need to learn to live by great love so He

3. THE WORD MATURITY: When we use the word "maturity" or becoming mature throughout this report, we mean a mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living as He walked with the Father. Everything for life is coming from the Father as a source. So when people see us, they see the Father, because from ourselves we are doing nothing. This is what we mean when we use the word maturity.

4. SEEKING GOD'S BEST: Read our web site October 2008 newsletter entitled: *Church Leadership Guide: Training Methods to Have God's Best*. It is also found under "Training" and "What's New." ***It is our hope that all Church pastors and elders, as well as family heads, will read this report, for their sake and for the sake of their people.***

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will lead us in His great (greater) things. Without love, we are nothing. (As is being stated, when we have great love for God, we will learn and obey His commandments. This leads to holy and righteous living.)

For this to occur toward the maximum, we must, in my view, "appreciate" God's absolute and infinite Greatness and pursue maturity as He commands, as stated, with excellence, thoroughness, and expediency. We must appreciate that our God is the single (only) and infinite perfect being that exists. Because He created us (and thus, is in control of our lives and destinies) and He is infinitely perfect, we should seek out all His ways in the Holy Bible and obey them with excellence.

We (particularly pastors, teachers, Church leaders, and family leaders) need to pursue God's best in this manner "in relationship living with Christ and God. This is with the purpose God will greatly direct us in the Church and in families (living the example and training them) in all aspects of life."

Walking with God, the Holy Spirit will lead us in all things. When we obey God to keep His Word, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. When we do, and in order to do, what God wants, we are led by the Holy Spirit (God is working in us). The concept is that our lives are to be centered in God and Christ and do only what God wants, coming only from Him as a source. We are to love Him from all of what are - our total being, demonstrated and lived out by keeping (obeying) His commandments, and trusting Him, living by faith, to guide and to direct every aspect of our lives. We are to trust Him, not ourselves, to work all things together for good. The just man is to live by faith, with spiritual and life success (without sin) only coming from God. (We gain more faith from God as we hear and obey God's Word. It comes when we seek out God as He works in us.) We are to abandon all of our efforts to direct our own lives. We are to build a serious relationship with God so that He directs all of our lives. Directing our own lives always results in sin, because we do not have any inherent holiness and righteousness, and we do not know all the facts and conditions. Only God does. Many times in life, we will need to take faith-action steps to determine God's leading and will. We need to pray for opportunities and major results. It is a keen and personal relationship with many dynamics.

We must thoroughly understand, as previously introduced, we are not here to mainly become Christians, even though this is of most vital eternal importance. We are here, after becoming Christians, to pursue maturity to the maximum spiritual ability in Christ-likeness so that we can know and relate to God toward the maximum. Thus, pastors and teachers should train their people to become mature in Christ gaining a specific outcome, and not just teach with good teachings for spiritual growth, however good. They need to be outcome oriented, gaining a result of at least a specified description and needed content of maturity. One should have a well designed curriculum that includes the major teachings for how one becomes mature in Christ. They should be taught in a reasonable time period where people can easily attend and learn the principles. One can use sermons, the Sunday School, chosen teaching times, and seminars.

We also can use a Discipleship Training Center concept. This would be my choice. In this training center concept, we teach Bible content for background.

However, we, most importantly emphasize, as the main teaching, training people to walk as Christ walks - gaining maturity in Christ, with the result of having a mature and intimate relationship with God.

We need to run the race of life to win - to have maximum maturity and great fellowship and unity with God and Christ. Thus, to win the race, we must put aside all things and activities that are not needed in the running of the race. Otherwise, in principle, we will not come in first, so to speak because we are carrying excess baggage. Things will get in the way of running the race effectively. Carrying excess baggage can limit the amount of maturity in Christ we can have.

What we do not know is the basis by which God creates all people. We all have different gifts, callings, and will gain different maturities. He chooses the elect and the non elect. God promises fairness, but not equality. We need to respond to God to have the best of whatever He has planned for each of us personally. It is better to exist and go to heaven with little maturity than not to exist. On the other hand, it may be better not to have been born if one goes to the Lake of Fire for eternity. (This was said about Judas.)

A mature person in Christ-likeness will have at least the following characteristics:

(1) Will know God's attributes and appreciate His absolute Greatness. He will trust only in God for His future and seek His will in all things.

(2) Will pursue maturity with excellence to live as Christ lives with everything coming from God the Father as a source (now from the Holy Bible). Will be learning and living by the head-subordinate relationship principles lived between Christ and the Father and for other aspects of life, especially for marriages and families.

(3) Will have and walk by great love for God for who and what He is, such that He keeps (obeys) His commandments and seeks out with diligence to learn the commandments. As He does, he will live a holy and righteous life. (He will seek to serve others from love sacrificially.)

(4) He will walk by faith, trusting God to fulfill His promises. He will obey the instructions with the promises to activate His faith. Thus, he must know the promises. As such as he does, he will live without sin and will receive revelation of the Scriptures. He will learn and memorize many of these. This is because all is coming from God, nothing from man, as a source.

(5) As described later, he will live to glorify, honor, and please God in all things. He will attempt to live godly, help accomplish God's work, and will believe and stand strong on the basic Christian-Faith doctrines. He will give great praise to God for all things.

(6) He will live by the hope of one day being with Christ.

(7) He will have a strong prayer life. Will regularly read and study His Bible. He will attend church and have fellowship with other believers.

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(8) He will walk trusting God to lead in all of life and causing all things to occur for his benefit as he grows to maturity in Christ. He will pray to God about all things and trust God to work all things together for good.

(9) He will have the character qualities required for church leadership and will have the attitudes of the beatitudes.

Not to seek the best that God offers us individually is great folly.

MAIN REPORT: SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE'S TEACHINGS ON SALVATION AND WHY WE ARE HERE: ●⁵ ●⁶

(There is some redundancy because many individual - different topics need the same background.)

PREAMBLE FOR BACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING ●⁷ (History begins with this background)

- * God, being a most perfect, infinite, and the only God, created us to have relationship with Himself. He, being the only one who is perfect in all things, is the only one who can lead us to have and live a perfect life. For this to happen, He must determine and lead us in all things. He planned history so that we could become one in Christ (one of the Trinity - the pre-existent God) and gain spiritual maturity in Christ-likeness so that we could relate to and know Him in His depth-breadth in eternity. **Christ is our only role model for perfect life. He lived out only that which came from the Father as a source.** Thus, when people saw His actions, they actually saw only the Father's, because He, from Himself as a source, was doing nothing. We are to learn to live this way in our experience, as we become mature. What a wonderful plan He has for us.
- * Gaining this maturity to live as Christ lives is a growth process. But we have to respond to His leading greatly as He works in us to have it to the maximum. Otherwise, we can gain less than He desires for us. Therefore, we need to live obediently.

5. **REFERENCES:** This main report section contains doctrines that should be in a good Church and/or personal doctrinal statement. For Scripture references and more detail, see our doctrinal statement under "About Us" and our expanded doctrinal statement under "Training," both on our web site. See our many reports on our web site, particularly those that deal with becoming mature in Christ found under "Training." If one wants to become a Christian, see the document on our web site: *Becoming a Christian* located under "Training."

6. **CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD:** Many believers around the world that are experiencing persecution and hardship, and may know less of God's Word than we do here in America. In this life, living out what they know, they can be more mature in Christ-likeness than we Christians here in America, who know more, but are doing less with it.

7. **UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND:** To understand in much more detail how history begins, the spiritual warfare, how history ends, and how we become mature in Christ, read my web site report: *God's Plan for History* under "Biblical Worldview."

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- * His plan for history began when Adam and Eve were created (first created beings) and placed into the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, as the first created beings, are heads of the human race to follow. However they disobeyed God (sinned, being deceived by Satan) and received a depraved sin nature that sins. Because of their sin, they came under the condemnation of God. Because of the spiritual warfare between Satan and Christ, sinning man was transferred into the Dominion of Satan, under his eternal control.
- * Thus, man's situation in his fallen state is several fold. He needs to have God's condemnation removed in order to go to heaven to live with Him forever. This requires a satisfaction of God's Justice. This man cannot do. In order to go to heaven, he must be transferred into the Kingdom of God under Christ's eternal control out of the Dominion of Satan and being forever under his eternal control. He must receive a divine nature that does not and can not sin and allows him to pursue maturity in Christ at God's leading and working in him. For unbelievers, where God's satisfied Justice by the Cross is not applied to them, they will be eternally cast into the Lake of Fire for God to satisfy His Justice in another way.
- * Throughout history, there is a spiritual warfare between Christ and Satan. Christ works to have God's elect to actually believe the gospel of the Cross and to actually accomplish God's chosen works. If this happens, and it will, Christ will win the warfare. Winning the warfare, Christ is given the authority over the eternal states of all people, believers and unbelievers. Satan on the other hand, works to prevent these from happening. If he does, and he will not be able to, he will win the warfare and not have to go the Lake of Fire.

THE SALVATION STORY AND NEED

(There are many aspects to be seen.)

- * Since the Garden of Eden and the fall of man, all people are born with depraved natures that sin (break God's laws). Because of sin, we are under God's condemnation to go to the Lake of Fire to satisfy His justice for sin - for spiritual law breaking. All people after the fall, no exceptions, are born in the Dominion of Satan, under Satan's eternal control.●⁸
- * All are born under the Law of God. One must keep (obey) the Law perfectly in order to keep from sin and not come under God's condemnation for sinning. This man, with a depraved nature, cannot do. He sins breaking the law. Thus, he comes under the condemnation of God for sin and is in the Dominion of Satan.
- * Christ (the pre-existent God, one of the Trinity) was born of Mary by the Holy Spirit (not by man)

8. **BACKGROUND:** All of the events of biblical history are designed to bring us salvation and maturity in Christ. There is a spiritual warfare between Christ and Satan. Christ is to bring all the elect to believe and to accomplish God's chosen work. Satan works to prevent this happening. All people remain in the Dominion of Satan until the Cross and Christ's ascension. At the fall of man, all people were transferred (born) into the Dominion of Satan. At Christ's ascension after the Cross, He received all power in heaven and in earth. This gave Him the authority to transfer all believers (both Old and New Testament) into the Kingdom of God under His eternal control. After the termination of history, Christ is shown to win the spiritual warfare over Satan. He then is given complete authority over the Kingdom of God and authority over all people and their eternal states - believers into the new Jerusalem and all unbelievers into the Lake of Fire. Satan has lost all control and he, himself, is cast into the Lake of Fire.

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with a divine nature (not a sin nature). This allowed Him to live a perfect life without sin. His life of perfect obedience, without any sin, qualified and allowed Him to go the Cross to die and to satisfy God's divine justice for all of man's sin (law breaking). Christ's blood on the Cross purged out and covered all sin. Without the shedding of Christ's blood, there is no salvation.

- * God's satisfied Justice must be applied to man for him to go to heaven. This is called being saved. He must also receive a divine nature in order to pursue maturity. A person is saved (God's satisfied Justice is applied to Him), when God works in the person, drawing the person to Himself, by believing by faith the Gospel - that Christ died on the Cross to satisfy God's justice for sin.

The Bible defines the Gospel (good news) as that Christ died on the Cross for sin according to the Scriptures. He was buried, and rose again on the third day from the dead. This Gospel is also the Gospel of the Kingdom.●⁹ This Gospel and salvation are only according to the Bible (not according to any church or any religion). A person is saved by their activated faith in the Gospel, (the power of God for salvation) - the Jew first and also the Greek (Gentile). One is not saved, and cannot be saved, by anything that man does by himself or that can come from any church or religion as a source. (There is other good news that the Christian is to live in order to live the Christian life.)

One must activate their faith in the Cross of Christ by some act (work) as God works in them in order to have living faith to be saved.●¹⁰ But one is never saved by any of these activations. We are saved only by the Cross. Examples of acts that activate our faith are: (1) prayer to God that we believe what the Scriptures teach about Christ dying on the Cross to satisfy God's Justice for sin and request salvation as God promises to give; (2) confession to others of our acceptance of Christ dying on the Cross; and/or (3) being water baptized.●¹¹ One is saved by activated faith - living faith, but not by that used to bring the activations.

The Cross of Christ is efficacious (complete in itself). One cannot add anything to it or take anything from it for salvation. (Attempting to do so may keep one from being saved such as by

9. **GOSPEL:** The Gospel was defined in the above text. But the Gospel is often also called the Gospel of the Kingdom (kingdom of God) because when one believes the Gospel of the Cross, one is translated into the Kingdom of God out of Satan's Dominion, to be led by God and Christ as Lord and King forever. The word "Gospel" as used in the Scriptures, in my understanding, always refers in some manner, even indirectly, to Christ's Cross, His death, burial, and resurrection.

10. **BEING SAVED:** Becoming saved results from a triunity. As a source we are to have faith that Christ died on the Cross (the Gospel). We are to embrace that faith (the source) with some action that brings living faith. God works through our living faith to give us the actual salvation and the needed change in our lives. The Bible teaches that without works, our faith is dead. The works are needed to activate our faith, but do not save us, even though they are involved. On this basis is the Bible's teaching that we cannot be saved without works and by our works we will be saved. As stated, the works or actions are used to activate our faith. We are only saved by the source or faith in Christ. But our faith must be activated.

11. **WATER BAPTISM:** Water baptism is meant to occur after one becomes a Christian as a public presentation, witness, and/or confession (demonstration) that one has believed Christ and His Cross, have spiritually died, buried, and resurrected with Him with the result to receive newness of life, and is now saved. One is now living for Christ and is now living in newness of life under Christ and God.

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adding anything and/or and requiring water baptism, having works, or joining a church falsely in order to be saved). But one must activate their faith only in the Cross of Christ without adding anything.●¹²

- * In the process of being saved (being born again) as God is working in the person drawing him to Himself, a person is placed spiritually into Christ on the Cross by the Holy Spirit, dies with Christ, and is raised spiritually from the dead with Christ. ***As such, the depraved nature, in principle, dies. It "now" no longer under God "legally" represents the new believer (however, he still retains the depraved or sin nature). It no longer effects his eternal destination.*** (This process is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.●¹³) The new believer using his depraved nature sins, and he can restore fellowship with God by confessing his sin unto God.●¹⁴

When the new believer is raised spiritually from the dead after he has died spiritually with Christ (as part of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit), as he believes in the Cross, he receives a new divine nature (newness of life) that cannot and does not sin. ***This new nature now "legally" represents the new believer.*** Thus, because the new believer does not and cannot sin using the divine nature that legally represents him, he has eternal security in Christ. God's condemnation is removed from the believer forever. The Holy Spirit seals the new believer such that He can never lose his salvation - this gives the believer a guarantee that he will be with Christ in eternity forever after death. God directs the new Christian using the divine nature such that the believer becomes mature in Christ-likeness to the degree by which the believer responds to God's leading. It is to the degree he responds in faith for God to fulfil His promises

12. **ADDITIONS TO FAITH:** We are not (never) saved by works or by water baptism. They are activations to our faith. However, if one means we need the activations to be saved, they can say we are saved by works and/or by water baptism with a complete context of the salvation process, being centered in the Cross. But saying this, we need to provide explanation so one will not believe falsely.

13. **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:** We are discussing this subject as an alert so we can have a maximum maturity in Christ - not to criticize. There is, in our understanding, no such thing as a baptism of the Holy Spirit after one becomes a Christian. Wrongly believing this and having a post salvation experience of such leads to an inhibiting of becoming mature in Christ toward the maximum. It leads to us wrongly believing we have spiritual power, and can result in a glorification of self, instead of only Christ. We must understand that Christ is our direct head, not the Holy Spirit, even though He uses the Holy Spirit. Thus, it leads to knowing and relating less of God in eternity.

(I fully understand that believers may differ here. If you do, please make it a matter of "the most serious prayer" because of its most serious current and especially eternal results. E-mail me and I will send you a paper on this subject with details from the Scriptures.)

14. **RESTORE FELLOWSHIP:** When we sin as Christians using our depraved natures, we should confess our sin unto God. Then the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin. Then we are restored to God from any lost fellowship.

(Christ's blood at the time of the Cross only satisfied God's Justice for the sins that Christians committed before becoming Christians that is required for salvation. Once saved, now having a divine nature, the Christian does not sin using this nature. But when the Christian sins using His depraved nature, the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing all sin when confession of sin is made.)

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and in love, keeping His commandments. (The problem comes, that limits our growth, when we know but few promises and but few commandments, and/or do not use them. God may lead us mainly using our current knowledge of these and also lead us to learn more. We must not limit God, but also understand there can be limitations.)●¹⁵

- * When a person becomes a Christian, one is taken from being under Law to being under Grace forever. (The Law includes many commandments, including the ten commandments.) Being under Grace, Christ keeps the new Christian saved forever, even though he sins using his sin nature that no longer legally represents him. It is the Cross of Christ that keeps him saved, no longer his required obedience (without sin) under the Law. God leads him using his new divine nature (that now legally represents him) in all of life. And using it, the believer does not and cannot sin. God uses the divine nature for becoming mature in Christ, instead of the sin nature, in a growth process.

To use our divine natures the most under God's direction and working in us, we must learn to live by faith in God to fulfill His promises, and we must live by love keeping God's commandments. This implies, as stated, we know the many promises and commandments. Loving God, we will search the Bible to find His commandments and promises.

All unbelievers are under Law. The purpose of the Law is to show people (unbelievers) that they cannot keep from sinning, and have the need to believe in Christ on the Cross for salvation (satisfied Justice for sin) where they will sin no more. As Christians, when we sin, using our sin natures, we place our selves temporally in application (not status), as we are sinning, in a sense under Law. This allows us to see that we are sinning, and thus, need change. To know we are sinning, we need to know the Law, and God may lead us to see the needed understanding. The Bible teaches that where there is no law, there is no sin. However, all people know of some law, and thus sin, because God puts it their conscience. The Law is also used to condemn unbelievers that they break God's laws and gives a basis for eternal judgment and being placed into the eternal prison of the Lake of Fire - being judged according to their works. (This is an alternate method for God to satisfy His Justice for sin.) Many people today live wrongly to have works in order to keep their salvation (that they most likely may not have). **God does not accept anything, including works, that come from us as a source.**

- * Being saved to eternal life, one depends only upon what Christ did on the Cross. It is independent of how man lives his life. It can only happen when God is working in us, and, with our response, causes it to happen. Receiving Justification for sin to eternal life is a one-time event, even though a process may be used or involved to bring one to this event. One is changed into Christ's likeness with a new divine nature (we cannot be changed back) that does not and cannot sin. We are transferred into Christ and He keeps us saved - not dependent on what we do or do not do. Thus, being in Christ, we will pursue living by His ways our entire life. Those not truly saved, will go much of their own way, even when they believe wrongly they are saved. But many Christians (who are truly Christians) may not look like Christians when they do

15. **CHOICES:** As we live our lives under God, we can chose to obey God with our divine natures or go our own way, using our sin natures. Using our divine natures more of the time is a growth process. If we are to use our divine natures more of the time, we must become humble before God, dying to self rule. We must let God work all things together for good, letting Him to be in control. We must live out what Christ is working in us.

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not train and pursue to live godly with any sense of excellence. Many of our churches are in this condition now. (We cannot have it both Christ's way and our way.)

- * When a person becomes a Christian, he is transferred from the Dominion of Satan under his eternal control into the Kingdom of God under Christ's eternal control forever. One cannot be transferred back, from being under Christ's eternal control. When one is transferred into the Kingdom of God, they become permanently the Church of Christ - a called-out people (from the Dominion of Satan). (Thus in the biblical sense, one cannot go to church. Instead the Church assembles for worship.) This, as stated elsewhere, is the Gospel of the Kingdom - all believers being in the Kingdom of God under the direct rule of Christ. All believers (from both Old and New Testaments) in the Cross after the Day of Pentecost are in the Kingdom of God and are part of the Church with no exceptions. One (Jew or Gentile) cannot be a true believer without being part of the Church (the called out group by God into Christ). (All Old Testament references to salvation and justification look forward to the Cross.)
- * The Cross broke down the barrier of the dividing wall between the Jew and Gentile (Greek) believer. In Christ, there are now no ethnic divisions - all are one in Christ. The Cross set aside physical temples and animal sacrifices forever. The believer in Christ is to be a living sacrifice and is now the sanctuary of God. All Christians should present themselves (daily) to God as instruments of righteousness and as living sacrifices, dying to self rule.
- * If a person does not use living-faith to accept Christ and His Cross to be saved, he is without excuse in the coming endtimes judgment. This is because he knows of God through creation, and God, as stated above, has put some of the Law in His conscience so he knows he sins. Thus, in effect, man chooses to go to the Lake of Fire. God works in all people to draw them to Himself. But He most likely works in people to the degree that He knows in advance how they will respond. If a person will not respond, God may work in them but little. ●¹⁶ Christ said that when He is lifted up on the Cross, He will draw all people to Himself. But many or most will not respond to accept Christ's offer. People do not accept Christ because they want to be in control. They do not appreciate God's absolute Greatness, such that He alone is in control of the future and can work all things together for good. Wanting to be in control and work all things together for good (as a god) was Satan's great sin as well as man's. But believing in Christ is a faith exercise where He, not us, is in control. (Thus, part of being saved, is to relinquish all control of life to God.)
- * When one becomes a Christian, one is betrothed to Christ according to the oriental marriage custom. However the bride and groom at this time on earth do not live together. This is a legal arrangement and cannot be changed (divorce is required to change this, which will not happen). Sin does not change or effect the betrothal, but it does effect close fellowship. This betrothal gives the believer eternal security - cannot ever lose his salvation (Justification). Then at Christ's Second Coming, the Church, the betrothed Christian, is caught up to live with Christ for ever in

16. USING FAITH IN TEACHING: If Church leaders do not use adequate faith such that they search for and study the Scriptures in sufficient detail, they will know less of God and of the Scriptures. Thus, Church growth can be truncated. This appears to be happening today as demonstrated by the dumbed down teaching in a large number of our churches. They are no longer enduring sound doctrine. (In expository teaching in a specific passage, the teacher should check the rest of the Scriptures that apply and share them. Many pastors and teachers do not do this. Thus, the Church people do not sufficiently learn.)

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the marriage of the Lamb. At the marriage, the groom and bride now live together. Christ is the single and only head and husband of the Church forever.

- * A summary is below of why we, as true believers in Christ (we truly have been saved), will have eternal security in Christ such that we will (can) never lose our salvation in Christ regardless of how we live our lives after we are "actually" one-time saved. (If we sin, we will be disciplined. When we obey, we grow toward having great maturity in Christ.) **As "true" believers, we have eternal life (eternal security) that cannot be lost (cannot lose our justification salvation after we truly receive it) because, having been saved, we:**

- (1) Are now under Grace, no longer under Law.
- (2) Are now permanently in the Kingdom of God, no longer in Satan's Dominion.
- (3) Are now betrothed (married) to Christ with no possibility of divorce.
- (4) Have been baptized by the Holy Spirit resulting in having a new divine nature that cannot and does not sin. There is no longer any condemnation for sin for the believer from God.
- (5) Are sealed by the Holy Spirit with a guarantee to be with Christ in eternity forever.
- (6) Are indwelt by the Holy Spirit now as the sanctuary of God.
- (7) Are adopted sons of God to be in the family of God.
- (8) Have been redeemed. We have been bought out of the slave market of sin by the blood of Christ. We now belong to Him. We are no longer our own.
- (9) Are a new creature in Christ. Old things have passed away.

But we must be careful that we have fruit of the Holy Spirit in our souls and in the ministry, or we may not be saved. If we are not involved in some ministry, we may not be saved. If we are not pursuing maturity as God commands in some manner, we may not be saved. If we fall away from pursuing Christ and His ways all our lives (not enduring to the end), we may not be saved.

- * The Scriptures imply, but do not directly teach, that the spiritual ability we have at death, we may have forever. (Thus, we must pay attention to God and pursue maturity as God commands with excellence (what does it hurt)). The Bible implies that our spiritually maturity is fixed forever at death in the following ways:

- (1) All of biblical history is designed to bring us to become mature in Christ.
- (2) God commands in His Bible that we teach the basic fundamentals. But we are not to teach them over and over again (that many or most churches are doing today), but to pursue maturity. How else can we have the maximum from God?
- (3) The development environment of the world, flesh, and the devil will not be in heaven.
- (4) We sin when we make mistakes in our growth process, and there will no sin in heaven (our sin (depraved) natures are removed from us as we enter heaven).
- (5) The Bible teaches that our growth now in Christ has benefit for eternity.)

If we are not here to gain maturity in Christ so we can relate to God in His Greatness, what are we here for? We are here to learn to live by the sacrificial love demonstrated by the Cross. (It appears that to learn this degree of love is the primary reason we are on earth, and God chose not to just create us with maturity. The Bible teaches that if we have all knowledge and all faith, but do not have love, we are nothing.) Having and living by great love is key on the pathway to becoming mature in Christ such that we are selfless, living holy and righteous lives. We can only live holy and righteously, if we are unselfish and

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live sacrificial love This is so we can relate and to know our perfect and infinite God in His depth and breadth. There is no perfection apart from our perfect God. We are created to live by His ways in close fellowship with Him. There is nothing else.

* In our Christian lives, we are to have unity with God in all things, and also with each other. We can only walk close together if we have unity (we agree) in all things. Then, we will have fellowship with God first (doing things held in common by both) and then with ourselves. Thus, we should seek for unity with God in "all" things and then with each other. For this, we should walk humbly before God, not seeking first place, but allowing God alone to have first place. For this to happen, we must know and obey the Scriptures, and allow God alone to work all things together for our good. This happens when we from our love of Him, obey His commandments and from His purpose for us, help accomplish His work.

* We become mature in Christ by employing excellence in (all of the following are required) - refer to the list in the summary for additional items:●¹⁷

(1) glorifying, obeying, honoring, and worshiping God as the main purpose of life in all that we do and are; We glorify God by doing all that He asks us to do.

(2) living a godly life as Christ walked with the Father with everything coming from the Father(as source - now from God's Bible) using love and faith. (Then when people see us, they see the Father, not us, because from us as a source, we are doing nothing.) We live by faith trusting God to fulfill His promises, and we obey the instructions with the promise. When we do, we live without sin and receive revelation from God because all is coming from God as a source. We live by love of God such that we keep (obey) His commandments. When we do, we live holy and righteous lives; As part of this, we will sacrificially serve God and each other from our love. This is key and very important.

(3) we work to help accomplish Christ's ministry to: evangelize our total local and foreign areas, mature our people in Christ to the maximum levels, build godly families, work to plant new churches, and help the needy;

(4) believe and stand strong on the basic Christian-faith doctrines such as contained in a good doctrinal statement.

* When we are more mature in Christ, we will want to honor God and glorify Him most greatly in

17. GAINING MATURITY REFERENCES: For helps to gain maturity, see our web site document: *Living by God's Righteousness* (found under "Training"). This documents contains Psalms to use to praise God, promises to memorize, commandments to obey, the attributes of God, spiritual requirements for Church leadership, principles for living by love, and aspects for prayer. See our other documents under "Training" that deal with becoming mature in Christ. They contain many biblical procedures and doctrines that help us. Especially review our ppt charts on *Christian Life Relationship Principles* found under "Training" on our web site. They deal living in head subordinate relationships living as Christ lives and living in family relationships. They are needed to gain maturity in Christ. For example we will all live the subordinate role to Christ. The husband lives the subordinate role to Christ and the head role over his wife, nourishing and cherishing her. The wife lives the subordinate role, obeying her husband in all things, but trusting God work through him in all things. The husband and wife work for unity. As in prayer, the wife can ask her husband for things.

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everything. We do this by obeying what He has given for us to do. This is how our Lord lived. Thus, in my view, to give Him more glory and honor, we will also address our prayers to a holy and righteous Father (not just to the Father), and we will ask our prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, not just in the name of Jesus. This brings more honor to God from our hearts. In our Church worship services, we will pick music that we believe honors and brings great worship to God from deep in our hearts (e.g. Sing the hymn: *To God be the Glory*) - what He desires - not necessarily what we may personally like - hopefully both are true.

* In summary, total salvation is a three step process as God works in us and leads us:

(1) **Justification:** We become saved in Christ (believing the Gospel - Christ's death, burial, and resurrection) forever with eternal life - having eternal security; This is one time event. As this occurs, we receive a divine nature that legally represents us that cannot and does not sin. Thus we have God's condemnation for sin removed from us. We can now go to heaven to be with God forever. Having a divine nature is needed for us to pursue and have maturity in Christ.

(2) **Sanctification:** We, as justified Christians, grow to become mature to high skill levels of spiritual ability in Christ-likeness, living as He lives, for the sake of eternity. This is so that we can know and relate to God, living sinless lives, amidst His great and most wonderful eternal Glory - a Glory to be revealed that we cannot know now; This is a lifetime pursuit. We generally will only pursue maturity in Christ if we appreciate God's absolute Greatness and realize our maturity in Christ may be fixed forever at death. We will be involved in ministry and build up treasures in heaven by witnessing the Gospel.

(3) **Glorification:** As we enter eternity, we lose our sin natures, and we receive a new glorified eternal-life resurrection body so that we see Christ as He is. (All possessions that we have on earth and our memories of what happened (at least when we used our sin natures) on earth are also taken from us. They will not enter heaven.) (We will receive rewards - to be defined by God - commensurate with our obedience.)

* If we "truly" have become and are Christians, we will have some fruit of the Holy Spirit and of the vine in our lives (however small or large, both in our souls and results of ministry). We will endure following Christ in our "entire" lifetime (however we act small or great). If we do not have fruit in our lives and/or we do not endure unto to the end of our lives in some manner in the Christian walk, we very likely are not Christians. This is true, even though we think we are and might have gone through the process of receiving Christ as Savior. The Bible speaks of some who pursue Christ and His work, where Christ says, I never knew you. There are many cults that say they believe in Christ, but are not Christians. ***This can be true of some in the Christian Church, including pastors and teachers.*** ●¹⁸

18. **A FALLING AWAY:** From observation, many Church leaders today are not pursuing God with excellence and thoroughness, knowing His Word in depth. Their training is mainly at the a,b,c level. Thus, we have leaders who now do not endure sound doctrine (do not know much as they should, even though they may believe wrongly that they do). They cannot determine the difference between the holy from the profane. Thus, we have leaders and churches falling away from God's best in sins of omission and commission. Are they saved? In my view, those in this condition, do not adequately appreciate God's absolute Greatness.

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We can know in reality that we are Christians when (all should be true):

- (1) the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God;
- (2) God uses us in the service of Christ with fruit from the ministry (e.g. witnessing the Gospel to others to become believers);
- (3) we are experiencing the fruit of the Spirit in our souls - love, peace, joy; etc.
- (4) our desire in life is to glorify God in every aspect of our life (seeking repentance, departing from major sin):
- (5) we have received discipline from Christ for sin with the goal to be more obedient Christians. The Bible teaches that if we are not disciplined by God, we do not belong to Christ - we are not Christians. God disciplines those He loves for the sake of spiritual growth to know and to relate

18(...continued)

In order to gain maturity and revelation of the Scriptures, one must walk by faith, searching the Scriptures for all of what God wants done and to the degree by He wants it done, and to trust Him to guide and direct all of life. When leaders and pastors use their own thoughts, working attempting to work things together for good, their knowledge of the Scriptures plateaus. They no longer endure sound doctrine and cannot tell very well the difference between the holy and the profane. ***This is happening today as demonstrated by churches mainly reaching out using the world's methods to new young people using a dumbed down training and the Devil's loud repetitive beat rock music. As a result, as time progresses and as the older more mature people die, we are developing an immature (illiterate) Church with a loss of biblical intellect, and with a low plateau of biblical knowledge.*** To a large degree, it is here now. (This is increasingly happening to our youth and young married more and more.) This is using Satanic, not God's, strategy. It aids his, not God's, plan. As such, the true and/or best worship of God is decreasing. We should have worship services that bring maximum worship to God, not designed to reach new people. We can use evangelism techniques in other ministries to accomplish the latter.

We must remember that in the Church we have the gung ho, the very faithful, and the watchers (the wonderers). We should spend most of our time training the gung ho and faithful to become mature in Christ. We should encourage the watchers to become the faithful and gung ho. We should never dumb down our training to the level of the watchers. (Doing so, loses the challenge to become more toward the maximum in Christ. No one gains.) We can provide additional, and/or other training for them.

Having two Church services one with the hymns and one with contemporary music is like having two churches without unity at least in the music. We are commanded to have unity in all things. This is the basis for walking together. So having a designed or allowed disunity for any purpose, such as on music, is sin, and does not bring the required unity and close fellowship - it brings tolerance and impedance for becoming mature in Christ.

Because many church pastors and leaders are not enduring sound doctrine, they can fall under the category of not being Christians, even though they think they are. All church leaders and teachers should go to prayer on this subject. All of us, as believers, will be disciplined by God when we pursue major sin. He does this to correct us for the sake of us gaining maturity so that we can know and relate to Him more in His Greatness and have a closer fellowship with Him. The Bible teaches if we do not receive discipline, we are none of His. What is your case?

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to God in a much more mature manner.

(6) (and it helps) we have a genuine fear of God that is the beginning of wisdom so that we seek out His wisdom.

(7) we are following Christ during all our life - enduring to the end.

(8) we are pursuing maturity in Christ with excellence, thoroughness, and expediency, not just living life like the world. We no longer have a love for the world and what it provides. We have a sense of this world not making any sense, apart from pursuing maturity in Christ.

- * When we are actually mature in Christ, God will direct every thought and action we will ever have, both now on earth, but especially in eternity. He will most likely lead and guide us commensurate with our ability to respond - according to our maturity in Christ - according to the degree of love we have for Him. There will be no sin.

Thus, in eternity, God will direct all of life with everything for life coming from Him as a source. He will work all things together for good. It will be God all in all. When we are gaining and living out maturity, God will be the center in every aspect of our lives and will be directing all things. Again, this makes Him the infinite God (in our experience).

We now on earth sin and show less maturity when we, ourselves, attempt by default to work all (or many things) together for good. Thus, we have not learned to respond to our perfect God in a more mature way in every aspect of life. It is a growth process to depend only on God for all things.●¹⁹

19. **NEEDED TRAINING:** If we are to become mature in Christ, pastors and teachers must train, not just teach and exhort, believers in the Church. When we train, we tell what must be done, how we do things, give examples for how we do things, and give personal testimony for how we did (lived out) what must be done. Then we need to place people into on-the-job training in the Church or in the home, etc. God and our sinful lives and environment will lead us into testings. Mainly only teaching what should be done, does not get the job done.

The problem we have as Christians, not being adequately taught with the depth of the Scriptures oriented in application with examples for how we live them out, we do not pursue becoming maturity in Christ with excellence as we should. Thus, we have Christians with different and many skill levels of maturities in Christ-likeness. Many Christians do not act as they should as Christians. One generally pursues and becomes more mature in Christ-likeness, when, as stated, one appreciates God's absolute Greatness with an eternal outcome orientation. He pursues Him with all his heart and life, attempting to discover and to live out with only that which comes from God as a source (the Holy Bible). He trusts God to work all things together for good. He walks by great love for God keeping the commandments, and lives by faith in God to direct every part of His life using the promises and His power as He works in us. We are to live out what Christ is working in us.

Christians, especially young people and young married, who do not follow Christ and are not being adequately trained for maturity, will have wasted their lives, when considering their situation in light of eternity. They will not be able to know and relate to God to the degree, they otherwise could and should if they pursued and obtained maturity. Many of our young people no longer attend Church

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- * When we enter eternity, every knee (both believers and unbelievers) shall bow before the Lord Jesus Christ declaring Him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father.
- * When we enter eternity, we, most likely, will go in with all of us having different maturities in Christ. Thus, God will most likely act with us in different amounts and in different ways according our maturities, spiritual gifting, calling, and ministries. We, as stated many times, need the maximum mature high-skill spiritual abilities in Christ-likeness in relationship living to know and relate to God in eternity toward the fullest of His Greatness. We particularly need to live by great love, serving God and others sacrificially. He, most likely, can lead us in greater things if we have great love for Him and each other.

Although, in my view, even there may be a chain of command in eternity, there is no sense that one is better than anyone else. Only Christ alone will have first place. The more mature Christians will be seeking under God's leading to serve Him and others sacrificially from love. They will live humbly before God. Even though God may lead others according to their maturity, there will be no sense of one having more maturity or being greater than others. The main difference is that the more mature will learn more of God and have a deeper fellowship with Him.

(We, in my understanding, will not suddenly all be equal in our spiritual walk when enter eternity. There is no Bible teaching that teaches or infers we can or will increase our maturities in heaven. And God may use our spiritual walk in eternity in different ways than we can know now. This is all there is. If we do not pursue maturity as God commands, we can or may hurt ourselves by not being able to participate in God's plan in eternity to the degree we otherwise could) (What are you doing to become mature in Christ? What am I doing?) (As a pastor are you teaching good things for growth or the total of what is needed for one to become mature in Christ? Do you know what is needed?)

Thus, if we love God with our total beings and appreciate His infinite Greatness, we will pursue maturity as He commands with excellence, thoroughness, and expediency. Then we can know and relate to our infinite God much more toward His maximum. There is nothing else, When we do not pursue maturity with excellence, as most churches appear to be doing today, we are only eternally hurting ourselves and our people. Will our leaders and pastors be judged? It looks like it. (Our churches in America now have a major falling away from God's best and requirements.)

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when they enter college and/or leave home. Our young people, before they go on their own, need to be challenged to seek God's best including attending a Bible Church (that has a doctrinal statement that contains the tenets that are in mine), a Bible taught Sunday School, and a youth group. They should be involved somewhere in ministry, where they can see God using them. Our Church leaders and family heads should encourage this.

This situation is happening to many of our young people today, especially as they leave high school. Our high school pastors are dumbing down in their training (and using rock and much contemporary music) and offer little challenge to train them to become mature at least at the higher skill levels - to become much more than they are. Thus, they are helping to cause much of this to happen. Pastors, elders, and family heads need to evaluate what they are doing and make needed changes, working for "God's best" in their people, including in their children and youth. But will they do it?

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- * We must thoroughly understand, that all people, being unbelievers in Christ's Cross when they die, not having received the Cross, will spend eternity (forever) in the Lake of Fire (a most terrible place).●²⁰ This is for a means for God, as an alternate to the Cross, to satisfy His justice for sin. This can be most difficult for us to fathom.

All believers will spend eternity with Christ in heaven (the new Jerusalem) in a most wonderful place with Christ forever. There will be no tears, sickness, or death forever. In eternity, God will lead us in all things forever. We will live and do all things for our love of Him under His leadership to His glory forever. (He does not need to be glorified. But we need to live this (His) way in order to obey Him, live holy and righteously, and live without sin.)

REFLECTION

Can you imagine all of us eternally living perfect lives without sin and problems in complete unity and fellowship with a (the only) perfect God and with each other in all things. We will be living to the great Glory of God (and of Christ our direct head) where He is God all in all, amongst billions of believers. What a wonderful future we will have. We will, in my understanding, experience a deeper and more mature relationship with Christ and God, if we die with a maximum (toward the maximum) mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living as Christ walked to the Father. We are here now to gain this maturity. As stated, God commands us to pursue it.

Even if I am wrong in these details, we will have the very best under God in eternity, if we pursue and gain maturity as God commands using obedience, walking by faith, and using sacrificial love.

To me, the Bible does not give alternatives for His best apart from becoming mature in Christ so that we can know and relate to God toward His fullest amidst His Glory and Greatness, both now and especially in eternity. What else is there? We must be careful here, because we are talking about eternity. We must not be and act wrong or insufficiently. We must not go our own way, for He is in control, or do less than what He requests. If we do, we are the losers, and so are our people. We will have wasted our lives to a very large extent.

The leadership job (being outcome oriented) is to write from the Bible a complete and detailed description of what one is like, believes, thinks, acts, and becomes when one is mature in Christ. Then one must search the Scriptures, being procedurally oriented) for the necessary procedures of obedience required to get there. Does your church have these? They procedures must be implement with excellence, thoroughness, and with expedience.

Is your church doing this? As a pastor or family head, are you doing this? Do you have a detailed description of what one is like if one has maximum maturity in Christ? Are you working to develop one?

20. **LAKE OF FIRE:** See my salvation booklet: *God Is Reaching Out To You* and my report: *God's Plan for History* for a description of the Lake of Fire and how "extremely terrible" the experience will "eternally" be.