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C0533 – 8/31/2005 – The Terms of Salvation
Believe and Confess-Part 1

We're looking at the terms of salvation because Paul claimed it was fundamental and yet there is a lot of confusion in our day over just what the gospel is and what a man must do to be saved. There is literally a war going on in evangelicalism today between those who hold to a position known as Free Grace and those who hold to a position known as Lordship/Master/Discipleship Salvation.

	Fighting Over	Method of Solving Dilemma
Lordship/Free Grace Controversy	Terms of Salvation	Clarification of the Terms of Salvation

Martin Luther was wise to say that if we do not meet the battle where it is then we have utterly failed our generation. The battle here is what a man must do to be saved. The method of solving this dilemma is to clarify the terms of salvation; to cut through the confusion. So, this is where we need to concentrate our efforts. By way of analogy, imagine trying to fight the Revolutionary War today, we can't fight that war today. That's no longer the issue. Today the issue for our nation is freedom from terrorism (in order to maintain the democratic way of life) and so the war is against those who would oppose us, namely, terrorist organizations. Therefore, we must engage all our efforts toward winning Operation Iraqi Freedom. If we fail to fight this war on terror then we will certainly lose it, we will lose the American way of life, and there will be an increase in American casualties the world over.

	Fighting over	Method of Solving Dilemma
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Revolutionary War	Freedom from Tyranny	Hand to hand and some artillery (canon, rifle, and pistol)
Operation Iraqi Freedom	Freedom from Terrorism	Advanced weaponry (land, sea, and air support, smart bombs, etc....)

In the same way, there is a very real battle going on today for the souls of men. If you can't get the terms of salvation clarified then people can't get saved. Obviously, a major conflict is being waged over the souls of men. This conflict has been going on for a very long time but Satan has used different methods at different times. Interestingly, wars are often fought over the same basic thing but the methods and instruments of war often change. One war for freedom may have been fought by way of hand-to-hand combat whereas a later war for freedom is fought by way of advanced weaponry.

In the same way, the war for men's souls is an ongoing battle that has been fought with different Satanic strategies. The ultimate goal, of course, is to keep people confused about the terms of salvation. Satan always wants to confuse. For example, during what has often been called the Dark or Middle Ages ranging from the 6th century AD until the time of the Reformation in the 16th century people were kept from knowing the gospel by a certain methodology; they were kept from the gospel because it was inaccessible to them because permitted only in a foreign language.

	Fighting over	Method of Solving Dilemma
Reformation	Access to the Gospel; Language	Translating Bible into other languages
Lordship/Free Grace	Terms of Salvation; Language	Clarification of the Terms of Salvation

The Roman Catholic Church did a good thing in the 4th century when Jerome translated from Greek and Hebrew texts into the common (i.e., vulgar) tongue, Latin. We know this as the Old Latin Vulgate. But by the 6th century no one spoke Latin anymore except the scholars who had access to advanced training. Rather than translating the Bible into the common language so people could read it the Roman Catholic Church forbade the Bible in any other language and burned any and all that were discovered. They forbade it because they had introduced new doctrines that were not taught in Scripture. If people could read it then they could discover that these new doctrines were not Scriptural. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church developed into an immense power structure that

reigned politically and religiously over the lives of literally billions of people over the next millennia. Thus, the gospel was virtually unknown for over 1,000 years. That's 10 centuries of souls that could not be saved because they never heard the gospel. I want you to imagine that. I want that idea to make an impression on you so deep you will never forget it. You're responsible to not let this happen again. So, one of Satan's methods was to keep men ignorant of the gospel by not permitting the Bible to be translated into the people's language. The Reformation solved this dilemma. The Reformers were smart enough to realize that the battle was over language (in fact, originally, the word "heresy" meant 'anything not in Latin'). So, that's why those who translated the Bible into other languages were considered heretics. Through these tumultuous years the Bible was translated into many different languages so the common man could read it for himself and be saved.

In our century the battle is the same, the battle is for the souls of men, but Satan's methods are a little different. The basic problem now is confusion over what the Bible is teaching, particularly the definition of various terms related to salvation. Interestingly, again, this is related to language, what words mean. That is why we are studying the terms of salvation. This method of Satan is more subtle and really it has to be in order to deceive those who have the Bible in their own language and can check out what is being claimed. A person who examines (*anakrino*) the Scriptures is known as a Berean.

Acts 17:11 ¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.

Again, if the basic terms of salvation are distorted then the result is no salvation. This is undoubtedly a scheme of the devil.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The picture here is of Satan, the god of this world, blinding someone to the light. The gospel must be understood in order for a person to be saved. If a person doesn't understand it how can he or she believe it? This is why Satan blinds the minds of the unbelieving. If they do see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ then they might believe. So, we are trying to unveil the gospel by straightening out the terms of salvation,

by defining them biblically and ultimately answering, what must a man do to be saved. Paul said,

Galatians 1:6-8 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Paul was concerned about two things. First, the desertion of God who called them by the grace of Christ; and second, the distortion of the gospel which is really not another. Now, these are genuine believers who have deserted Christ for a different gospel. This does not mean they lost their salvation but that they abandoned the very principles of grace which God used to call them into salvation. In other words, now that they had departed from the principles of grace, they were adding human works and destroying grace. Paul explained elsewhere that works can't mix with grace.

Romans 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

grace + human works = destruction of grace

We also learned in previous weeks that faith and faith alone is said to be in accordance with grace.

Romans 4:16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace,

Therefore, in accordance with this we found that there were upwards of 150 verses in the NT that condition salvation, on the human side, on faith alone (cf. Lesson 3: *Faith: Man's Responsibility*). If salvation is conditioned on faith alone in 150 verses and other conditions are added elsewhere then faith alone will not result in salvation as these verses claim! That would mean God lied. That would mean that when Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" then the Philippian jailer would not have been saved. So, what I am presenting to you is what we might call the *only common denominator* system. The only common denominator found in salvation passages is faith. Some passages use repentance as a synonym for faith and there is a repentance that saves, but the only common denominator in salvation passages is faith.

Thus, faith alone must be the human condition for salvation or else every other message in the Bible is not a gospel message at all but only a partial gospel.

We also learned that on occasion the word “repent” is used as a synonym of faith or as a part of faith and, when it concerns the person and work of Christ it could not be separated from faith so that repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin resulting in salvation. We also learned that water baptism is not a condition of salvation in any sense. The verses usually brought forward can be easily explained grammatically in some other fashion than making it a requirement for salvation (cf. Lesson 6: *Believe and Be Baptized?*). Water baptism is an outer symbol of an inner reality. It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer with Christ. Water baptism is therefore a ritual act administered by men that pictures the real act of Spirit baptism administered by God. Water does not save, God and God alone has the power to save.

So, what we’re doing now is going to all those passages people say add a second or third or fourth requirement on the human side and we are evaluating those in context. Our ultimate goal is to harmonize them with the faith alone passages without doing violence to the grammar or the historical context. This week we’ll look at the question of whether a person must confess Christ or sins for eternal salvation.

First, it must be said that no verse says that confession of Christ or sins results in eternal life. However, there are some verses used to support this contention.

I. CONFESS CHRIST

A. MATT 10:32-33 (parallel passage: LUKE 12:8-9)

Matthew 10:32-33 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

The argument is that it is obvious from this passage that if a person does not publicly confess Jesus Christ he cannot be saved. First of all, this strong statement should not be taken out of context. Contextually, beginning in 10:1 Jesus is speaking to the 12 apostles.

Matthew 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

In 10:2-4 the twelve disciples are named. In 10:5-8 Jesus gives the first commission.

Matthew 10:5-6 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; ⁶ but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

This is Jesus' personal commissioning of the 12 disciples to go to the lost house of Israel. Notice Jesus' narrow commission. "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter any city of the Samaritans". Many people are confused by these words because they do not take a dispensational approach to Scripture. The words should cause no trouble, the kingdom of Israel was near but the lost sheep of the house of Israel had to be ready spiritually for the kingdom to come. What message were Jesus' disciples to take to the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

Matthew 10:7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

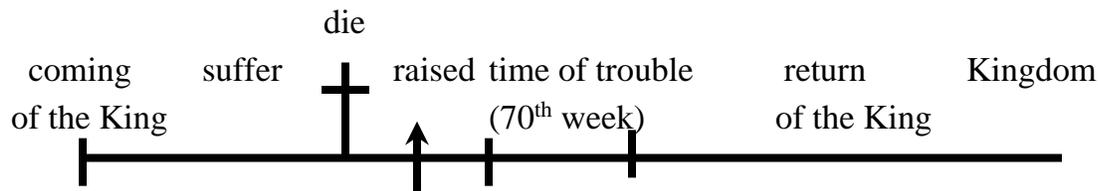
This is on the go preaching, they are to preach on the move. To authenticate the message of their preaching Jesus gave them the authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of disease and sickness. This kind of ability was unheard of, even Moses could not transfer his powers to others. And Elijah's powers were transferred to Elisha only after Elijah died. Only the promised Messiah could transfer such power, a demonstration of His own power.

Matthew 10:8 "Heal *the* sick, raise *the* dead, cleanse *the* lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

When the people heard the message and saw the miraculous works these messengers did it would authenticate that these messengers were legitimate as was their message that the kingdom of heaven was near.

Matt 10:9-15 gives the provisions the disciples would need for their work. At this juncture you have to understand Jesus' mission to the nation of Israel. In the OT it was taught that the Messiah would come and after He came, he was to suffer and die and be raised again. Following his death and resurrection would be a time of trouble (Daniel's 70th Week). The Messiah would then return after the time of trouble to judge the world.

Only then would the Messiah as King establish his Kingdom on earth with Israel at the head of the nations.



Verses 16-25 are a clear reference to the 70th Week of Daniel. This is clear in verse 23 where Jesus mentions the coming of the Son of Man

Matthew 10:23 "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish *going through* the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

This title comes from Dan 7:13 and is always used in relation to the coming King. These verses trouble many readers because the disciples did not undergo any persecution before Jesus' death. But the solution is easy. "Jesus is looking past His death to the time of tribulation following. The narrow road leading to the kingdom leads through the tribulation (Matt 10:16), and this persecution is to be of a religious and political nature (Matt 10:16-19)."¹ In verse 22 Jesus said that he who endures to the end will be saved. That is, he who remains underground (*upomeno*) until the end of the Tribulation will be saved physically and will walk into the kingdom in mortal bodies. Further, that this is the tribulation is also indicated by the fact that the disciples would have to flee from one city to another city in Israel. This never happened in the 1st century but it will happen during the tribulation. Before they finish going through the cities of Israel Jesus says, the Son of Man will come. He's definitely looking beyond His death. It is clear that this is a coming in judgment because the Lord states explicitly in verse 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." Lastly, the mention of the Holy Spirit in verse 20 is further vindication of this interpretation because the Spirit was prophesied in Joel 2:28, another tribulation text just preceding the kingdom. The troublesome text about confession in 10:32-33 falls in this tribulation context. Verse 26, 28, and 31 all mention fear. Fear of God and not men during the tribulation is what should govern their lives. From Jesus' perspective this would happen soon (see diagram above). The kingdom of heaven was at hand (v 7)! The only thing needed for the kingdom to come was Israel's acceptance of its King. But they were not ready spiritually and ultimately rejected Him in Matt 12, thus it became impossible to establish the

kingdom at that time. Even after His resurrection Peter still offers the kingdom to Israel on the condition that they accept Jesus as Messiah but they would not (Acts 3:18-26).

So, to confess Jesus and His message of the kingdom meant

1. That the kingdom was near.

Only Jewish believers in Jesus' Messiahship would make such a confession. This confession is required for the Messiah to return else Jesus would not have said,

Matthew 23:39 "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

This is the actual confession the nation will make at the end of the Tribulation. these verses do not add a second requirement for receiving eternal life. Eternal life is always conditioned on belief. For example, turn to Luke 12:42.

John 12:42-43 Nevertheless many even of the *rulers believed* in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

So, these rulers already had eternal life (John 5:24) but because of their fear of losing their position and their love for the approval of men they were not confessing Him. Therefore, these believers should not expect God's help in life's difficult situations. A believer must confess Christ in order to receive God's help but it is not a condition for eternal life.

Back to our context in Matt 10, we know that at the end of the tribulation 1/3 of Israel will confess Jesus as King of Israel and 2/3 will have been killed during the tribulation so that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26). So, this national confession of Christ as the Blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord will be made by Israel whenever the kingdom is at hand, which is in the time of trouble, or Daniel's 70th week. At that time, Christ will claim all who confess Him and deny all who deny Him (cf Matt 23:39)

B. Rom 10:9-10

Romans 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

The confusion will be answered in more detail next week. In the meantime, a short answer to this confusion is answered by Rom 10:14-15.

Romans 10:14-15 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ How will they preach unless they are sent?

Can we all agree that there is a sequence here? What's the first thing that has to happen in this sequence?

- (1) Before they preach, the preacher must be sent
- (2) Before they hear, the preacher must preach the message
- (3) Before they believe, the message of Christ must be heard
- (4) Before they call, the person of Christ must be believed

Therefore, when does calling/confession of the Lord take place in relation to believing? See, believing results in justification but only a Christian who has already believed can confess Christ and call upon Him for help. A confessing Christian, one who is not ashamed of Christ will enjoy the help of God in the Christian life. A non-confessing Christian, a closet Christian will not enjoy the help of God in the Christian life. So, just like in the gospel of John there are two aspect of eternal life.

John 10:10 I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

First, there is the *possession* of eternal life. That comes solely by believing. Justification by faith alone. Second, there is the *enjoyment* of eternal life. Enjoyment of eternal life is not automatic but is conditioned on various elements. One of those elements is verbal confession of Christ, as in Rom 10:9-10. Those who are ashamed of Christ will not enjoy Christ's help in times of trouble. No matter what, it is impossible and silly to think that confession here is a condition of eternal life.

Justification is conditioned on faith alone as always in the Book of Romans. Deliverance is conditioned on confession/calling on the Lord as always in the Book of Romans.

II. CONFESS SINS

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This is often made out to be a justification verse but this is actually a fellowship verse (cf 1:6). John is interested in the Christian walk (1:6, 7; 2:6, 11). John's audience are believers (cf 2:1-2; 12-14, 18, 20, 21, 27, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 18, 21; 4:1, 4, 7, 11; 5:13, 16, 21). The book is not focusing on establishing a relationship but restoration to fellowship! Confession of known sin is required to restore fellowship between a believer and God. A Christian is walking in the light (the known will of God both general and specific) then the light exposes some sin. If the Christian confesses it then fellowship is maintained. If he does not confess it then he is walking in the darkness committing more and more sins. The goal of the Christian is to always confess sin as soon as the light exposes the sin. As soon as you are aware that you have sinned you need to confess it. What does it mean to confess? The word is *homologeō* and it means to "say the same thing" or simply, "to agree". What a Christian must do is agree with God about his sin. When a Christian agrees with God about his sin then God immediately forgives us and fellowship is restored. This is a recovery technique in the Christian life. Those who see this verse as a salvation verse argue that all sin was forgiven on the cross and so this is unnecessary. But that is impossible in this book as shown from above. When you learn to confess your sins immediately then you are able to move into abiding (2:6ff). Those who abide in Christ bear fruit (cf John 15:1ff). The word "abide" means "to remain, to stay". Abiding is therefore remaining in close connection with Christ who is our life so that His fruit is manifest through us; e.g., the fruit of the Spirit. So, fellowship is the initial stage that a Christian has to learn to master. Once he's learned to confess sin and remain in fellowship then he moves into stage two, abiding where he's bearing the fruit of the Spirit. The point is that this verse is not teaching salvation. Eternal life is not even in view here. What is in view is restoration of fellowship which sin disrupts.

ⁱ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*.

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