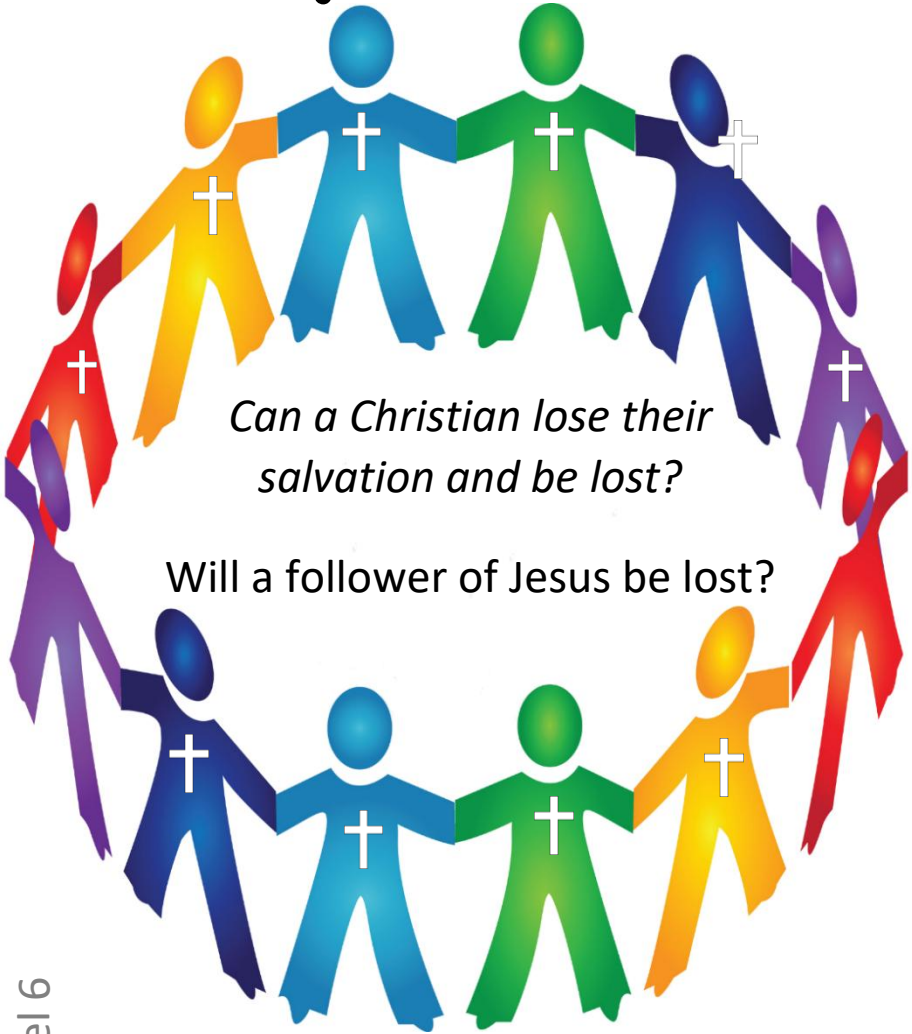


# Many are called



*Can a Christian lose their  
salvation and be lost?*

Will a follower of Jesus be lost?

Level 6

Heino Weidmann

## **Imprint**

*Many are called – Can a Christian lose their salvation and be lost? Will a follower of Jesus be lost?*  
Levels 1–6, **English language edition**. Language note: This edition was translated from the German original with DeepL and revised by hand. In case of doubt, the German edition is the reference. If you notice a translation issue, please let us know at <https://viesindberufen.de>.

Author and editor: Heino Weidmann, September 20, 2025

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## **Bible translations used in the original German work**

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*Meng* – *Menge Bible translation from 1939 (public domain)*

*F* – *Free own translation*

The Bible passage links in the eBook edition refer to <https://www.bibleserver.com>, which contains many foreign-language Bible translations.

## **Greek word explanations**

Based on Strong's Concordance, available at [www.csv-bibel.de/strongs](http://www.csv-bibel.de/strongs), published by CSV-Verlag.

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## **Note on AI-supported content**

Some content on this website—in particular summaries (levels 2 and 4), chapter 1.1, editorial revisions, and wording aids—was created or revised in the original German edition using artificial intelligence (AI), specifically ChatGPT from OpenAI. The author of the book bears ultimate responsibility for the content. All AI-supported content was manually reviewed and adapted prior to publication.

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*Grace be with you and peace from him  
who is, and who was, and who is to come, and  
from the seven spirits who are before his throne,  
and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness,  
the firstborn from the dead, and  
prince of the kings of the earth.*

*To him who loved us and  
washed us from our sins by his blood,  
and made us kings and priests  
for his God and Father—  
to him be glory and power  
from everlasting to everlasting! Amen.*

Rev. 1:4-6 Slt



# Start

## **Many are called — Can a Christian lose his salvation and be lost? Will a follower of Jesus be lost?**

These questions strike at the heart of the Christian faith—and leave no one untouched who wants to follow Jesus with all their heart.

This book is unique: it takes you on a thorough journey through **all the passages in the New Testament that are relevant to** salvation—around 545 testimonies, clearly arranged, deeply thought out, and explained in an understandable way. See for yourself—come and see what the New Testament really says.


The biblical debate about whether a born-again Christian can lose their salvation and ultimately be lost is not an easy topic—neither theologically nor emotionally. After all, people would rather read about weddings than possible divorces. And yet, anyone who takes Scripture seriously cannot avoid this question.

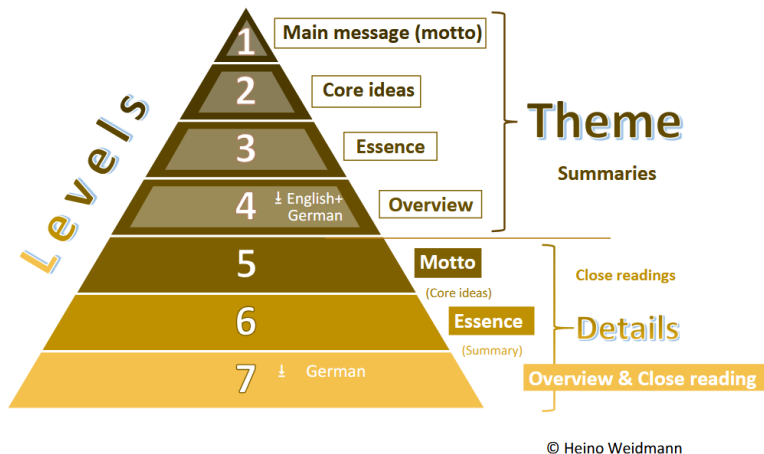
If you are certain of God's love and know your salvation in Christ, you can approach this topic with confidence. Jesus loves you—and he invites you to dig deeper. Talk about what you read—with a mature brother or sister in faith or in a group of followers of Jesus. In conversation, truth often unfolds even more clearly and encouragingly.

### **A clear structure will help you:**

Start with the main message. From there, you can delve as far and deep into the topic as you want and are able. The 7-level pyramid on the website <https://viesindberufen.de> shows you the structured path:

Figure 1: Seven-level structure of “Many are called” (Levels 1–7).

From:  [Many are called](#) – Can a Christian lose their salvation and be lost? Will a follower of Jesus be lost?



## Intro

### The motivation behind this work

This book is the result of a long, personal struggle. Over 35 years ago, I gave my first sermon on Romans 11:22 about the goodness and severity of God. Afterwards, a sister told me that she did not believe that a Christian could lose his salvation. This statement triggered my lifelong preoccupation with the subject.

For a long time, I couldn't decide which view was closer to the truth—both sides had strong arguments. However, the common debates were mostly based on a limited selection of Bible passages (5-15 verses), supplemented by theological principles. This seemed insufficient to me. With a small selection of scriptures, one can represent almost any point of view.

Therefore, I developed a desire to examine *all* relevant New Testament passages—without omission or prejudice. Today, in March 2025, after three years of intensive work, this dream has become a reality: **ALL 545 passages relevant to salvation, comprising approximately 35% of the entire New Testament text, have been carefully analyzed.** The main message of this book is supported and clearly elaborated on at all levels and through every deepening.

Ultimately, it is about the glory of God. It is about a people who love Him, who bring Him joy with their lives – and about as many people as possible being saved and led to the knowledge of the truth and eternal salvation.

**Join me on a journey** of discovery—through God's grace, faithfulness, love, and wisdom. He has prepared everything so that we—and many with us—can surely attain temporal and eternal salvation.

### **The question**

The New Testament proclaims that Jesus Christ saves us from our sins so that we may now live in reconciliation with God. From this arises the certainty and hope that after death we will enter into eternal glory.

The Greek word *sōtēria* ("salvation," "redemption") describes both the present and future dimensions of salvation. It encompasses forgiveness, liberation, preservation, and eternal life in communion with God. We already have salvation—and at the same time await its completion.

This means that our salvation begins with turning to God, but is not yet complete. We are saved, we are reconciled with God, we are his beloved children—and at the same time we are on our way to being finally saved. The Spirit of God has been given to us as a pledge, but the path to eternal glory is not yet complete.

This raises the crucial question of this book: Do we automatically receive the second, final salvation after conversion—or is it conditional? Are there factors that promote or hinder it?

The New Testament shows that Christ accomplished a perfect work of redemption. Many are called to participate in it through faith. But the

same Scripture presents us with a serious question: Can a Christian who believes in Jesus still be lost?

Clarifying this tension is the theme and concern of this book.

### **The approach to developing the topic**

In the first year of my research, I identified around 545 passages in the New Testament that are relevant to salvation. The focus was on central themes such as salvation from perdition, eternal salvation, possible losses on the path of discipleship, and reward in heaven. Each Bible passage was assigned a cause (e.g., grace, faithfulness of God, initial or continuing faith) and assigned to the respective New Testament book.

For each book, I arranged the verses relevant to salvation thematically, commented on them theologically, and evaluated them in their context. This resulted in a separate "theology of salvation" for each book by the respective author. On average, approximately 35% of the Bible text per book was included in this study (details in the chapter *Salvation in Numbers*). Each verse was interpreted, summarized, and condensed into a concise key sentence.

On this basis, I created five systematic summary levels for each NT book:

- **Overview:** Thematically organized, complete, with nuances—suitable for deeper theological discussions.
- **Summary:** Reduces redundancies, remains complete, more readable.
- **Essence:** Focuses on the central themes – compact, clear, nuanced.
- **Key ideas:** Focuses on the main messages of the book – clear thrust, deliberately simplified.
- **Motto:** One central statement per book – as a condensed introduction or comparison of the book's perspectives.



A comparison of these levels across all 27 NT writings clearly shows the theological unity in the doctrine of salvation of the various authors and provided the basis for the chapter structure of Chapter 2.

In the second year of research, the results were evaluated across themes throughout the entire New Testament. Statements on the same themes were brought together, divided into main themes, and the chapter structure of Chapter 3 was developed from this – not predetermined, but derived from the texts themselves. Here, too, the three levels of *summarization—overview, essence, and motto*—are used, as they are in Chapter 4 (Reward in Heaven), Chapter 5 (Preservation in Salvation), and other chapters.

This methodical, systematic approach characterized the entire project.

In the third year, the book was compiled, completed, and revised, and the website was developed.

## **Basic beliefs**

The following basic beliefs underlie this book. (Only) those who agree with them can and will read this book with benefit and are able to comment on it constructively.

The decisive foundation of this book is trust in the divine inspiration and infallibility of the entire Holy Scriptures. The 66 canonical books—and especially the New Testament as the perfect revelation of God in Jesus Christ—are considered the highest authority for teaching and life. It follows that *God's Word is true and does not contradict itself*.

Scripture interprets itself—not through theological systems or dogmatic models, but through its own context and the interplay of all relevant

statements. Therefore, in this study, Bible passages are not considered in isolation, but

- in the direct context of each individual book of the Bible (Chapter 2)
- in the light of the entire New Testament revelation (Chapter 3)

Clear passages of Scripture take precedence over derived statements. No single verse may be placed above others as a "key verse."

Truth is not revealed in individual fragments, but in the harmonious whole—and this whole contains both promises of grace and urgent warnings.

### **How to read this book**

#### **Notes on reading this book and the website [vielesindberufen.de](http://vielesindberufen.de)**

This book—and the accompanying website [vielesindberufen.de](http://vielesindberufen.de)—follows a special structure: it resembles a pyramid, with the most important information coming first. Unlike many theological books, it begins with the main message (level 1) and gradually delves deeper into the reasoning and research. Readers can start immediately and work their way through levels 1 to 7 in depth – or, depending on their interests, start directly at a suitable level.

#### **The overview section: Levels 1-4**

The first four levels form the overview section. They summarize the results of the investigation – with increasing depth and detail:

- **Level 1:** The main message of the book
- **Level 2:** The most important basic findings and key concepts
- **Level 3:** An overview of all areas examined – deliberately concise, but systematic
- **Level 4:** Detailed, argumentative level – suitable for conversations and discussions for the first time

## The detailed section: Levels 5-7

The second block contains the three in-depth levels of analysis:

- **Level 5 (motto):** Very compact, topic-specific orientation for each book or subtopic
- **Level 6 (essence):** Initial in-depth evaluation with a high level of detail and comprehensible argumentation – **the level of this book**
- **Level 7 (Overview):** Deepest level with the complete theological examination – including interpretation of *all* Bible passages relevant to salvation (Chapter 2) and *all* topics relevant to salvation in the New Testament (Chapter 3). Due to its scope, this level is available exclusively on the corresponding website [https:// vielesindberufen.de](https://vielesindberufen.de).

## The structure of the book

This book contains levels 1 and 2 as a quick overview of the topic and level 4 as a systematic, comprehensive summary covering all areas. This is followed by a continuous presentation of the research results at the detailed level 6.

*In the e-book version of this book, all headings are linked to the website <https://vielesindberufen.de> with the NIV Bible translation, making research level 7 quickly available if needed. In addition, virtually all of the Bible passages listed are directly linked to [bibleserver.com](https://bibleserver.com) (thanks to ERF Medien for this excellent platform). Even with mere references without written text, every Bible passage can be quickly found and understood.*

*Additional self-created materials for download are also linked throughout the e-book. Paperback readers can find them at <https://vielesindberufen.de/downloads/>.*



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5.9 *Summary: My protection on the path to eternal salvation*

## **6 Boundaries of salvation**

6.1 *There is no such thing as "cheap" grace; true grace costs life*

6.2 *God's love and immeasurably vast space of grace*

6.3 *Life to the sorrow of the Holy Spirit or to the loss of salvation*

6.4 *What is "enough" for eternal salvation if faith (and works of faith) is (are) necessary for it?*

6.5 *Assurance of salvation – certainty of salvation*

6.6 *Losing and regaining salvation: The prodigal son – the prodigal daughter*

6.7 *Signs of true salvation*

6.8 *Sin against the Holy Spirit*

6.9 *Summary: Boundaries of salvation*

**7 Summary, outlook**

7.1 *Lost, seemingly or truly saved?*

7.2 *Salvation happens NOW through faith without works, and ETERNAL salvation happens through faith that is made visible through works*

7.3 *Even eternal salvation comes only through grace, faithfulness, and the mercy of God*

7.4 *The reward of discipleship*

7.5 *This is a hard saying; who can hear it? On God's pedagogy and the balance of our current preaching*

7.6 *Conclusions*

7.7 *(Urgently) recommended practical steps for faithful discipleship that remains in our salvation—for individuals and the body of Christ*

**Appendix Counterarguments and answers from the Word of God**

1 *Counterargument: "Salvation comes only through faith, not through works."*

2 *Counterargument: "We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and no one but Jesus can break that seal, and He will not do so."*

3 *Counterargument: "Salvation in the Old Testament was imperfect, but in the New Testament it is so perfect that we cannot be lost."*

4 *Counterargument: "The work of Christ is perfect—do we need or have to do anything else?"*

5 *Counterargument: "The temple of God is here, the temple of God is here!"*

6 *Counterargument: "Those who are saved are sanctified once and for all."*

7 *Counterargument: Works burned and yet saved*

8 *Counterargument: "Danger of pride in works, danger of comparison, danger of judgment, danger of despair, danger of discouragement."*

9 *Answer: "Our salvation is always and only 'in Christ'. If you are 'in Christ', then you are safe."*

10 *Summary: Counterarguments and responses from the Word of God*







*Level 1 – Main message (motto) – Topic*

**A Christian  
*can be lost.***

**A follower of Jesus  
*will not be lost.***

*Are you a follower of Jesus?*

*Are you a follower of Jesus?*

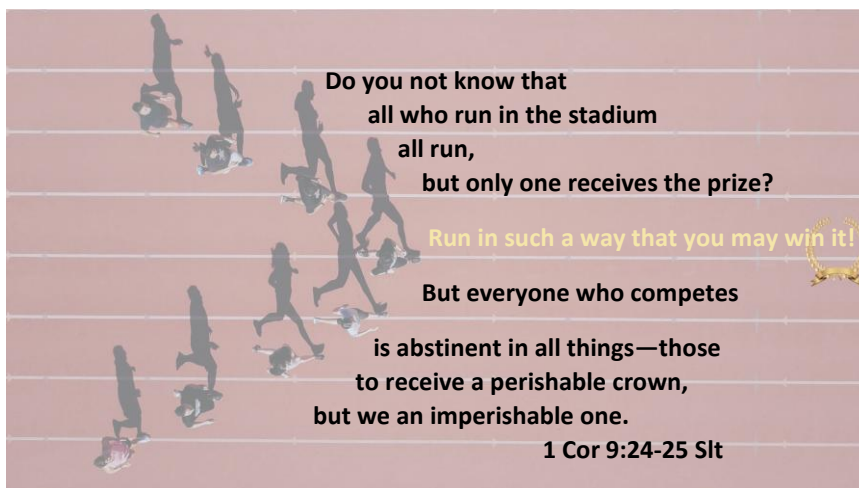
## The long-distance race

The new life with Jesus is like the starting shot in a marathon. That's when the race begins—and victory belongs to all who run to the finish line. They alone will receive the prize of victory.

A good start is vital—but finishing is what counts.

*Non-Christians stand on the sidelines – they don't even run. Nominal Christians venture a few meters onto the track without really being registered. Pretend Christians wear a stolen race number and only choose the comfortable sections. But none of them will receive the imperishable crown of victory.*

Figure 2: 1 Corinthians 9:24–25 — Run in such a way that you may win.



## Level 2 – Key ideas – Theme

### **Naturally Lost**

*All people* sin and do not live according to God's standards as set forth in His Word, the Bible. No one will be condemned indiscriminately, but everyone will be lost before God because of their specific sins. Non-Christians who do not recognize Jesus as Savior are unsaved.

*Nominal Christians* participate in religious rituals. Their faith remains external, without inner renewal. Observing forms does not save them. What they do (or think they do) for God are dead works without power. Without deep repentance toward God and renewal of life through re-birth, they too are lost.

*False Christians* consider themselves followers of Jesus, but have never truly known him. They may have worked in his name, but without genuine devotion and obedience. They have not died to themselves in order to live for God. They have realized themselves through their lives and have not served God. Jesus will not know them in the final judgment.

### **Saved—by grace, through faith**

Those who are *truly Christians* were not saved by their own efforts or religious endeavors, but solely by God's grace. True Christians have recognized that they are guilty before God – and that they cannot save themselves. They have confessed their sin in the light of His truth and accepted Jesus Christ as the only Savior. His love has touched their hearts, His grace has transformed their innermost being.

In genuine repentance, they have turned to God—with broken hearts, but full of trust. God has reborn them through his Spirit into a new life full of hope. From now on, they are no longer enemies, but children of God—loved, accepted, forgiven. Not because they deserve it, but because the Son of God gave his life for them. Their salvation is secure because it is founded on Christ. And from this certainty grows the desire to follow him—out of love, not duty.

## **Loved—and therefore moved**

*True Christians* do not follow Christ in order to earn God's love—they do so because they are already loved infinitely. His grace and love shape their lives from the ground up. *We love because He first loved us.* This love inspires, fulfills, sustains, and moves us. It ignites a deep longing for fellowship with God in the hearts of true followers—here and now, and in perfect clarity in the world to come.

This love gives strength in times of need, courage in times of trial, and comfort in times of suffering. God stands by His children, watches over them, and intercedes for them. Nothing can snatch them out of His hand. Even when they fall, his grace is new every morning. They may come to him at any time—with joy and thanksgiving, but also with fears, worries, and weaknesses. He preserves, carries, protects—and allows only what is ultimately for their best.

## **True discipleship—the fruit of his love**

This divine love does not remain without consequences. It changes. It moves true Christians to follow Him. They no longer live for themselves, but for their Lord. They confess His name not only with words, but in a life full of devotion, repentance, and sanctification. Even when they stumble, they rise again through His power. They hold fast to His love—in good times and in bad.

Their faith is alive, bears fruit, serves God and people. Their salvation is not evident in a past moment, but in an ongoing transformation: in their love for Jesus, in their avoidance of sin, in their perseverance until the end. The source of their steadfastness is not their own efforts, but the love of God poured out in their hearts. His love brings about their faithfulness. And his faithfulness is their support.

## **Two paths as followers of Christ**

Salvation is a gift—but it does not happen automatically. Not everyone who once began to follow Jesus Christ will reach the goal. Scripture

makes it unmistakably clear: those who stray from the path of discipleship, give themselves over to sin, love the world more than God, or follow a false gospel, put their salvation in serious danger. Without repentance, eternal life can be lost.

True followers do not remain faithful by their own strength, but through the preserving grace of God. Nevertheless, they are called to remain vigilant, to fight, and to persevere. The narrow path leads to life, the broad path to destruction. The path to salvation is a path of faith, of confession to Jesus, of love and devotion—far more than mere lip service. Those who persistently ignore their conscience, deny or abandon their faith in word or deed, or serve themselves more than their Lord and their fellow human beings, turn away from Jesus and lose their salvation with him.

God expects fruit—not out of compulsion, but as a natural expression of genuine love. Faith without deeds, without change, without sanctification is dead. Those who disregard the grace they have received, keep it for themselves, or leave it unused, risk not only losing their reward, but also missing the eternal goal.

### **God's loving preservation**

The community of the redeemed will exist forever—but on the way there, all believers are drawn into a real spiritual battle. It is a struggle for faithfulness, truth, and steadfastness in following Christ—not superficial, but with eternal consequences. Jesus himself is the good shepherd who leads, protects, and preserves—his sheep are safe in his hand. No external enemy, no power of darkness can snatch them away from him. His love gives strength, his grace makes us steadfast, his Spirit works in us.

Jesus intercedes for us as High Priest. He gives us strength to persevere, protects us in temptation, and shortens difficult times for the sake of the elect. It is he who calls us—and who gives us room to repent when we stray from the path. He does not want anyone to be lost. Everyone is allowed to return, everyone is allowed to start anew. His guidance, his

comfort, his love make him a shepherd whom we can follow with confidence.

### **Remaining responsible – growing in love**

God protects us—but he does not do so without us. He calls us to cooperate: to be vigilant, to repent, to be faithful in teaching, prayer, and conduct. Those who remain close to him, who love and live his word, remain in the shelter of his love. Closeness to Christ is not a theoretical concept, but practical discipleship: daily devotion, struggle against our own flesh, perseverance in faith.

Our salvation is not based on performance, but on Jesus' love and redemption. But only those who remain in this love will reach the goal. The Father does not measure us by the performance of others, but by what we do with what we have received from him. Vigilance, faithfulness, and a life of holy reverence lead us safely to the goal – negligence and indifference, on the other hand, put us in danger of falling away.

Those who forget God's purification and are self-sufficient live dangerously. But those who love Jesus, respect His word, and bear fruit will be preserved.

### **Judgment and reward**

The unsaved, on the other hand, are not only lost, but through their specific sins they accumulate the wrath of God for eternity. The intensity of their misconduct determines the measure of their judgment.

Reward in heaven is only for those who have been saved by pure grace. They have eternal life NOW. And yet, for believers who live with and for Christ, eternal life is also the reward of discipleship.

The more faithfully we serve God and follow Jesus here, the more glorious our reward will be in eternal life. What matters is our love for God and the works that spring from that love. Anything done out of self-interest, even if it appears to be good, will not bring a reward in heaven.



Those who faithfully use their talents for God, suffer for Christ's sake, and practice love for their enemies will be richly rewarded in heaven.

Those who serve others with self-sacrifice and practice what they preach will be highly esteemed in heaven.

Those who love Jesus and remain faithful to the end will receive the crown of life from him.

### **Conclusion: Proclaiming a balanced gospel of discipleship**

The message of the New Testament to born-again followers of Jesus combines encouragement and challenge. A one-sided emphasis—whether on God's love alone or on His judgment alone—distorts the nature of God and leads astray.

Even believers who have been born again in Christ are constantly faced with a decision: Will they follow the narrow path of devotion, faithfulness, and love—or will they be seduced by the broad path of self-will, self-realization, and lazy compromises? One leads to eternal glory, the other ends, without timely repentance, in the loss of life and judgment—together with those who never truly knew Christ.

Our eternal salvation depends on remaining in Christ. This includes recognizing Him as both a loving Savior and a righteous Judge—and following Him in holy reverence until the end. In doing so, we can know that God is faithful. He preserves, strengthens, guides, and carries all who trust in His grace and do not let go of Him—and in His mercy brings them to their destination.

**Those who do not allow themselves to be robbed of the certainty of their Savior's love for them will be preserved. Those who repent when they fall will remain saved. Those who follow Jesus with holy reverence on the narrow path to eternity and bear fruit until the end will surely reach the ETERNAL goal.**

Both personal and communal discipleship are crucial for faithful following. Whether in pairs, small groups, or the whole congregation—through deep fellowship, mutual encouragement, and also admonition,

we remain on the path of faith. Even loving church discipline can help keep us from straying and remain firm in Christ.

But ultimately, it is our abiding trust in God's unchanging love and faithfulness that carries us through all challenges—and preserves us until we reach the goal of eternity.

**A Christian can indeed be lost.  
But a follower of Jesus will not be lost in eternity.**

### *Level 3 – Essence Theme*

*<https://vielesindberufen.de/ebene-3-essenz/>*

## *Level 4 – Overview - Topic*

### **1 Many are called: Are you lost, a Christian, or a follower of Jesus Christ on the path to eternity?**

#### **Lost**

**Every human being** is spiritually dead by nature and separated from God. *All people* sin and do not live according to God's standards as set forth in His Word, the Bible. Sin rules their hearts, and without a living relationship with God, they remain on the path away from God toward eternal destruction. No one will be condemned indiscriminately, but everyone will be lost before God because of their specific sins. No human being can save themselves—no moral behavior, no good works, and no religious rituals can remove their sinful condition. Non-Christians who do not recognize Jesus as Savior are unsaved.

#### **Hope**

But God has not allowed us to remain hopelessly lost. His love is greater than our failure: He wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. That is why He not only created us out of love, but also prepared a way of salvation before the foundation of the world—a single way that leads through Jesus Christ alone. The gospel, the good news, is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and true God, suffered and died on the cross for our sins, rose from the dead on the third day, and now lives. He can save all who come to God through him—now and forever.

#### **Two paths for every person**

Those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior find true life; those who reject him remain in darkness. Every person faces this decision: one path leads to eternal life, the other to destruction.

*John 3:36 Slr*

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

## **Salvation**

A **true Christian** is someone who has been saved by God's immeasurable love and grace. This salvation does not come through one's own works, but solely through faith in Jesus Christ. Such faith involves a profound conversion in which one recognizes one's sins, repents, and consciously decides to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. This decision leads to a new birth in which the Holy Spirit works in the believer and leads him or her to a new life.

True Christians love God more than themselves and allow themselves to be guided by His Spirit. Their faith is manifested in love, obedience, and a transformed life.

## **Close to the cross and yet lost**

Not everyone who calls themselves a Christian truly lives in a relationship with Jesus. Some live only in the outward appearance of piety, but their hearts do not belong to Christ.

**False Christians** may uphold Christian values and practice religion, but their lives are not truly submitted to God. They want to fulfill themselves instead of submitting to God in obedience.

**Nominal Christians**, on the other hand, rely on church membership, baptism, or traditions without having a living relationship with Jesus. But being a Christian means more than just a label—it means knowing Jesus and following him.

## **Saved and saved forever**

True Christians follow Jesus because God's love has reached them, renewed them, and moved them. They are drawn by the hope of eternal

glory and guided by His Holy Spirit. God is faithful and keeps His promises—He preserves His children on the path to eternity. He educates, guides, and strengthens us, does not tempt us beyond our abilities, and opens His path of salvation to us. Out of love, He gives us space and time to repent when we fall along the way, because He does not want even one to be lost. His faithfulness gives us certainty, protection, strength, and joy to move forward unwaveringly—and He will bring us safely to our destination.

### **Carried by God's love** – preserved by his faithfulness

The path of discipleship is not easy, but it is not lonely. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows his sheep, leads them, and protects them. He himself stands up for us, bears our weakness, and gives us strength when we reach our limits. God's love is not just an initial impulse toward salvation—it remains the sustaining force for each day.

Those who are certain of his love draw new courage from it – even in trials, temptations, or failures. God's faithfulness is greater than our weakness. He does not let us go as long as we want to stay with him. Those who turn to him again and again experience that his grace is new every morning. His love does not motivate indifference, but awakens deep gratitude and the longing to live faithfully.

### **Security despite struggle** – the power of genuine hope

The hope of Christians is not uncertain, but firmly founded on God's promises. Those who love Jesus will not reach their goal by their own strength – but because Jesus is faithful. He completes what he has begun. Even in times of questions, struggles, or setbacks, we can know that our security does not lie in ourselves, but in him.

This gives us serenity, but not recklessness. It calls us to faithfulness—not out of fear, but out of love. For those who have realized how much

they are loved ( ) will not run away from the Lord, but will follow him with all their hearts.

### **Two paths also for followers of Christ**

— a clear decision is necessary

But the Word of God also makes it clear: only those who remain faithful to the end will reach the promised goal. Living as a Christian means not slackening, but remaining faithful. There is the narrow path of the Spirit, which leads to life, and the broad path of the flesh, which leads to destruction.

Followers of Jesus also face this decision in their life of faith: Will they follow the Spirit or allow themselves to be ruled by the flesh? Only those who remain faithful to Jesus will inherit eternal life in the end.

*Romans 8:13*

*For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

### **Arriving in eternity:**

Many could be saved, but only a few remain faithful

Many are called, but few are chosen. Not everyone who makes a good start remains faithful to the end. Jesus himself warns that some who think they are saved will one day realize that they have strayed from the narrow path.

*Mt 7:21 Slr*

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

But God saves **many**—his grace is much greater than we think!

*Rev 7:9-10 F*

*A great multitude that no one could count stood before the throne and praised God.*

## **2 Evaluation of ALL 27 books and 545 salvation-related passages in the New Testament**

### **2.1 Core ideas of all New Testament books**

#### **Matthew**

In the course of turning to God, you must detach yourself from your sins and purify yourself for salvation. Those who now and permanently remain in an attitude of obedience and vigilance toward the true gospel and toward Jesus, who loves them so much, and who bear fruit in serving God until the end, will be saved eternally.

#### **Mark**

Those who turn to Jesus will be saved. But only those who value Jesus above all else, who listen to and heed God's word, who do it and bear fruit, will ultimately be saved eternally. Every one of God's chosen ones can rely on God's faithfulness, who wants to and will bring them to heaven.

#### **Luke**

Those who turn to God to obtain forgiveness of their sins through Jesus will be saved here and now. Those who listen to Jesus, confess him in words and deeds without being led astray, and listen to him in everything he says as a good and wise king and lord, yes, those who love Jesus more than anything else in this world and love their neighbor as themselves until the end, they will be saved eternally.

#### **John**

The chosen sheep of the good shepherd Jesus have eternal life now. As true disciples of Jesus, they are recognized by their love for one another, by their abiding with Jesus, and by their doing his will. And Jesus brings them through to eternal salvation, for no one can snatch them out of his hand or out of the hand of the loving Father.

## **Acts**

Receiving grace and salvation from God by accepting the gospel, and then following the Lord Jesus with all your heart and remaining faithful, is the way of salvation to eternal life.

## **Romans**

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls people out of the realm of God's wrath—to obedience in faith toward God. Those who believe are saved by grace, justified before God, and accepted as His beloved children. And those who, as saved people, persevere in denying the old self, follow the Spirit of God, and strive for glory, honor, and immortality in good works, God will give eternal life.

## **1 Corinthians**

The word of the cross saves now—but only those who hold fast to the gospel and do not return to sin will receive eternal life. Those who do not remain steadfast have believed in vain. But God is faithful: He does not tempt us beyond our ability and, in his love, creates ways out that lead to salvation.

## **2 Corinthians**

In the gospel, Christ says yes to us and, upon our conversion, gives us his Spirit as a down payment and assurance of eternal life. But our eternal salvation depends on our continued simple devotion and relationship of faith with Christ.

## **Galatians**

Those who, after a good start, reject God's grace in the Gospel by trying to stand before God on their own strength, and who follow the desires of their old nature instead of the Spirit of God within them, for them Christ died in vain and they are lost.



## **Ephesians**

In Christ, we are chosen from eternity. Through faith in the gospel of God's love and grace, we are redeemed from sin by His blood and accepted as God's children. As saved people, we have forgiveness and are sealed with the Holy Spirit—the down payment on our eternal inheritance. Our mission is to put off the old self, be renewed in our minds, and put on the new self with pure thoughts and speech. Those who live for Christ in this way on earth will be rewarded by the Lord in eternity.

## **Philippians**

We will (only) win the victory prize of eternal life above if we run according to God's rules until the end of our lives.

## **Colossians**

To stand before Jesus in heaven one day and receive from him the prize of eternal life, three things are necessary: to remain firmly grounded in faith now, to serve the Lord Christ wholeheartedly, and not to be led astray from the true gospel and the hope of the gospel—to live eternally with Jesus.

## **1 Thessalonians**

A holy life preserved by God is the key to heaven and to standing blameless before Jesus. But not everything that is or could be blame-worthy about us when we stand before Jesus robs us of our eternal salvation.

## **2 Thessalonians**

Every Christian can count on God's faithfulness and protection from evil on their way to heaven. Those who remain faithful to their calling to eternal life until the end will be honored as chosen ones to spend eternity with their Lord.

## **1 Timothy**

Only those who fight the good fight of faith and do good works of faith will ultimately attain eternal life. And that is: to live and remain in scriptural faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as No. 1 in our lives and in love, and to lead a sanctified life with a conscience well sharpened and unblemished by God's Word, with self-control.

## **2 Timothy**

(Only) those who hold fast to the true gospel, continually purify themselves, and fight the good fight of faith prescribed for them according to God's rules, willing to suffer to the end, will be awarded the victor's crown of eternal life. The preservation and assistance of our faithful God are promised to us on our way.

## **Titus**

The gospel of God's grace saves people who, through it, begin to live in reverence toward God according to their knowledge of Him and who, on their path of faith and reverence, have hope for eternal life. Every follower of Christ, encouraged and exhorted by sound preaching, must cast off many bad habits and practice and exercise new good habits on the path to eternity.

## **Philemon**

Whoever follows Jesus now and loves their brothers and sisters in faith is saved now.

## **Hebrews**

Our salvation is conditional: we must pay the utmost attention to what we have heard (in order to do it) in our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved eternally. Otherwise, we will drift past our destination—eternal life—like a ship in distress passing by the saving island.

## **James**

For James, doing works of faith is an expression and reflection of genuine saving faith.

The crown of glory and thus eternal life will be won by those who endure the trials that God allows in their lives or who turn away in time from the deadly paths they have strayed onto, because they love God. And in the end, it is those who love God by doing His will who will be saved eternally.

### **1 Peter**

Our faith in and love for Jesus are proven and strengthened in trials. Proven faith is true faith and more precious than gold. It knows unspeakable joy filled with glory. It will inherit eternity. Through our faith, the Lord preserves us. His grace alone saves even gold-proven faith into eternity.

### **2 Peter**

Fleeing the defilements and lusts of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, diligently growing in a pure and blameless life in love, thus confirming His calling and election, guarding ourselves against false prophets, repenting quickly where necessary, trusting in the Lord's longsuffering for our salvation: so that we may be granted—abundantly—entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### **1 John**

Eternal life is now enjoyed by those who believe in the incarnate Son of God, live in the light and in the truth, love their brothers and sisters in faith, and keep God's commandments. Those who continue to purify themselves from their old nature and sins on this path to heaven will one day see Jesus as he is.

### **2 John**

Those who believe in the incarnation of Christ, love their brothers and sisters in faith, and live according to God's commandments are and will remain saved.

### **3. John**

To stand true to the truth means to live truthfully. Whoever does good is a child of God. Whoever does evil has never known God.

#### **Jude**

Those who accept the good news and hold fast to it with faith, unwavering, unblemished, and uncorrupted until the end, living a God-fearing lifestyle marked by keeping God's commandments, will be saved eternally. They are preserved by God's love and faithfulness and preserve themselves by remaining steadfast, praying, and eagerly awaiting Christ's return.

#### **Revelation**

The blood of the Lamb redeems believers now and forever; it makes us fit for heaven and children of God. God loves us and, in his faithfulness and grace, preserves those who faithfully follow him. Those who hold fast to the love of God and his word without compromise or addition, who keep his commandments, and who remain faithful to Jesus as witnesses even unto death, will be saved eternally.

### **Summary**

of the individual book evaluations of the New Testament

#### **Lostness**

Since the Fall, all people have been separated from God and alienated from his life by their sinful nature. They follow their own fallen nature, which leads to disobedience and sin. Godless deeds such as idolatry, lying, immorality, greed, or unbelief cause them to be lost and subject to God's wrath. Only through repentance toward God and obedience to His will can this separation be overcome.

#### **Signs of spiritual lostness**

Those who do not recognize God as Creator, violate their conscience, or twist His truth live in sin. The law of God in the 10 Commandments is a

mirror of our lostness. Anyone who is guilty before God in even one area is a transgressor and has become guilty of the whole law and is heading for damnation. Human attempts at (self-)salvation do not help us out of our lost state. Particularly dangerous are false teachers who proclaim salvation through one's own works or external forms. A gospel that ignores God's judgment and human responsibility does not lead to life, but to death.

### **Salvation: Now and for eternity**

Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of mankind and rose again. Faith in the living Savior, Lord, and Redeemer Jesus Christ and His love brings forgiveness, new life, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. But true repentance also means putting off the old life and being renewed in obedience and devotion to God's will. Salvation is a gift of grace that is received through faith, not through our own efforts.

### **Requirements for followers on the path to glory**

Those who follow Jesus should consistently remove sin from their lives, not cause others to stumble, and bear fruit. True discipleship is manifested in love for God, who loved us so much and continues to love us. It is manifested in holding fast to His Word and in serving our neighbors. It is crucial to love Jesus more than anything else and to remain steadfast in trials.

### **The gospel and its conditions**

The gospel is the good news of a loving God who saves lost sinners. This salvation cost him, as Father, and his Son Jesus Christ everything. And in his love, God wants to guide, lead, and bring each of his saved and beloved children into eternity. He has guaranteed this. Only (true) followers of Jesus Christ will reach their destination on the path to the glory of eternity. That is the condition of our salvation NOW and FOREVER. It is essential that we follow our Lord in the great lifeline, remain vigilant, and hold fast to the good news of God's love. Those who abandon their

faith or consciously live against God's will risk their salvation. Faith without works that testify to God's will is dead. Discipleship requires perseverance, self-discipline, and a willingness to withstand temptations and suffering.

### **Faithfulness to the end**

True believers remain devoted to Christ. They allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit and keep a pure life. Steadfastness, faithfulness, and keeping God's commandments are essential characteristics of a life that leads to eternal salvation.

### **Warning against false paths**

False teachers who spread a prosperity gospel or heresies endanger eternal salvation. Likewise, a life of immorality, greed, or deliberate rejection of God leads to separation from Him. Christians are called to be vigilant and to stay away from such influences.

### **Hope for eternal life**

The certainty of salvation lies in God's grace and faithfulness. Those who remain in faith will be preserved by Jesus and receive the crown of life. The reward in heaven depends on faithfulness and commitment in earthly life. Ultimately, God's goal for His followers is a life in His presence and for the glory of His name.

## **2.2 Salvation in numbers: Evaluation of ALL 545 New Testament salvation-related Bible passages**

In the New Testament, all 545 Bible passages, or about 35% of the entire text, that relate to our

- temporal and
- eternal salvation
- , including reward in heaven and

- lostness and damnation.

And they were related to the most important reasons and causes for this:

- election and calling
- God's grace and faithfulness
- initial/first faith and
- continued faith, expressed in works of faith.

The first and most important table showing the distribution of all Bible passages relevant to salvation in the New Testament simply shows the distribution and frequency of the topics sought in the New Testament with their underlying causes. This makes it clear how much and what God has to say on each topic. This table is the most meaningful of all in terms of where God places particular emphasis in His Word.

## Distribution of salvation themes in the New Testament with their underlying causes within ALL 545 passages relevant to salvation

		around	exact	Number
Topic Causes	Lost & damned	33	34	186
	Salvation <b>now</b>	50	53	291
	Salvation <b>forever</b>	50	48	259
	Through <b>election (E) / vocation (V)</b>	10	11	60
	by <b>God's grace (G) / God's faithfulness (F)</b>	40	41	221
	Through initial <b>faith</b>	33	35	189
	through <b>continued (n) / faith works</b>	67	68	369
	Losing salvation	25	23	128
	Wages/rank in heaven	10	9	48

A Bible passage can touch on several topics and mention causes at the same time, which is why the total is more than 100% and there are 545 Bible passages.

### States of salvation

About **one-third** of all Bible passages in the New Testament that deal with eternity and salvation address the **fundamental lostness and eternal damnation of people** through God's judgment.

Almost exactly **half of all passages deal with our possible salvation NOW** as fallen human beings from our natural enmity against God, our distance from God, and our sins to a restored relationship with God through repentance and rebirth.

About the other **half of the Bible passages deal with the eternal salvation promised** by God to the followers of Jesus when believers move from faith to sight and enter into eternal glory.

About a **quarter of all Bible passages** deal with the **possible loss of relationship with God and salvation on the path of true believers to**



**heaven**, where they will not arrive after the revelation of their lives in God's final judgment.

About **10%** of all Bible passages deal **with the reward of believers** in heaven **or the rank** they will have in heaven.

### **Reasons for salvation**

The causes for acceptance or rejection by God in eternity—without assigning them to a specific topic—can be broken down as follows:

About **10%** of the passages in the New Testament that deal with eternity and our present or eternal salvation refer **to God's election** (57%) **and calling** (43%).

Around **40%** of Bible passages cite **God's grace** (2/3) and **faithfulness** (1/3) as the cause for the respective event.

About **one-third** of all Bible passages deal with **saving initial faith** in order to enter into a healthy relationship with God.

About **two-thirds** of all Bible passages deal with **continued faith** after initial faith, **which is expressed in works of faith** on the path to eternity.

### **It becomes clear that**

**Lostness and damnation** are **major themes** in the New Testament (33%), but **even more so is the salvation that God wants to give to a lost world in this life** (53%). However, **God devotes almost as much attention** (47%) **to the attainment of eternal salvation by those who are now saved.**

Yes, how we as humans can enter into a healthy relationship with God is just as important to God, in terms of frequency of mention, as the important area of salvation, how we as those who are now saved can ultimately arrive in heaven.

**God is the agent** in every kind of salvation—this **is clear in half of all Bible passages** (40% God's grace and faithfulness +10% God's election and calling).

However, God's saving action toward us humans includes **faith** as such **an essential element** (33% initial faith +67% continued faith expressed in works) that **salvation of any kind is inseparably linked to faith on our part**. It remains to be seen whether this faith alone is God-given, God-wrought, or also something that God demands of us as our own prerequisite for salvation.

An alarming number of Bible passages (about **25%**) deal with the **possible loss of salvation by those who have entered into a right relationship with God through initial faith**. These passages are explicitly not about those who are not truly converted but consider themselves converted, but about those who once made a good start with Jesus. The others, who in reality never entered into a right relationship with God, are found in the Bible passages on "lost and damned."

It is noteworthy that **God pays about twice as much attention to our continued faith after our conversion as to our initial faith, which has now led to our conversion and salvation**. God cares deeply about our continuing faith in him!

Jesus repeatedly emphasized that we should not be so concerned with our rank in heaven, but rather serve ourselves and others here on earth. Therefore, from God's own perspective, the **Bible passages about our future reward and rank in heaven** are limited to **about 10%**, which is important but modest.

### **Summary of the connections**

**Lostness and damnation** are **major themes** in the New Testament (33%). Those who do not know God and who do not believe in the gospel, which is offered in many ways in God's love for our temporal and eternal salvation, will be lost and damned. **The salvation that God wants to give to** a lost world now in this life appears in 53% of all Bible passages on salvation.

There is an **almost 1:1 correlation between eternal salvation and continued faith, which is expressed in works of faith**.

The next largest value, but almost half as large at 46%, is attributed to "God's grace/faithfulness" and illustrates where the **source of these continued works of faith can be found: in God Himself**, who enables, sustains, protects, and promotes this faith.

There is another strong, **almost 1:1 correlation** between "**losing salvation**" considered on its own and "**continued faith/continued works of faith**." God shows us very clearly in His Word that continued "works of faith," or continued practical faith, is indispensable for obtaining our eternal salvation.

If we consider our **reward and rank in heaven** on its own, the highest **correlation**, as expected, is with our **continued works of faith** at 79%. We will reap in heaven what we sow in this life by observing and doing the will of God.

If we consider Bible passages about God's **election and calling** on their own, there is a high and roughly equal correlation with **salvation now** and with **eternal salvation** (both 66-67%). This makes it clear that both our initial conversion and our later salvation depend on God's calling and choosing, and that we cannot attribute our salvation now and eternally at the end to ourselves, but to God, without whom no one in the world can take anything to which God has not called and chosen him.

And yet God binds us with our being, essence, and will into his saving action. For the next almost equally large correlation of "**election and calling**" again exists with "**continued faith/continued works of faith**" (65%). God's calling and election always have very specific tasks and effects. And these are first our conversion and then continued works of faith.

One might think that continued works of faith are completely irrelevant for the elect. The opposite is true. **The greatest connection exists between God's election and continued works of faith (70%)**. Those who are chosen by God should follow God and simply lead a life marked by continued works of faith, for God's election will never be without consequences.

We are called to put our faith into practice on the way to heaven in order to truly inherit eternal life – and in the end, we can only do so through God's grace and faithfulness.

**"Initial faith"** is, of course, almost 1:1 connected with **"salvation now"** at 86%. We can only be saved **through the grace of God** and **by faith** alone.

If we consider **God's grace alone**, it is primarily aimed at our salvation now (83%) through initial faith (70%). Yes, by grace alone we are saved at our conversion, and that through faith, which is a gift from God.

And true initial faith has consequences. In His **grace and faithfulness** (64%), **God accompanies** those who have become **His children** through faith on their way to heaven, again with the **consequence of continued faith and continued works of faith** (59%).

If we focus primarily on **God's faithfulness**, then **the main emphasis is on continued faith and its works (78%)**. God's faithfulness enables us, as those who are saved, to live as He wants us to—and the result will be eternal salvation (69%).

**When it comes to *the possible loss of salvation*, it is striking that there is an absolute 1:1 relationship with continued faith or continued works of faith.** If there is a loss of salvation, it is to be sought and found here first and foremost. Those who no longer actively follow Jesus in faith lose their salvation – and the view of biblical witnesses often (71%), but not always, focuses on the later eternity, which is automatically affected by this.

**Eternal salvation is 100% connected with election/calling.**

Those who are eternally saved were previously called and chosen by God; that is the least that can be said. But we know from Jesus that not all who are called will enter heaven. Why might that be? Certainly not because of a lack of God's grace and faithfulness, with 63% agreement. To the same extent (63%), continued works of faith are linked to eternal salvation and calling. This shows two things. **On the one hand, those who arrive in heaven were called and chosen (100%).** On the other

hand, God's grace and faithfulness play just as important a role in arriving in heaven as continued works of faith – indeed, the former seems to make the latter possible in the first place. **For God's grace and faithfulness are also linked to eternal salvation in an impressive 1:1 ratio of 100%.**

It is astonishing that **our salvation NOW is 100% linked to continued works of faith.** But that is the goal of our salvation now: that we honor God with our lives from now on, made possible by our relationship of faith and love with him.

**Salvation NOW** linked to **election/calling** is connected with all other important areas with roughly the same intensity:

- Initial faith
- Continued works of faith:
- God's grace and faithfulness
- eternal salvation

**All of these are necessary on the path to heaven.**

## **2.3 Loved and saved NOW – preserved FOREVER: The love and fear of God in all the books of the New Testament**

An examination of the 27 books of the New Testament reveals remarkable consistency in their statements about the love of God, salvation in the here and now, the importance of the fear of God, and the conditions for eternal salvation. Twenty-six of the 27 books deal with all three aspects: the love of God, salvation through faith, the necessity of a healthy fear of God, and the way to eternal salvation. This consistency impressively testifies to the divine inspiration of Scripture and underscores the central message of the New Testament.

### **The Gospels**

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) consistently emphasize the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. They show that present salvation comes through repentance, faith, and acceptance of God's grace.

At the same time, they warn against a life without the fear of God and encourage a lifestyle characterized by holiness and obedience. All the Gospels emphasize that eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to Christ and requires consistent discipleship.

## **The Epistles**

The letters of the apostles, especially those of Paul, take up the themes of the Gospels and deepen them. They make it clear that God's love is the foundation of salvation, but also that salvation must be preserved through faith. Fear of God is described as essential for a life of following Christ. The letters emphasize that eternal life is not only a gift but also a goal that is achieved through perseverance, obedience, and faithfulness. Differences can be seen in the focus: while, for example, the letters to the Corinthians warn of the danger of overestimating oneself, the letter to the Romans concentrates on justification by faith alone but works as the fruit of a truly renewed life.

## **Revelation**

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, summarizes the central themes of the New Testament in an eschatological framework. It urges fear of God and shows the consequences of a life of sin, including the loss of salvation. At the same time, God's love is made visible through the ultimate salvation of believers who overcome and remain faithful. Revelation emphasizes that eternal salvation requires an active, victorious life of faith.

### **3      Salvation and possible loss of salvation:          Cross-book teachings of the New Testament**

#### **3.1 The way of the Spirit and following Christ to eternal salvation**

An examination of the cross-book teachings of the New Testament confirms the findings so far:

Faith in Jesus Christ is a long and challenging path that leads us to the crown of eternal life. This path requires not only a good start, but also perseverance and patience. Through the supernatural help of God, which the Holy Spirit gives us, we are enabled to overcome the challenges of faith and reach the goal. The most important themes are:

### **The overwhelming love of God as motivation**

The love of God that we encounter in conversion is the foundation of our faith. It grants us forgiveness for our sins and motivates us to continue on the path of faith. Even when we stumble and fall, we know that we can come to God at any time to be cleansed. The immeasurable love and grace of God is our motivation to run the race faithfully to the end.

The Holy Spirit, whom we received at rebirth, is our daily source of strength. Through Him, we are enabled to remain faithful on the path of faith.

### **Diligence, perseverance, and patience: the path to the goal**

A life of faith requires patience, perseverance, and discipline. We are called to persevere and hold fast in difficult times. Those who patiently endure trials and prove themselves worthy will ultimately be rewarded with eternal life, as God has promised to those who love Him. This perseverance helps us to complete the race to the finish line and receive the crown of victory.

### **The vicarious atoning death of Jesus and His resurrection**

Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection after three days are the foundation of the Christian faith. Through this vicarious atoning death, we are reconciled with God and receive forgiveness for our sins. Faith in Jesus, who died and rose again for us, is the foundation on which we build our lives.

## **Fruit for God: A measure of true salvation**

True salvation is evident in the fruit we bear for God. Jesus said in : Those who live in close connection with Christ will lead fruitful lives because they draw strength from this connection. This fruit is the natural consequence of a redeemed life and is evident in good works and service to others.

## **Brotherly love and forgiveness: The foundation of life in community**

Another hallmark of a faithful Christian life is love for our brothers and sisters in faith. Jesus calls us to love one another as he loves us. Mutual love among believers is a central feature of discipleship—it should be as strong as Christ's own love. This love is evident in our willingness to forgive and encourage one another.

## **Humility and love for God: a prerequisite for discipleship**

Following Jesus requires humility. Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom of God are the humble. True greatness is not shown in ruling over others, but in serving and being willing to stand up for others. This humility is shown in the willingness to serve God and others in love.

Love for God must be the greatest love in our lives. It is the foundation for our discipleship and our life in obedience to His commandments.

## **Dealing with money and sexual purity**

Handling money requires that we love God more than money. Jesus urges us: A person cannot pursue two conflicting goals—he will always be more devoted to one than the other. We are called to handle money responsibly and use it as a tool that God has entrusted to us to build His kingdom.

Sexual purity is also a central part of Christian life. God tells us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we should avoid sexual sin in order to preserve our purity.



## **Maintaining an Unblemished Conscience**

It is crucial that we maintain an unblemished conscience, as our conscience is an internal yardstick for our behavior. In it says: A firm faith and a clear conscience are inseparably linked, for they help us to live in harmony with the truth. A clear conscience helps us to live in the truth and to stand before God in obedience.

## **The importance of mission and evangelism**

A redeemed person has the task of proclaiming the gospel. In Jesus gives us the Great Commission: The task of passing on the faith applies to all followers of Christ—they are to lead others into fellowship with God. Every believer is called to spread the gospel and help others also come to faith in Jesus.

## **Continuous purification through God's grace**

Even if we remain faithful in our belief, we will stumble again and again. But in all this, we can know that God's love and grace are always available to us. God remains faithful and just – those who come to him and confess their sins and mistakes will experience forgiveness and purification. We can come to God again and again and be purified – not because we deserve it, but because God forgives us.

*Romans 2:6-7 Slt*

*[God] 6 who will repay each person according to their deeds: 7 to those who persevere in doing good, glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life.*

*1 Tim 2:14-15 F*

*[But they will be saved if they] remain faithful and loving and lead a holy life with self-control.*

*James 1:12 Slt*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

*1 John 1:9 Slt*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*1 Peter 5:2-4*

*[Exhortation to the elders] 2 Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 Then, when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

*Rev 3:11 Slt*

*11 Behold, I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may take your crown.*

*Rev 2:10 Slt*

*10 Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

### **3.2 The way of the "flesh" away from salvation to judgment and destruction**

The big picture of the way of the "flesh" away from salvation to judgment and destruction shows:

#### **The grace of God—a gift that must not be disregarded**

God has called us in His immeasurable love and saved us through Jesus Christ by pure grace. But this grace is not a license to remain in a life of the flesh. Those who indulge in sin, love the world, or water down the gospel not only disregard God's love, but abuse it and jeopardize their own salvation. True disciples of Jesus remain in his grace, hold fast to him, and allow themselves to be transformed by his Spirit.

## **The deadly danger of forgetting God's grace**

Our faith and our service to Christ are not in vain—as long as we hold fast to them. But those who turn away from the true gospel or live a life without repentance receive God's grace in vain. Scripture warns urgently against forgetting God's love and grace and falling back into the works of the flesh. Faith without continual purification and sanctification is dead.

Those who consciously indulge in sin and do not repent show that they do not value God's grace. Jesus saved us, but He expects us to remain in Him and with Him. Those who do not allow themselves to be led by the Spirit of God, but choose the way of the flesh, ultimately reject the love that once saved them.

## **The serious warning: lukewarmness and conscious sin separate us from God**

It is possible to start with Jesus but not reach the goal. Those who become lukewarm and do not repent will be spit out by Jesus. Discipleship requires vigilance and steadfastness, especially in times of trial. Those who turn to the world, follow it, and ignore God's commandments disregard the love through which they were saved and risk their salvation.

Conscious, persistent sin is particularly deadly. Those who are not willing to break with their old life, who push God and his commandments into the background, will one day realize that they have distanced themselves from God's grace. The love that once saved them has been disregarded and ultimately abused. Jesus has no fellowship with those who live in conscious rebellion against him.

## **The true reward: a life for God and not for oneself**

God rewards those who live for love of him and remain in his will. Those who use their talents for the Lord, remain steadfast in suffering, and serve selflessly will receive a great reward in heaven. But those who act only for their own recognition or do not use their God-given abilities will not only receive no reward, but will lose their eternal life.

True disciples of Jesus understand that their lives do not belong to themselves, but to God. Those who become entangled in the desires of the world again not only act against God's commandments, but show that they no longer honor God's love. A life for oneself is a life against God.

### **The destruction caused by carnal living**

God has renewed us in Christ, but the flesh remains an enemy that wants to pull us back. Those who give in to the flesh, who put their desires above God, will die spiritually. The Bible makes it clear that those who live according to the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. So those who consciously decide against God's Spirit not only reject His guidance, but also mock the grace that once saved them.

Jesus expects us to take up our cross daily, deny ourselves, and follow Him. Those who instead choose a life of the flesh forget the immeasurable love that once saved them and ultimately abuse it by using it for their own purposes.

### **The danger of seduction and false gospel**

A false gospel kills. Only the pure, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ leads to life. Those who allow themselves to be seduced by false teachings or worldly philosophies will fall away from God. It is especially dangerous to water down the gospel and ignore God's holiness. A gospel without repentance, without sanctification, and without obedience to Christ is not the gospel. Those who cling to something else disregard the truth and are lost.

### **Love for the world leads to destruction**

*"No one can serve two masters."* Those who love the world lose eternal life. Scripture warns urgently against allowing oneself to be taken in by the desires of this world. Greed, fame, comfort, and self-fulfillment are deceptive traps that distract us from God. Those who place these things

above Jesus disregard the love that once saved them and will perish with the world.

Many begin with Christ, but the cares of this world stifle their faith. The temptations of life, the pursuit of possessions, and the desire for recognition cause many to lose sight of the true treasure. But in the end, only one thing matters: those who remain faithful to the end will be saved.

### **Grace and restoration—God's heart for His children**

Our path of discipleship is not about sinless perfection, but about our great lifeline. Every day offers us the opportunity to be cleansed by God – from the things that sadden him, but do not affect our salvation in Christ. But even when we stray so far from God that, like the prodigal son or the lost sheep, we leave the safe haven of the Father or the good shepherd, His love remains unchanged. He waits with great joy to welcome us back and restore us completely. His grace is not a license to sin, but it is inexhaustible for anyone who returns in repentance.

### **Conclusion: Remain vigilant and honor God's love**

Our life is a gift from God, purchased with the blood of Jesus. We must not disregard His love by indulging in sin or choosing the path of the flesh. Those who turn against God abuse the grace that once saved them and jeopardize their eternal future.

But God's grace remains greater than our failure. Those who have strayed can return to Him at any time. Just as the father welcomed the prodigal son, God joyfully accepts anyone who turns to Him in repentance.

Therefore, let us remain vigilant, hold fast to Christ, and love God more than anything else. Only those who remain faithful to the end will receive the crown of life. For God's love is faithful—but it requires us to remain faithful to it.

## 4      **Reward & Rank in Heaven**

Reward in heaven is exclusively for those who have been saved by grace through Jesus Christ. They have eternal life from the beginning.

The unsaved are not only lost, but their sins also cause them to accumulate wrath for eternity. The intensity of their wrongdoing determines the extent of their negative reward in eternity.

For those who are saved by grace and who live with and for Christ, the following applies:

Eternal life is the reward for those who love God and show this love through their lives and service to Him. Our inner motives are decisive in this regard. Everything we do out of love and for God's glory will be rewarded by Him.

There is a great reward in eternal life for believers who use their talents generously and faithfully for God, for suffering for Christ's sake or for the sake of righteousness, and for loving their enemies. However, actions that are done primarily for one's own recognition and not for the Lord will not bring any reward.

Yes, we may want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, but the way to achieve this is to SERVE, to do what we say and teach, and to suffer for Christ's sake. And yet we can be completely relaxed and do not need to get involved in any apparent power struggles. In the end, the hierarchy in heaven will be as the Father in heaven has intended it to be.

Those who do nothing with their God-given abilities for the Lord will not only receive no reward, but will also lose eternal life and suffer the same fate as the unbelievers. Even those who, although in the service of God, serve themselves more than God, are not or will not be saved.

*Romans 2:6-8 Slt*

*[God] 6 who will repay each person according to their deeds: 7 eternal life to those who persevere in doing good, seeking glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and anger to those who are selfish and disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness.*

*2 Cor 9:6 Meng*

*6 Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

*Matthew 6:1 Meng*

*1 Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them, or you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

*Col 3:23-25 SlT*

*23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will receive the consequences of his wrongdoing, and there is no partiality.*

*Lk 6:22-23 + 35 Meng*

*Love your enemies, do good, and lend without expecting anything in return. Then your reward will be great.*

Rom 2:4-7; Lk 19:16-19; Mt 25:25-30; 2 Cor 9:6; Mt 6:1; Mt 20:20-28; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 22:11-12; Luke 6:22-23 + 35; Col 3:23-25; 1 Cor 3:11-15; Matt 7:21-23; Matt 5:19

## **5 My preservation on the path to eternal salvation**

In His grace and faithfulness, God cares for our preservation on our path to eternal salvation. And whoever follows Jesus and makes use of His grace(s) will surely attain eternal salvation.

### **Preservation by God**

*Our preservation on the path to eternal salvation*

What a great God! Our salvation is not our own doing—it is in His hands. He holds us fast, guides us, and preserves us until we reach our destination.

*Phil 1:6 SlT*

*I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

## **God is our protector**

God Himself ensures that we remain on the path of salvation. No one can separate us from Him: John 10:29. His hand holds us securely!

## **Grace carries us**

Our salvation is grace—it began with God's love and will remain until the end: Eph 2:8.

## **Jesus intercedes for us**

We are not alone—our High Priest lives to intercede for us: Hebrews 7:25. He fights for us!

## **God's faithfulness holds us fast**

He remains faithful, even when we falter: 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:13.

## **God uses challenges to strengthen us**

Difficult times are not punishment, but a sign of his love: Hebrews 12:6.

## **He will bring us safely to our destination!**

*Romans 8:38-39*

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

He has equipped us with everything we need to remain faithful. Those who hold fast to him will surely reach their destination.

*2 Peter 1:3 SlT*

*For his divine nature has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his glory and virtue.*



## **Preservation through the church of Christ**

God has not called us to be lone warriors, but members of one body, the church of Christ. Through encouragement, admonition, spiritual guidance, and mutual vigilance, the church helps us to remain on the path of salvation. Those who withdraw from the church expose themselves to the danger of becoming spiritually cold and falling away from the faith. God preserves us by anchoring us in the fellowship of the saints.

*Hebrews 10:25 Psalm*

*Let us not neglect meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

## **Preservation through encouragement and admonition**

No one can walk the path of faith alone—we need brothers and sisters who encourage us, but also admonish us when we stumble. A healthy church is a place of mutual correction and strengthening. Without loving rebuke and encouragement, individuals become blind to their own mistakes and jeopardize their walk. God uses brothers and sisters to keep us faithful.

*1 Thessalonians 5:11 SlT*

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

## **Preservation through comfort and encouragement in difficult times**

When trials and tests come, we need brothers and sisters to comfort us and strengthen us in the truth. The church is the place where we are encouraged to hold fast and not lose heart. Through fellowship and prayer, we are strengthened anew to remain steadfast: 2 Cor 1:3-4

### **Faithful obedience as salvation for others**

Our faith affects not only ourselves but also others. When one person remains faithful, it can lead to the salvation of another. Like a light in the darkness, the faith of one individual helps to bring others onto the right path: Phil. 1:14

### **Preservation through church discipline – protection from straying**

A just and loving approach to sin in the church protects believers from temptation. Those who live in conscious sin endanger not only themselves but also others. Church discipline serves to preserve the purity of faith and correct wrongdoing: 1 Corinthians 5:12-13

### **Preservation through mutual vigilance**

Christians are called to watch over one another. When we fall asleep spiritually, we need brothers and sisters to shake us awake. Mutual exhortation helps us to remain faithful and not stray from the truth: Hebrews 3:13

### **Submission to spiritually minded leadership**

God appoints shepherds and leaders who bear responsibility for the church. Those who submit to spiritual leadership experience protection, guidance, and spiritual growth. A leader should not rule, but serve in the spirit of Christ: Hebrews 13:17

### **Preservation through sound doctrine and teachers according to God's Word**

False teachings destroy faith. A church remains preserved when it adheres to sound, scriptural teaching. God gives his church teachers who faithfully interpret his Word and protect it from deception: 2 Tim. 4:3-4

## **Preservation through good role models**

We learn most from what we see. Good role models in the church help us to remain faithful in our faith. Those who are spiritually mature should set an example for others so that they can grow in faith: 1 Corinthians 11:1

## **Conclusion: The church is God's tool for preservation**

Those who anchor themselves in the church of Christ not only remain strengthened, but also spiritually preserved. Encouragement, rebuke, spiritual guidance, and sound teaching help us to remain on the path of salvation.

*Eph 4:16 SlT*

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

## **The preservation of the church of Christ on the path of salvation to eternity**

### **The calling and completion of the church as the bride of Christ**

The church of Christ is the bride of Jesus Christ, called by God, whom he has prepared for himself, pure and blameless.

*Eph 5:25-27 SlT*

*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present her to himself as a glorious church, without , spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless.*

The church as a whole, as the body of Christ on earth, will NEVER perish, but will ultimately arrive with Christ in heaven, inherit the kingdom with him, and reign for eternity.

*Mt 16:18 SlT*

*But I also say to you: You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

*Rev 19:7-8 Slt*

*Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory, for the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. And she has been given fine linen to wear, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

### **The local church – discipleship at a crossroads**

But what about each individual local church? Its eternal existence and spiritual life are by no means guaranteed.

Jesus demands sanctification and church discipline at the local church level, that is, separation from anyone who remains unrepentant in sin (Matthew 18:17; Luke 9:60), because otherwise sin will permeate the entire church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). Furthermore, Jesus makes it unmistakably clear what the consequences are when a local church abandons its first love, does not preserve pure doctrine, and renounces church discipline: spiritual death threatens, the lampstand will be removed, and the church will ultimately be spewed out of his mouth (Rev. 2:4-5; Rev. 3:16).

*Rev. 3:1-2 Slt*

*1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works. You have the name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*

*Rev 2:4-5 Slt*

*But I have this against you, that you have abandoned your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent, and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

*Rev 3:16 Slt*

*So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

## **Preserving the local church on the path to salvation**

### *a) Preservation from seduction by a false gospel*

Even the first churches had to contend with temptations. Paul warns that a false gospel that does not proclaim true salvation through Jesus Christ can corrupt the church.

*Gal 1:6-9 Meng*

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: "If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed!"*

*Preservation:* Elders and leaders must watch over the saving doctrine, teach it without distortion, and live it out in an exemplary manner. (Titus 1:9)

### *b) Preservation from spiritual slumber and lukewarmness*

Spiritual lukewarmness is a serious danger.

*Rev. 3:16 Slt S*

*O, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

*Preservation:* The church must be vigilant and preserve its first love (Rev. 2:4-5).

### *c) Preservation from sin and lack of church discipline*

Sin in the lives of individuals can defile the entire church and separate it from God.

*1 Cor. 5:6-7 Slt*

*Your boasting is not good! Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a*

*new lump, since you are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed for us.*

*Preservation:* Living holiness and church discipline are necessary (2 Tim 4:2).

#### *d) Preservation through spiritual leadership*

Weak leadership is often the beginning of apostasy.

*Acts 20:28*

*So keep watch over yourselves and all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.*

*Preservation:* Leaders must love the Word and live exemplary lives. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:16)

### **Conclusion**

The church as a whole, those who have overcome and remained faithful to Christ, will exist for eternity. But every local church is engaged in a spiritual battle for life and death. Vigilance, sound doctrine, church discipline, and spiritual leadership are the keys for the local church to remain on the path of salvation into eternity.

*False teaching:* Even the first churches were threatened by false gospels. Paul curses any message other than that of grace in Christ, because it means spiritual death (Gal 1:6-9). Therefore, elders and leaders must watch over the saving doctrine and live it in an exemplary manner (Titus 1:9).

*Spiritual lukewarmness* is just as dangerous. A lukewarm church will be spit out of Jesus' mouth. Therefore, the church must remain vigilant in keeping its spiritual life alive in Jesus (Rev. 2:4-5).

*The sin of individuals* defiles the entire church. Only when the church purifies itself of this sin can it remain on the path of life. When sin is tolerated for a long time, death is already in the pot of the church. Therefore, holiness and church discipline are necessary (2 Tim. 4:2).

*Weak or unspiritual leadership* is often the beginning of apostasy, which ultimately leads to the spiritual downfall of the entire church. Leaders must love the Word and be role models (1 Cor. 5:6-7; Acts 20:28).

The church will endure, but every local church is engaged in spiritual warfare. Vigilance, teaching, church discipline, and spiritual leadership are the keys to remaining on the path of salvation as the church of Christ.

#### *Victory over trials – remaining steadfast on the narrow path*

The path of faith is not an easy walk—trials, temptations, and resistance are part of it. But God gives us everything we need to remain steadfast. Through His love, His joy, His protection, and His strength, we can be victorious.

*1 Cor 10:13 Slt*

*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

#### *God's love is our shield*

God's love is more than a feeling—it is our strongest protection. Those who remain in it cannot be shaken, because they know that nothing can snatch them out of God's hand. His love carries us through every challenge.

*Romans 8:39 SlT*

*Neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

*Joy in the Lord is our strength*

There are many worries in the world, but true strength comes from re-joining in the Lord. Those who remain close to him experience supernatural strength and steadfastness. Our joy does not depend on circumstances, but on him.

*Neh 8:10 SlT*

*Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!*

*Don't be afraid: we cannot do it on our own, but through Him!*

The fear of failure keeps many from living courageously for God. But God does not expect us to succeed on our own—He Himself gives us what we need. Those who rely on Him will prevail!

*Phil 4:13 SlT*

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!*

*Protection from false pride and judgment*

Self-righteousness and arrogant judgments of others can lead us astray from the narrow path. God protects us when we remain humble and fix our eyes on him instead of judging others. He sees the heart—and he alone judges righteously.

*James 4:6 SlT*

*God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

*Victory over the adversary – standing firm against the enemy*

The devil wants to bring us down through lies, fear, and doubt. But those who submit to God and trust him can resist. We do not fight alone—Christ has already won the victory!



*James 4:7 Slt*

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

### **Summary:**

#### **My preservation on the path to eternal salvation**

The church as a whole, those who have overcome and remained faithful to Christ, will exist for eternity. But every local church is engaged in a spiritual battle for life and death. Continued love for Jesus, vigilance, sound doctrine, church discipline, and spiritual leadership are the keys for the local church to remain on the path of salvation into eternity.

God preserves us as members of Christ on our path to eternity through His unwavering faithfulness and grace. Our salvation is not based on our own achievements, but on Jesus' love and sacrifice. He does not expect perfection, but a heart that remains obedient to Him and lives close to Him. His grace gives us the opportunity to repent and strengthens us to remain steadfast even in difficult times.

God uses his Word, prayer, his discipline, and spiritual leaders to keep us on the right path. Those who take His Word seriously and act upon it protect themselves from evil. But preservation does not happen automatically—it requires our active devotion. Spiritual vigilance, good teaching, and exhortation are crucial. Sloth and negligence endanger our salvation, while a life of holy reverence leads us safely to our destination.

The greatest danger lies in pride and persistent sin. Those who rely on their own achievements distance themselves from God. But true love for Jesus is evident in a life that trusts Him and acts according to His will. Sin must be resisted decisively, for it destroys our spiritual integrity. Those who give in to it jeopardize their relationship with God.

We are called to care for one another, to love and strengthen one another, so that together we may attain eternal glory. Crucial to the preservation of the church is the training of spiritual leaders who love,

preserve, and teach God's Word. Elders and leaders have the responsible task of watching over the saving doctrine of the one true gospel, teaching it, and living it in an exemplary manner. A church that strays from the core of the one true gospel and turns to a false gospel in word and practice falls from God's grace—as the Galatians nearly did—and loses its salvation. Thus, there will be churches that outwardly still appear to be the church of Jesus, but in reality are dead and will be spewed out of Jesus' mouth.

The church discipline commanded by Jesus serves our healing and warning. A church that implements it carefully and faithfully protects itself from the judgment of its Lord and helps those who have been rebuked to remain on the path to eternity. However, the decisive protection against such developments or restoration after an apostasy that has already taken place lies in repentance and conversion to the true gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ. This includes an attitude of fear of God that avoids sin, arrogance, and the pursuit of one's own lofty goals. Instead, it is important to rediscover one's first love for Jesus and to orient one's life toward devotion to him. Sinful leaders and fellow believers must be led to repentance in love, through admonition and clear communication, so that the church as the body of Christ may be preserved in truth, purity, and faithfulness.

God's faithfulness is our security. He does not allow us to be tested beyond our strength and gives us the opportunity to repent. Like , he calls us to be vigilant, to pray, and to actively await his return. Those who remain close to him experience his preserving grace in a special way.

The spiritual battle is real. The enemy tries to undermine our faith and thus bring us to spiritual death. But through God's Word, prayer, and humility, we can resist his attacks. The armor of God protects us, while prayer keeps us close to Christ.

Ultimately, God's protection and our devotion go hand in hand. Our salvation is based on his love and faithfulness, but it is up to us to remain in him, allow ourselves to be purified, and keep his Word. Those who remain in Jesus, follow him, and listen to his voice will surely reach their destination—the glory of eternity.

## 6 Limits of Salvation

### 1. The limits of salvation and God's unchanging love

Salvation is a gift from God that is rooted in His love. He does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9), but for all to repent and find eternal life. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of each individual to remain on the narrow path of life.

- **Sins of the tongue and their consequences:** Even though careless words can grieve the Holy Spirit, God remains faithful and ready to forgive (1 John 1:9).
- **Loss of salvation through deliberate apostasy:** Those who remain hardened risk their salvation—but God's hand remains outstretched as long as someone is willing to repent.
- **He remains faithful:** Even when we are unfaithful, he remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13). His grace is greater than our weaknesses, and he fights for us so that we will not be lost.

### 2. God's space of grace and its wide boundaries

God gives his children room for repentance and patience on the path of faith. He knows our struggles and will not abandon us as long as we do not consciously reject him.

- **The escalating stages of decline:** Even when believers stumble, God's grace holds them fast. He lifts them up as long as they remain willing to repent.
- **Examples from the Bible:**
  - The Galatians wavered in their faith, but Paul struggled for them because God did not want to give up on them.
  - The Corinthians lived in disorder, but God worked through Paul to restore them.

- **Remaining in Christ:** God strengthens us so that we remain in Christ. But those who consciously and definitively separate themselves from him step out of his saving grace—yet until their last breath, his call to return remains.

### **3. Assurance of salvation and responsibility – God's interest in our salvation**

God's greatest concern is our salvation. Those who trust in him can be sure that he not only saves once, but also preserves (John 10:28-29).

- **Doing God's will:** Not as a burden, but out of love for him (Matthew 7:21).
- **Fruits necessary for salvation:** love for fellow believers, humility, forgiveness, and faithfulness.
- **What sustains us:** Not our achievements, but God's faithfulness. Even when we fall, He lifts us up—as long as we do not consciously reject His saving work.

### **4. The prodigal son – the prodigal daughter: God's open arms for those who return**

Even when someone turns away from God, His fatherly heart remains full of love.

- **God does not give up on anyone prematurely!** Those who stray are spiritually dead – but God seeks them out.
- **The heavenly joy over everyone who returns:** "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!" (Luke 15:6-7).
- **Endless grace:** No abyss is too deep for God's mercy.

### **5. Assurance of salvation – God's indissoluble faithfulness**

Our salvation is not fragile. Those who live with God can know that they are held.

- God protects his children: no one can snatch them out of his hand (John 10:28).
- The seal of the Holy Spirit: Our salvation is secured in Christ Eph 1:13.
- God Himself works in us: He gives us the strength to stay on the path of life (Phil. 2:13).

## **6. The distinguishing mark of those who are truly saved – love as the foundation**

The true sign of the redeemed is not perfection, but love.

**God's power overcomes the world:** Our faith is the key to remaining in His grace.

**Love for God is expressed in obedience:** those who love God keep His commandments.

**Brotherly love is indispensable:** Those who love God also love their brothers and sisters in faith.

## **7 Summary, conclusions, Outlook**

### **7.1-5 Summary**

**Salvation happens NOW through faith without works, and eternal salvation happens through faith that is made visible through works.**

In the New Testament, the Greek keywords for salvation (G4991 – σωτηρία – soteria) and saved (G4982 – σώζω – sozo) and their derivatives are used equally frequently both for the salvation already accomplished by Christ at our conversion and for future salvation. This future salvation will occur when Jesus returns and we enter from this earthly life, marked by temptation, into perfect resurrection fellowship with

him, in which we will neither sin nor die. This future salvation is referred to in this book as "eternal salvation."

After our first salvation, we are now on the way to this second, eternal salvation. Christ has redeemed us—and he will redeem us. He has saved us—and he will save us. As a down payment on this final redemption, he gave us his Spirit at our first salvation, the pledge of our future, perfect salvation.

An examination of all 545 salvation-related Bible passages in Chapter 2 shows that the approximately 250 passages dealing with the first salvation are always connected with grace, acceptance, and election. The approximately 250 Bible passages concerning the second, eternal salvation, on the other hand, are always connected with our continuing faith, visible in works of faith and in our actions.

Grace—yes, yes, and yes again! But equally human responsibility to shape a life that honors God out of this grace—yes, yes, and yes again!

The gospel is not only the good news of God's love that saves us. It is also God's call to obey him from now on, because Jesus is Lord. Those who accept God's love and let Jesus into their lives as Lord in faith love Jesus. And those who love Jesus do something for him. For the language of God's love is action.

Those who experience God's love and remain cold and indifferent to it—or later become numb to it again—embark on the path of abusing grace. But God does not allow his grace to be abused.

The final judgment, which decides whether we will receive eternal life, is always based on works—but on the basis of undeserved grace.

Does this invalidate the gospel? After all, Paul proves in his Epistle to the Romans, especially in chapters 1-3, that all people are sinners and no one is saved by their own works. Yes, it is futile to try to earn salvation through our own efforts. This applies to our initial salvation, our entry into a reconciled relationship with God.

But when it comes to final, eternal salvation, Paul also says in the Epistle to the Romans:

*Rom 2:6-8 Slt*

*6 [God] will repay each person according to their deeds: 7 eternal life to those who persevere in doing good, seeking glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and anger to those who are selfish and disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness.*

How does this fit together? Will we ultimately be saved by our works? Isn't eternal life only given to those who believe in Jesus Christ?

Yes, it fits together: those who believe in Jesus Christ are those who obey the faith (Romans 1:5). Their lives are characterized by one decisive trait: they persistently do good and strive for God's glory, honor, and immortality.

This is the description of those who have heard God's call in the gospel, have been made righteous and saved by his grace, and remain on the path to eternity. God will give them eternal life according to their works. But these works are not the cause of their salvation. Their salvation is based solely on Jesus Christ and their faith in the gospel. But they have changed their minds, repented, and follow God in obedience to the faith. Their works of faith are the result of their saving faith and at the same time a condition for reaching their goal. It is not the good beginning alone that saves, but the faithful walk to the end.

Jesus himself makes this clear: Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life. The gate alone is not enough—the way always belongs to it.

James confirms this: faith without works is dead. Such faith cannot save. True faith only becomes alive and complete through works.

Works of faith do not save us causally. But truly saving faith is manifested in works of faith – which in turn confirm our salvation.

According to these two passages, the grace of God in Jesus Christ has four effects and purposes for us believers—and all are part of God's plan to give us eternal life. This path begins with our conversion, and **God's grace trains us**

- to serve the living and true God,
- to deny ungodliness and worldly desires,
- to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world,
- to look forward to the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Is this waiting for the Lord really necessary for salvation? Yes, it is a God-ordained part of our salvation.

Whoever hears and believes the word of Christ immediately receives eternal life. He or she does not have to show any works in order to be accepted. The person immediately stands in the right relationship with God and is with God when he or she dies.

But those who do not want to hear the voice of the Son of God will have lived their lives in evil and will ultimately hear the judgment of condemnation.

Here it becomes clear: hearing in the biblical sense is not merely listening, but always hearing in order to obey. Those who believe obey—and those who do not obey do not believe. That is why the New Testament often speaks of "obedience of faith."

True faith in Jesus encompasses the whole personality and has clear effects: it manifests itself in our listening to God and doing good. Doing good—out of love for God and people—is the divine standard for saving faith. Those who live in this attitude prove the authenticity of their faith and, because they truly believe, will remain saved. But those who do evil do not believe in Jesus—and are lost. These people have never heard Jesus' call or have turned away from it.

*John 5:24 Slt*

*[Jesus Christ says] 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life** and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

*John 5:28-29 Meng*

*28 Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done*



good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

*Isa 50:4-5 Slt*

4 The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a disciple, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, morning by morning he awakens me; he awakens my ear to listen like a disciple. 5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I have not been rebellious, nor have I turned back.

*Mark 12:28-31 F*

**Hear, O Israel:** The Lord our God, the Lord alone. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength—and your neighbor as yourself.

*3 John 1:11 Meng*

Beloved, do **not** imitate evil, but imitate good: whoever **does** good is from **God**; whoever **does evil** has **not** seen **God**.

*James 2:17 Slt*

17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

*Hebrews 9:28 Meng*

28 **So also Christ**, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are waiting for him, for their salvation.**

*Romans 3:28 Slt*

28 So we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

*Romans 2:6-8 Slt*

6 who will repay each one according to his works: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and disobedient to the truth, but obedient to unrighteousness, wrath and anger!

*Romans 8:13 Slt*

13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Rom 2:6-11; Rom 3:28; Rom 5:1; Rom 8:13; Rom 6:20-23; Acts 5:32; Rom 1:5; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17; Mk 16:16; Rom 2:8; Gal 5:7; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 4:17; Mt 7:14; Jas 2:14-26; Isa 50:4-5; Mk 12:28-31; Jn 5:24; Heb 5:9; Heb 11:8; Heb 13:17; Rom 1:5; Acts 6:7; Jas 2:17; 3 Jn 1:11

### **Eternal salvation also comes only through God's grace, faithfulness, and mercy**

It is God's grace and faithfulness and the works of faith brought about by them through me after my salvation that preserve me in salvation, which was once given to me entirely by grace and will be given to me completely.

Why else should we hope for the grace of Christ on that day (of eternity) if we can be certain of it (1 Peter 1:13)? And why must Onesiphorus, whom Paul truly considers to be born again (Philem 1:10) and who serves Christ impeccably to the best of his knowledge and belief, still find "mercy" on the part of the Lord on "that day"? The answer is: *In the end, only the grace and mercy of Christ himself saves gold-proven faith at the transition to eternity.* No one ultimately enters heaven through their own efforts; it is still undeserved grace that is the foundation. But God has woven our part—faith (works)—so closely with his part—the preserving power of God and his grace—that it becomes an indissoluble whole that is only effective and reaches its goal in its entirety.

Eternal salvation is for those who do not abuse the grace freely given to them, but prove themselves worthy of it and use it to the glory of God. And this is decided by our merciful, but also holy Lord.

*1 Peter 1:13 SlT*

*13 Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope fully upon the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*2 Tim 1:16-18 SlT*

*16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; 17 but when he was in Rome, he searched for me diligently and found me. 18*

*May the Lord grant him mercy from the Lord on that day! And how much he served me in Ephesus, you know best.*

*Romans 5:21 SlT*

*21 So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 Peter 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; Romans 5:21; Philemon 1:10

### **The reward of discipleship**

The Bible teaches that eternal life is both an undeserved gift of God's grace and a reward for a faithful, obedient life in following Jesus. These two aspects are inseparably linked: grace and responsibility.

Those who truly believe love Christ and serve him. These works confirm faith and prove it to be genuine. Saving faith always manifests itself in action.

Eternal life is therefore a gift for all who sincerely entrust themselves to Jesus, and at the same time it is connected with the promise of a reward. The faithfulness and devotion of the believer on earth determine the measure of reward in heaven. Some will be richly rewarded because they have served God faithfully in love and obedience. Others will be saved, but without special reward, because their works had no lasting value. But there is also a serious warning that those who leave the opportunities entrusted to them by God unused and remain spiritually sluggish may ultimately be rejected and lost.

Jesus illustrates this in the parable of the talents, among other places. Those who increase what has been entrusted to them will be rewarded and given greater responsibility in eternity. However, those who do nothing with what they have received will be cast out into outer darkness with the unbelievers.

Paul speaks of the work of a Christian being tested by fire in the end. Those who faithfully build on Christ will have their work remain and re-

ceive their reward. However, those who live with false motives or indifference will have their work burned up. They can be saved, but only as through fire—without any special reward.

Not every deed for God is automatically rewarded. Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount that what matters is the attitude of the heart. Those who serve out of love for Christ and not to please people will be richly rewarded by God. However, those who seek the applause of people have already received their reward here and will come away empty-handed in eternity.

True greatness in the kingdom of God lies in serving. Those who humble themselves and serve others in love will be exalted in eternity and richly rewarded.

Yes, we may want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, but the way to achieve this is to SERVE, to do what we say and teach, and to suffer for Christ's sake. And yet we can be completely relaxed and do not need to get involved in any apparent power struggles. In the end, the hierarchy in heaven will be as the Father in heaven has intended it to be.

In summary, the New Testament makes it clear: eternal life is a gift of grace for all who entrust themselves to Jesus in faith. But this saving faith always manifests itself in a life of love, service, and faithfulness. Those who live this way will not only inherit eternal life, but also receive rich rewards in eternity. However, those who abuse the grace they have received through indifference or selfishness run the risk of ending up empty-handed in eternity or even losing their salvation.

### **This is a harsh message. Who can hear it? About God's pedagogy and the balance of our current preaching**

Do you disagree or strongly disagree with the conclusion and message of this book? Jesus was also accused of this by many of his followers in the Gospel of John in relation to his speech. The question is rather whether the "harsh words" are right or wrong.

I have some homework for you before you continue reading. It will take some time, effort, and care, but it only makes sense to continue reading if you do it:

1. Write down or mark all the promises made by God and Jesus and all the encouraging verses from the Gospel of Matthew alone.

*How many sermons have you heard about this?*

2. In the next step, write down or mark all of Jesus' open warnings or threats in the Gospel of Matthew.

*Then compare: How many sermons, devotions, or Bible studies have you heard on this subject?*

Does what you hear from others about God's Word reflect what Jesus said in a balanced way? If not, then you have been taught a one-sided view of Jesus and you have a distorted picture of who Jesus is.

*Encouragement and demands – a balanced gospel?*

I have examined the Gospel of Matthew myself in more detail. To do this, I divided all the text passages into four areas, marked them with colors, and evaluated them at the end (for more details, see the "Overview" section). The result is as follows:

Using the Gospel of Matthew as an example, we see a remarkable balance between God's encouragement and demands.

About 15% of the text contains exhortations about what we as believers should do, while 13% emphasizes encouragement, promises, and God's love. However, the largest portion, about 32%, is devoted to Jesus' harsh words, which announce warnings, consequences, and judgment. About 40% of the text is neutral.

This balance challenges us: Do we perceive Jesus in his whole truth, or do we only pick up on the pleasant aspects of his message?

In today's preaching landscape—even in evangelical circles—almost exclusive emphasis is placed on God's goodness and mercy. His holiness

and the serious demands he places on believers are often neglected. The result? A distorted gospel that presents a one-sided view of God and produces followers who do not truly know him in his entirety and follow him with complete sincerity. But the Bible clearly shows that God's holiness is just as central as his love.

This applies not only to the Gospel of Matthew, but also to the other writings of the New Testament. However, God, as a good teacher who knows that we need above all encouragement as followers of Jesus, often presents very serious issues in an educationally sensitive way, making them more acceptable to us.

### *Examples from the letters – encouragement and clear boundaries*

The apostles and Jesus himself often emphasize difficult but necessary truths in their message, embedded in encouragement and reassurance.

#### *1. Purity and holiness – "Flee from sexual immorality!" (1 Cor 6:15-20)*

Paul urges the Corinthians to be aware of their belonging to Christ and to honor God through purity. Here he takes a positive approach without making threats. Nevertheless, it becomes clear in other passages that continued fornication leads to exclusion from the kingdom of God. Positive encouragement and clear warnings are both necessary.

#### *2. Devotion to the true Christ – "No other Jesus!" (2 Cor 11:2-4)*

Paul lovingly warns the church not to be led astray. He compares this to Eve's temptation, which ended in spiritual death. Although the warning consequence is only hinted at, the message remains clear: our eternal salvation depends on our constant devotion to the true Christ and the true gospel.

#### *3. Way of life – "No inheritance in the kingdom of God!" (Eph 5:3-11)*

Paul emphasizes that followers of Jesus should live differently. Positive encouragement and clear consequences—such as exclusion from salvation for persistent sin—go hand in hand. The appeal to honor God is complemented by serious warnings against a godless life.

#### *4. Spiritual strength – "Put on the armor of God!" (Eph 6:10-13)*

Paul encourages us to put on the armor of God in order to win the spiritual battle. He does not say what will happen if we do not do this – presumably to keep the focus on the path to victory. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is no alternative to this path, and defeat requires repentance and restoration through Christ.

## Conclusion

### *Proclaiming a balanced gospel*

The message of the Bible reveals a tension between encouragement and demand. In our preaching culture, it is crucial to maintain a balance between the two in order to proclaim the wholeness of God. A one-sided emphasis—whether on love alone or judgment alone—leads to a distorted image of God and a false discipleship.

Our salvation depends on a constant relationship of faith with Christ. This includes recognizing the whole Christ: the loving Savior and the righteous Judge. Only in this way can we remain faithful to him, treat him with reverence, and walk the path of life to its destination.

## 7.6 Conclusions

An examination of the numerous passages in the New Testament dealing with salvation and faith clearly shows that the path to eternal salvation cannot be reduced to a one-time confession. Rather, the Bible presents salvation as a path that begins with conversion but is completed by a life of obedience in faith until the end.

1. **Saving faith is obedient, active faith:** Analysis shows that genuine saving faith always encompasses the whole personality. It manifests itself in obedience to God's Word and in good works. Hearing the Word in the biblical sense does not mean passive listening, but active implementation. Those who believe follow. Those who believe do good. Those who believe remain on the narrow path.

Jesus himself describes eternal life as the goal of those who do God's will and do good, while those who do evil will go into judgment (Mt 7:15-28; John 5:28-29). Paul summarizes the life of those who are eternally saved as a constant life and striving for God's glory through doing good and separating from evil (Rom 2:7; Rom 8:13). James makes it clear (James 2:17-26) that faith without works is dead. Faith in Jesus is the beginning, but continued obedience and faithfulness in everyday life prove this faith to be genuine.

2. **Salvation is grace—and yet it requires faithfulness to the end:** Scripture emphasizes God's grace as the basis of all salvation. No one is justified by works. Nevertheless, human beings remain responsible for allowing this grace to be effective in their lives. The New Testament shows that final salvation is linked to works. These works are not the cause of salvation, but the proof that faith is genuine.

Paul says in Romans 2:6-8 that in the end God will reward everyone according to their works: those who persevere in doing good will attain eternal life. This text does not contradict grace, but describes the consequence of a life shaped by God's grace.

3. **The path is just as necessary for salvation as the beginning:** Jesus describes the path to salvation as narrow and difficult. Entering through the narrow gate is the beginning. But the path itself leads to final salvation. Those who stop at the beginning will not reach the goal. Saving faith is evident in the fact that it remains. Grace enables obedience, but this obedience remains necessary.
4. **Hope and sanctification are part of salvation:** The Bible makes it clear that waiting for Christ and striving for sanctification are essential elements of the path of faith. Hebrews 9:28 says that Christ will appear for salvation to those who wait for him. This attitude of waiting is not passivity, but is expressed in a life of devotion and sanctification.

Scripture shows (Titus 2:11-13) that God's grace not only saves us, but also educates us to live a godly life. The expectation of Christ's return



strengthens us in sanctification. Final salvation is thus closely linked to a life lived in hope of Christ and in separation from sin.

5. **The final judgment will evaluate the fruit of life:** the judgment at the end of days will reveal the works. Jesus and the apostles emphasize that this is not about a new basis for salvation, but about the reality of faith becoming visible. The works show whether the faith was genuine. Those who have abandoned the faith, who have abused grace, who persist in sin, will be lost.
6. **Assurance of grace:** Through God's grace we are saved. Through God's grace we remain saved, even if we fall along the way. God accepts us again and again, no matter how often we fall on the narrow path, if we return to him.
7. **Warning against abuse of grace:** A central finding of the study is the warning against a false understanding of grace. Grace is not a license to sin. Those who abuse grace devalue it. Scripture warns against turning grace into debauchery. Grace leads to sanctification. Those who abandon sanctification abandon the path of grace.
8. **Grace and responsibility form a unity:** The Bible maintains the tension between grace and responsibility. Man is saved by grace alone. But this grace has an effect in life. Those who remain in grace will be saved. But those who abandon grace, whether through unbelief, sin, or lukewarmness, will lose their salvation. It is man's responsibility to remain in grace.

## Conclusion

The results of the study lead to a clear and at the same time challenging conclusion: salvation is a gift of grace that is received through faith. But this faith is an obedient, active faith that remains until the end. Those who stop believing, stop obeying, and do not align their lives with God's will forfeit the gift of salvation.

True grace is not cheap, but demands our whole life. Yet it also gives us the strength to walk this path—to the goal, to eternal glory with Christ.

## **7.7 Outlook: The narrow path and the goal – Essential steps for faithful and consistent discipleship – personally and as a church**

*I strongly recommend the following practical steps to promote and ensure that we, as individuals and as a church, can follow Jesus faithfully and salvifically. The list is not exhaustive.*

### **1. Individual strengthening in faith**

- **Strengthen hope:** The Word of God reminds us of Jesus' return and eternal glory.
- **Exemplary biographies:** Read the life stories of faithful Christians who believed until the end.
- **Theology of suffering:** Rediscovery and teaching about suffering and persecution according to the promises of Jesus and the apostles.
- **Promotion of perseverance and commitment:** Already in education through sports, binding commitments, and role models.
- **Encouragement and admonition:** Key to personal growth and strengthening of faith.
- **Daily Bible study:** Independent Bible reading protects against superficial teaching and deepens faith.

### **2. Measures at the church level**

- **Preaching and teaching:** Promoting devotion to Jesus and detachment from worldly things through clear, Bible-based sermons.
- **Devotional material:** Development of in-depth books and devotionals that convey biblical truths about salvation and discipleship.
- **Art and media:** Use contemporary Christian art (e.g., images, theater, films) that illustrates the path to eternal life, especially

a contemporary re-creation of the image "The Wide and the Narrow Way."

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Teaching about the difference between form and content in worship and life.
- **Church discipline:** Rediscovering and implementing biblical church discipline in response to increasing individualism.
- **Sermon content:** Striking a balance between God's love and holiness to promote reverence for God and genuine repentance.

### ***3. Essential teachings***

- **Righteous fruits of repentance:** Necessary signs of genuine discipleship and prerequisites for salvation.
- **Salvation by grace and faithfulness:** Salvation is given by grace, but preserved by continuing faith and devotion.
- **Time and responsibility:** Greater knowledge and resources mean greater responsibility before God. At the same time, even the smallest acts of faithfulness are seen and honored by God.
- **Education in the fear of God:** Training to distinguish between cultural influences and biblical truth.
- **Teamwork with God:** Cooperation between divine grace and human responsibility on the path to salvation.
- **Encouragement through role models:** Encouraging discipleship through spiritual role models, including Jesus as the ultimate role model.

### **Conclusion**

Balanced teaching, personal devotion, and communal commitment are essential for preserving faith and remaining on the path to eternity as the church of Jesus. Both individual and communal steps are necessary to promote deep, effective discipleship.

## **Appendix: Counterarguments and answers from the Word of God**

Salvation comes by grace alone and not by works (Eph. 2:8-9), but genuine faith necessarily produces good works (James 2:17, 26). Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), but this seal is only valid for those who remain in Christ (John 10:27). Christ's work is perfect (John 19:30), but we must remain in it in order to remain saved (Matt. 7:24).

### **Presentation of counterarguments to salvation by faith alone and their refutation**

#### **Counterargument 1: Salvation comes only through faith, not through works**

*Argument:* Salvation comes by grace and not by our own works (Eph. 2:8-9). Works before conversion are "dead works" and cannot please God (Heb. 6:1). Saving faith is a one-time act and not a process.

*Rebuttal:* God's Word clearly distinguishes between our salvation NOW through faith without works and our future ETERNAL salvation through faith (and works). True faith necessarily produces works (James 2:17, 26). Jesus teaches that true disciples must do God's will (Matthew 7:21-23). Good works are a sign of true faith and genuine salvation (Ephesians 2:10).

#### **Counterargument 2: We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and no one can break that seal**

*Argument:* Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). No one can snatch them out of Jesus' hand (John 10:27-29).

*Rebuttal:* Scripture shows examples where God removes his seal because of disobedience (Jer. 22:24; Ezek. 28:12ff). Jesus only promises security to those who follow him (John 10:27).

### **Counterargument 3: Salvation in the Old Testament was imperfect, but in the New Testament it is perfect**

*Argument:* Salvation in the New Covenant is final because it is based on the perfect sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 7:25).

*Rebuttal:* The principle of necessary faithfulness to God on the part of His children remains in both covenants (Jude 1:5; Hebrews 3:1-4). Those who do not remain in Christ lose their salvation (John 15:6).

### **Counterargument 4: Christ's work is perfect—we can do nothing to add to it**

*Argument:* Jesus accomplished salvation (John 19:30), and anyone who doubts this diminishes his sacrifice.

*Rebuttal:* The Bible distinguishes between the foundation of salvation and the necessity of remaining in it (Matthew 7:24-27).

### **Counterargument 5: The temple of God is here, the temple of God is here!**

*Argument:* Believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), which God will not destroy.

*Rebuttal:* The temple of God can be destroyed, desolated, and abandoned through sin (Ezek. 8:6-7; 1 Cor. 3:17).

### **Counterargument 6: Those who are saved are sanctified once and for all**

*Argument:* Once sanctified, one remains holy (Heb 10:14).

*Rebuttal:* Sanctification is both a one-time act at our conversion and a lifelong process, not a completed state (Hebrews 10:19-22). Those who leave the path of sanctification abandon and lose their initial sanctification.

### **Counterargument 7: Burnt works and yet saved**

*Argument:* 1 Corinthians 3:15 says, "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

From this it is concluded that even with lacking or bad works, salvation is not lost.

*Rebuttal:* This passage shows that the firm foundation on which we must still build is the foundation that Jesus defined in the Sermon on the Mount. And that is to do God's will. Those whose work is burned have done God's will, but for the wrong reasons—and therefore lose their reward, not their salvation. Many other passages warn against a false sense of security (Hebrews 10:26-27). Those who do not do God's will have not built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and will not be saved (Matthew 7:21).

### **Counterargument 8: Danger of pride in works, danger of comparison, danger of judgment, danger of discouragement**

*Argument:* If good works are considered necessary for salvation, pride in one's own achievements could arise. Likewise, emphasizing works could lead to comparing oneself with others or judging others. Those who feel incapable of doing enough works could become discouraged.

*Rebuttal:* Scripture emphasizes that God himself has prepared our good works and that without him we can do nothing of value (John 15:5; Eph. 2:10). Since our works for God result from faith and love for God, they are no cause for pride (Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3). Everyone has different gifts, which is why comparisons are inappropriate (Rom. 12:4-6). God will judge us only according to our own abilities (Matt. 25:15). Jesus teaches us not to judge others (Matt. 7:1-2). Our salvation and our reward do not depend on the quantity of our works, but on the attitude of our hearts behind them. In the end, we will all be saved by the grace of God and the patience of our Lord (Phil 1:6; 2 Pet 3:9).

## **Answer and CONCLUSION**

**Our salvation is always and only in Christ—if you are in Christ, then you are secure.**

Our salvation does not lie in ourselves, but solely in Christ. He carries us with his unchanging love (John 10:28-29). Those who live and remain in Jesus are eternally secure. Jesus is our good shepherd (John 10:11). Even when we falter, he remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13). He gives us everything we need to remain in him: his word, his Spirit, and his grace. When we fail, the door to forgiveness remains open (1 John 1:9). Those who follow Jesus NOW remain in Christ. And those who are in Christ may live in deep joy and security—today, tomorrow, and for all eternity. But the temple of God can be destroyed by persistent, unresolved sin and abandoned by God (Ezek. 8:6-7). Sanctification is an ongoing process (Heb. 10:19-22). Those who do not remain in Christ will be thrown into the fire like a withered vine (John 15:6). Nevertheless, God wants everyone to repent in time and be saved (2 Peter 3:9), and he always welcomes the lost son and daughter back with joy (Luke 15:20-24). The good shepherd lovingly searches for every lost sheep until he finds it and holds it safely in his arms. Those who are saved and continue to follow Jesus remain in Christ. They are allowed to live in deep joy and security—today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.

## *Level 5 – Mottos of the details/investigations*

<https://vieleindberufen.de/ebenen-5-6-7-details-untersuchungen/>

## Level 6

# 1 Many are called: Are you lost, a Christian, or a follower and disciple of Jesus?

The following chapters invite you to ask fundamental questions about your faith and your personal relationship with God. It is about more than religious labels—it is about the truth of your heart and your life. The following subchapters highlight the crucial differences between the state of being lost, being a formal Christian, and truly following Jesus Christ.

You will learn how the Bible describes salvation, what it means to live in God's love, and what a life as a disciple of Jesus looks like—marked by devotion, obedience, and genuine fellowship with God. These insights will encourage you to examine your own faith journey and realign it if necessary. Let this journey challenge and inspire you to discover and live the true essence of faith.

### 1.1 Definition: Christian, follower of Jesus Christ, and (eternal) salvation

Welcome to this page, which explains key terms such as "Christian," "follower of Jesus Christ," and "eternal salvation." The definitions and explanations presented here have been carefully researched and reflect common theological and linguistic views in 2025.

The aim of this content is to provide a better understanding of the terms used on this website and in the accompanying book. They offer a sound basis for classifying the theological meaning of the keywords discussed and the associated concepts. The information presented is not the intellectual property of the publisher, but serves as background knowledge to provide a clearer understanding of the language used and the central themes of the website.



## **Salvation and redemption in the New Testament**

In the New Testament, we encounter the concept of salvation as a complex and comprehensive theme. The Greek keywords σωτηρία (soteria – salvation, redemption) and σώζω (sozo – to save, to redeem) are used both for the present, initial salvation of a person at his conversion and for the future, final salvation in eternal life. This linguistic uniformity sometimes leads to misunderstandings that can cloud our view of the biblical teaching on salvation.

The first salvation describes the beginning of life with God: when a person accepts the gospel of Jesus Christ, trusts in him, and claims forgiveness for their sins, they are saved at that moment by God's grace. They become a child of God and can be certain of the love and acceptance of their heavenly Father.

But the Bible also speaks of a second, future salvation. This will happen when Jesus Christ returns and takes his believers to himself in perfection. It is salvation into eternal glory, the goal of the journey of faith, deliverance from earthly suffering and the power of sin into perfect communion with God, where death and temptation no longer exist.

The Greek terms σωτηρία and σώζω are often used in the New Testament for both aspects of salvation. This makes it clear that Scripture regards salvation as a comprehensive process: it begins in time and is completed in eternity.

Understanding this dual nature of salvation helps to correctly interpret many statements in the Bible. Some verses are in the context of the first salvation, acceptance by grace, while other verses have the second, final salvation in mind, which encompasses the entire journey of faith.

When reading the terms "salvation" and "being saved" in the New Testament, one should therefore always be aware that the Bible describes salvation both as a work of grace that has already been accomplished and as a future goal. Both aspects are inseparably linked and form the comprehensive salvation that God gives us in Jesus Christ.

## **Nominal Christians and false Christians vs. born-again Christians**

### *Formal nominal Christians*

A nominal Christian is someone who identifies as a Christian due to cultural, social, or traditional influences. Often, there is no conscious decision for Christ and no personal relationship with God. This form of Christianity has historical roots, e.g., in the Constantinian shift (4th century), when Christianity became the state religion. Nominal Christianity is also widespread in modern mainstream churches, where being a Christian is understood more as a cultural identity than as a lived faith.

Characteristics:

Outward religiosity: Participation in church rituals without a deeper connection.

Lack of transformation: No visible change in life through encountering Christ.

Passivity in faith: No striving for sanctification or discipleship (cf. 2 Tim 3:5 F: "... outward form of godliness, but denying its power...").

No experience of genuine salvation, and therefore no transformation and no certain hope and confidence in future salvation in eternity.

### **False Christians**

False Christians live within the outer framework of faith, but without genuine devotion to God. They represent Christian values, speak religiously, and appear committed, but their hearts are not truly submitted to Christ and . Their faith remains external—without repentance, obedience, and a living relationship with Jesus. Instead of serving God, they pursue their own goals and seek self-fulfillment. True faith, however, is evident in a life that submits to God's will and bears fruit. When trials come, it becomes clear whether their faith is genuine or just a facade. Jesus describes this reality in the parable of the weeds in the field (Matthew 13:24-30). Alongside the true wheat, weeds also grow, which appear similar on the outside but are ultimately gathered and burned. The parable shows that not everyone who "belongs" is truly from God—the true judgment comes at the end. **True faith lives in devotion and obedience. Everything else will prove to be deceptive.**

## *Born-again Christians*

Through the grace of God, born-again Christians have experienced a spiritual rebirth (John 3:3). This transformation is evident in a changed lifestyle characterized by love for God and neighbor.

Characteristics:

- **Rebirth:** "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..." (2 Cor. 5:17).
- **Experience of salvation:** The certainty of having forgiveness of sins and salvation through Jesus Christ NOW and a certain hope and confidence in future salvation in eternity.
- **Personal relationship with Jesus:** Daily connection through prayer, Bible study, and obedience.
- **Fruits of the Spirit:** The life of a born-again Christian is visible through love, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22).
- **Following and discipleship:** Following Jesus means self-denial and devotion (Luke 9:23).

## **The necessity of rebirth**

Rebirth is a central aspect of being a Christian. Jesus himself emphasizes that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again (John 3:3). This spiritual transformation is a prerequisite for becoming a follower of Jesus Christ.

## **Biblical basis**

- **John 3:3 Slt:** 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!"
- **Titus 3:5 Slt:** He saved us ... through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

## **Signs of rebirth**

- **Works of faith:** Genuine faith is demonstrated in works of love and righteousness (James 2:17).
- **Life change:** Rebirth leads to a life that honors God.

### **The follower of Jesus Christ**

A follower of Jesus is someone who has consciously decided to focus their life on Jesus, to trust him, and to live according to his values. This discipleship goes beyond mere lip service and is evident in deep devotion and a changed life.

### **Characteristics of discipleship**

1. **Calling:** Jesus calls us to follow him: "Come, follow me..." (Matthew 4:19).
2. **Devotion:** Following means taking up one's cross and following Jesus (Lk 9:23).
3. **Bearing fruit:** A follower lives in such a way that his life reflects God's love (Mt 7:16).

### **Challenges of discipleship**

Discipleship requires sacrifice and devotion. Jesus points out that it involves persecution and self-denial (Mt 16:24; 2 Tim 3:12).

### **Relevance for the Church and society**

Nominal Christianity poses a challenge for the church. It leads to a watering down of the faith and conveys a false image of Christianity. The church is called upon to promote authentic Christianity and to call people to follow Jesus.

### **Call to genuine discipleship**

- Proclamation of the Gospel: The focus should be on the message of salvation and rebirth.
- Promoting discipleship: Christians must be encouraged to deepen their relationship with God and grow in holiness.

## **Conclusion**

A true follower of Jesus is a new creation through rebirth. His discipleship is characterized by a living relationship with God, obedient action, and a life that bears fruit. In contrast, nominal Christianity and pseudo-Christianity remain superficial and without lasting change. The church is challenged to clearly point out this difference and lead people to genuine discipleship of Jesus Christ.

## **Nominal Christianity, nominal Christianity and true discipleship in comparison**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Nominal Christian</b>	<b>Hypocritical Christian</b>	<b>Born-again Christian</b>
<b>Basis of faith</b>	Tradition, culture, upbringing	Own religious activity, without genuine devotion	Personal decision and God's grace
<b>Way of life</b>	Unchanged	Partially adapted, but without genuine inner renewal	Transformation through the Holy Spirit
<b>Relationship with God</b>	Superficial, formal	Self-deception: believes they know God, but lives autonomously	Deep, alive, and personal
<b>Fruits of faith</b>	Absent	Inconsistent, insincere, often concerned with outward appearances	Visible through works of love and true obedience
<b>Goal-oriented</b>	This-worldly, religious security	Mixture of self-service and worship	Living for the glory of God, focus on the eternal goal
<b>Spiritual vigilance</b>	Low, routine	Sluggish, but convinced of being "on the right path"	Vigilant, examines oneself in the light of God's Word
<b>Salvation perspective</b>	Misguided Security without a true foundation	False security – Danger of rejection by Christ in the end	Based on grace, visible through lasting fruit

### **1.2 Lost: Naturally unreachable by God's love**

There is a life before the gospel. It is characterized by sin, living in darkness, and having no fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In God's eyes, no one is righteous, not even one. No one has insight and asks about God. All people since Adam have left the right path and have become useless. There is no one who does good, not even one. And this also applies to all humanists, Friday for Futures, and creationists who do not (in their opinion) do harm to people, animals, or creation. For they do not fulfill the most important commandment of their Creator: to love the one God of heaven and earth with all their soul and with all their heart and with all their strength, as He has revealed Himself in His Word, the Bible, and in His incarnate Son and Word, Jesus Christ. But with God, lostness and sin never mean eternal damnation across the board. It is always our specific sins that reveal our sinfulness before God and bring us under God's wrath and ultimately under God's judgment and ultimately into damnation.

*Romans 1-3 Meng*

*1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

*Romans 3:9-12 Slt*

*9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all! For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin, 10 as it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; they have together become useless; there is none who does good, no, not one!"*

*2 Thessalonians 2:12 Meng*

*All who have not believed the truth but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.*

Romans 1-3; 1 John 1:5-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 John 1:5-7

### **1.3 Called: The only true gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ is the key to your salvation.**

The gospel is THE key revealed by God to our eternal salvation. There is no other key

A false gospel spiritually kills those who believe and hold fast to it.

The only true gospel is the message of the love of God, who wants all people to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ and not be lost. At its core, the gospel says:

- All people are sinners, lost and heading for damnation. No one can come to God and be reconciled with him by their own strength and merit. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross out of love for our sins and was raised from the dead (for our justification). Through our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which is a gift from God, he saves and justifies us without our own merit and restores our fellowship with God. Through faith in him, we are reconciled with God and loved by God. For all who obey Jesus from now on, he is the author of their eternal salvation.

This is the message of salvation, the gospel. Any deviation from this message of salvation excludes one from salvation. We must hold fast to this gospel, which saves us eternally, throughout our lives. We must not deviate from it in any way until the end of our days.

The teaching of justice is also an integral part of the gospel of Jesus.

- of righteousness
- of abstinence
- future judgment.

A gospel that does not contain this is a false gospel. A gospel in which sinners do not also fear God because of their sins is not a gospel.

Where the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ and faith come together, there is salvation. And even saving faith is a gift from God.

An indispensable part of our salvation is



- believing in the right Jesus
- believing in the right gospel
- and, as a consequence of both, to receive the only saving Spirit of God

Only those who hold fast to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ until the end will be saved eternally.

*1 Cor 15:1-2 Slt*

*But I remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you also received and in which you also stand firm, 2 through which you are also saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*John 3:16 Slt*

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.*

*Hebrews 5:9-10 Slt*

*9 And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 being designated by God as a high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

*Gal 1:6-9 Slt*

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so now I say again : If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed!*

1 Cor. 15:1-58; Gal. 1:6-9; Heb. 5:9; John 3:16; Matt. 25:41; Rom. 9:2; Eph. 2:10; John 3:36; Acts 24:24-25; Romans 1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Matthew 9:11-13; Mark 14:22-2; Matthew 4:17; Matthew 5; Matthew 6; Matthew 7; Romans 6; Romans 8:13; Revelation 4:8-10

## **1.4 Reached by God's love: You are loved!**

**Here you will find God's very personal promises:**

**You are loved!**

You are loved by God unconditionally and boundlessly. Through Christ, all your debts are forgiven, and you are freed from sin. You are a new person, born again and sanctified by God's Spirit. His love is evident in the fact that you are now part of His holy people, a living temple filled with His Spirit. You have a new identity in Christ—you are God's beloved child, whom He has fully accepted. This love frees you from the principles of the world and gives you a life of divine grace. God has not only saved you, but also promised you eternal life so that you can live in his presence. He is always with you and gives you the strength to live according to his will. Through Christ, you are richly blessed with wisdom, righteousness, and salvation. His love remains constant and carries you through whatever comes your way.

# **You are loved!**

## **God loves you completely!**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

## **God has always loved you—with eternal love.**

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with loving kindness. *Jer 31:3*

## **God knows you personally**

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart. *Jer 1:5*

## **You are a beloved child of God**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are. *1 John 3:1*

## **Nothing can separate you from God's love**

For I am sure that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:38-39*

## **God carries your burdens**

Cast all your cares on him, for he cares for you. *1 Peter 5:7*

## **Jesus himself constantly intercedes for you**

Father, I ask you to keep them from evil.

*John 17:15*

I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

*Luke 22:32*

**Jesus understands you completely and can and will help you at any time**

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. *Hebrews 4:14-16*

**God ALWAYS gives you a new beginning**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just: He forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. *John 1:9*

**God can, will, and does keep you safe!**

To the one who has the power to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless and joyful before his glory, to this unique and only God, who through our Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior, belongs glory, majesty, power, and authority—before all time, now, and forever! Amen. *Jude 24-25*

**God gives you peace**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you!" *Luke 24:36*

**1.5 Chosen: saved NOW – solely by God's grace, through faith and profound repentance**

The message of God's love in Jesus Christ opens up the possibility for us to experience salvation right now. The Bible shows that salvation is not

merely a hope for the future, but a gift that can be received in the here and now. The following chapters shed light on various aspects of this truth.

### *1.5.1 Chosen and saved*

Through the Gospel, God calls all people to repentance, but no one can come to Him on their own—only His election makes it possible. Jesus Himself says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16). Those who are chosen by God are effectively called by the Holy Spirit, receive faith in Christ, and become His children.

The elect can be recognized by the fact that they love God and follow their Lord wholeheartedly, for “those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). They receive not only forgiveness and grace, but also a transformed life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation is God's gift alone, not the result of human achievement: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:8-10).

The Thessalonians show how true election becomes visible: “Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thess 1:5). Those who are chosen by God experience the power of the gospel, love God with all their hearts, and remain followers of Jesus.

For “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Corinthians 1:23-28).

*John 15:16 Sl*

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*

*Eph 2:8 Slt*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*

*2 Thess 2:13 Slt*

*But we are bound to God to always give thanks for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

John 15:16; Eph 2:8-10; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Thess 1:5; Rom 8:29

### *1.5.2 Salvation through the blood of Jesus alone*

Our salvation comes solely through the grace of Jesus Christ—now and for all eternity—and not through following rules, rituals, or religious regulations, not even those found in the Bible. Only through the sacrificed body and shed blood of Jesus can we enter into the covenant of grace with God, who grants us forgiveness of sins and saves us forever.

*Eph 1:7 Slt*

*In him [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the riches of his grace.*

*Col 2:8 Slt*

*8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

*Acts 15:11 Slt*

*11 But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the same way as they.*

Eph 1:7; Col 2:8; Acts 15:11; Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; Jn 6:53; Jn 19:34-37; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 10:16; Eph 1:7; Col 1:20; Heb 9:12-14; Heb 10:19; Heb 13:12; 1 Pet 1:2; Rev 1:5; Rev 5:9; Rev 12:11

### 1.5.3 *Forgiveness of sins—the key to salvation*

Only through the forgiveness of our sins can we now be saved and experience a healthy relationship with God as our Father. Only people whose sins have been forgiven will be able to praise God in eternity. Without forgiveness, heaven remains closed to us.

We receive this forgiveness exclusively through:

- a conscious turning to a life with God and letting go of the old life of sin

- faith in Jesus Christ, who paid for our sins through his death on the cross and now stands before God as our advocate.

Both points are crucial—if one of them is missing, we will not find salvation.

On the path of following Christ, we are not yet perfect and can and will sin, and in the worst case even sin gravely. But God is always ready to forgive us and cleanse us. His love and patience have no limits as long as we keep returning to him. Those who hold fast to Jesus despite all setbacks and sins, accept his forgiveness, and continue to follow him remain in the protection of his love and in the forgiveness that is crucial for our salvation.

The Bible makes it clear that we can lose forgiveness and thus salvation if we do not forgive others, especially our brothers and sisters in faith. God's forgiveness depends on our own willingness to forgive others.

Those who remain in their guilt and refuse to repent also run the risk of losing their salvation. This is especially true when other brothers and sisters in faith or the church point out our mistakes and we do not respond. Forgiveness is for those who sincerely follow Jesus and do not lightly indulge in sin. It is for those who do not misunderstand God's forgiveness as a license to sin, but who value it through a genuine life of repentance and discipleship.

*Colossians 2:13-15 Meng*

*13 And you, who were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions out of the kindness of his grace, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This record was contrary to us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

*Acts 26:18 Slt*

*18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me!*

*Hebrews 7:25 Meng*

*Therefore, he [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them (before God).*

#### *1.5.4 Recognizing Jesus as Lord and Savior—the only salvation*

Everything depends on recognizing Jesus Christ correctly. Only the true knowledge of the Father and His Son, given by God, brings salvation — not our own deeds. Continuing faith preserves the eternal life that has already been given to us. It was the disciples who recognized Jesus as the true Messiah and confessed this who followed him after this realization. Later, Jesus confirmed them as true believers and used them powerfully to build his kingdom.

*Matthew 16:16-17 NIV*

*16 Simon Peter answered him [Jesus], "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" 17 Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah!*

*John 17:2-3 Meng*

*[Jesus Christ speaks] 2 You have given him authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*



John 8:24 Meng

*24 That is why I told you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.*

Matthew 16:16; John 8:24; John 17:3; John 11:27; Acts 2:1-4

#### *1.5.5 Justified by faith alone*

Those who consider themselves righteous before God because of their supposedly good deeds will not be declared righteous by God and will be lost. Only those who acknowledge and confess that they are sinners before God will be accepted by him. We are righteous before God solely through God's grace and without any merit of our own—through faith and the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

*Luke 18:11-14 Psalm*

*14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, unlike the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

*Romans 3:23 SlT*

*23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

*Romans 4:22-25 SlT*

*22 Therefore [his faith] was credited to him as righteousness. 23 But it was not written for his sake alone that [his faith] was credited to him, 24 but also for us, to whom it will be credited, when we believe in him who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our transgressions and raised for our justification.*

*1 John 1:8-9 SlT*

*8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Luke 18:11-14; Romans 3:23; Romans 4:22-25; 1 John 1:8-9; Romans

### *1.5.6 Salvation happens now—through genuine faith*

Whoever believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has eternal life—and can be sure of possessing it NOW. How refreshing to know that we do not have to earn eternal life, but that it has been given to us as a free gift through our faith in Jesus and our connection with him. Everyone who follows Jesus is saved at this moment and lives in God's grace and salvation.

*1 Peter 5:12 SlT*

*12 Through Silvanus, whom I have found to be a faithful brother, I have written briefly to you, exhorting you and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.*

*1 John 5:13 SlT*

*13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God ( ) so that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

*Phil 4:3 SlT*

*3 And I also ask you, my faithful fellow servant, to take care of those who have fought with me for the gospel, including Clement and my other co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.*

### *1.5.7 Rebirth—the new life in Christ*

Believing in Jesus, trusting him, and accepting him—that is the way to become a child of God NOW. That is the way to salvation. No one can be "born again" by their own power or will; only God can do that. Between our decision to accept Christ and divine rebirth for salvation lies a holy mystery.

*John 3:3 Meng*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

*John 1:12-13 Slt*

*12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*1 Peter 1:23 Meng*

*You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

John 1:1-13; John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5

#### *1.5.8 Purification by the Spirit—true salvation*

At the beginning of their life of faith, rebirth and renewal through the Holy Spirit save and purify all who follow Jesus. This purification is closely connected with the devotion and love of our heart for Jesus, as was the case with Peter. Those who do not bind their hearts to Jesus and do not surrender themselves completely to him will not be cleansed—even if they appear to be connected to Jesus outwardly—and will be lost. But those who are saved and cleansed are preserved in fellowship with Jesus through constant cleansing by his grace as they follow him.

*John 13:8-11 Slt*

*Jesus answered him [Peter]: If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.*

*Titus 3:5 Slt*

*[God] saved us—not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy—through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

*1 John 1:9 Slt*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

John 13:8-11; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:9; Acts 15:9; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 9:14; John 15:2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Corinthians 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:21; 1 John 1:7; 1 John 3:3

### *1.5.9 The Holy Spirit as the seal of our salvation*

When we are converted, God gives us His Holy Spirit, who lives in us. We become temples of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus dwells in us through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's seal for all who follow Jesus—He is the promise of our future salvation and our inheritance in heaven. The Holy Spirit in us guarantees our complete redemption and will awaken us to new life. This gives us great security and comfort.

*Eph 1:13-14 Slt*

*In him [Christ] you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—in him you also, when you believed, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

*Romans 8:9-11 Slt*

*But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you; but if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ... 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

*Eph 4:30 Slt*

*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Mk 1:8; Acts 5:32; Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 12:13; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30

### *1.5.10 Saved through the inner renewal of the heart*

True salvation does not happen externally, but deep within the heart—a renewal that God Himself brings about. Those who allow Him to change their hearts love Him more than themselves and live through His Spirit. This inner transformation enables us to keep God's commandments out of love, not out of our own strength or for the purpose of justification.

True spiritual circumcision means listening to God and taking His Word seriously. Those who resist the Spirit of God and do not follow His law

are uncircumcised before God, even if they appear religious on the outside. But those who are justified by faith serve God through His Spirit and follow Him in love. This is evident in the attitude of the heart, which is focused on doing God's will and loving one's neighbor.

It is not a matter of being perfect or sinless, but of having a heart and life orientation that is directed toward God. Those who live by grace follow God's Spirit—not out of compulsion, but out of love.

*Col 2:11-13 Meng*

*1 In him you were also circumcised, not with a circumcision done by human hands, but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 since you were buried with him in baptism. In him you were also raised up through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions out of the riches of his grace.*

*1 Cor 7:19 SlT*

*19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping God's commandments is everything.*

*Phil 3:3 SlT*

*For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*

Col 2:11-13; 1 Cor 7:10; Phil 3:3; Gal 6:15; Rom 2:25-29; Rom 7; Rom 8:13; Gal 5:13-14; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19; Acts 7:51; Rom 2:25-29; Jer 4:4; Ezek 44:7

### *1.5.11 Obedience of faith leads to salvation*

Our salvation lies in obedience to God. This obedience begins with faith in the gospel and leads us on the narrow path of following Jesus obediently to the end. In this way, our obedience of faith is perfected until we are allowed to see our Lord one day in eternity.

*Rom 1:5*

*5 Through him [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship for*

*his name's sake, for the obedience of faith among all the nations, 6 among whom you also are called of Jesus Christ.*

*Acts 6:7 Slt*

*7 And the word of God spread, and the number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem ; and a large number of priests also obeyed the faith.*

*Heb 5:9 Slt*

*9 And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

Rom 1:5; Acts 6:7; Heb 5:9; Heb 5:9; Heb 3:18; Mt 7:26-27; Rom 6:16; Acts 7:51-53; Acts 6:7; Rom 1:5

#### *1.5.12 Salvation is more than words—it is manifested in repentance and life*

Jesus himself, John the Baptist, and the apostles repeatedly emphasize that genuine repentance is the prerequisite for salvation. True repentance is demonstrated by a life that bears fruit for God. Forgiveness, made possible by Jesus' sacrificial death, is the foundation of our relationship with God. This forgiveness is only given to those who turn away from their old life without God and do God's will – recognizable by deeds that show genuine repentance. Without the decision to turn away from a godless life and lead a life that honors God, there is no salvation, no forgiveness, and no redemption.

*Mt 3:2-10 Slt*

*[John the Baptist] 2 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near... 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance! 9 And do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father. For I tell you, God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! 10 But even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire!*

*Luke 13:3 Slt*

*[Jesus] 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish!*

*Acts 26:20 SlT*

*[Paul] 20 But I preached first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then throughout the whole region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.*

Matthew 3:2-10; Luke 13:3; Acts 26:20; Matthew 4:17; Luke 24:44-49

### *1.5.13 Jesus more important than anything else – the true proof of salvation*

Those who realize what it means to follow Jesus and the kingdom of heaven and are willing to let go of everything for it will be saved. However, those who reject the invitation of the Gospel because the things of this world are more important to them will be lost. It does not have to be serious sins that separate us from God – often normal, good things in life such as relationships, work, or money are enough. When we put them above God's call, we risk our eternal salvation.

*Luke 14:26-27 SlT*

*26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

*Luke 14:23-24 SlT*

*23 And the lord said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.*

*Luke 14:33 SlT*

*33 So likewise, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

Luke 14:26-27; Luke 14:23-24; Luke 14:33; Luke 14:15-24

#### *1.5.14 Those who confess Jesus will be saved*

The Bible shows us in many places that only those who confess Jesus Christ will be saved. This confession includes both what we say with our words and the way we live our lives and obey God. Our lives themselves are the true confession of faith. It is those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, who live according to God's commandments, and who remain faithful to the message of Jesus—even unto death—who are saved both now and in eternity.

*Romans 10:8-10 Meng*

*9 For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*Luke 12:8 Meng*

*But I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.*

*Matthew 10:33 Meng*

*But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven.*

*1 Tim 5:8 SlT*

*8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

*Rev 12:10-11 SlT*

*10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*

Luke 12:8; Matthew 10:33; 1 Timothy 5:8; Revelation 12:10-11; Romans 10:8-10; 1 John 2:23; 1 John 4:15; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Timothy 6:12; Matthew 7:21; Revelation 12:17



### *1.5.15 Whoever enters the kingdom of God will be saved*

Whoever enters the kingdom of God will be saved.

There are two cornerstones for entering the kingdom of God: turning away from one's old life of self-rule and sin and becoming a subject of the glorious King Jesus in the kingdom of heaven—and subsequently listening to Jesus in everything, listening to Jesus in everything he says as a good and wise King and Lord.

Those who repent and make Jesus their Lord and King now, and who serve Him faithfully until the end, will be saved eternally.

Those who only say "Lord, Lord" and do not do what Jesus says will not experience the joy of the kingdom of God.

*Mt 21:31 Slt*

*31 Which of these two did the will of his father? They said to him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you!"*

*Luke 19:17 Slt*

*Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities!*

*Mark 9:47 Meng*

*And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.*

Lk 19:11-27; Lk 13:22-30; Lk 18:17; Mt 21:28-32

### *1.5.16 Your new identity in Christ shows the greatness of your salvation*

Through our conversion and rebirth, we have received a new identity in Christ. We no longer live in our old, human nature; God has sanctified and purified us as a new creation. We are now holy, pure, and good in our essence—no longer "sinners," but saints. God's desire is that we live accordingly.

Our task as newly created people in Christ is not simply to allow the deeds of the "flesh" to happen, but to overcome them through the Holy Spirit and "put them off." Although we are the "new man" in Christ, we must first fully accept him in our consciousness and everyday life. This is a process in which we put on the "new man" and leave the "old man" behind us once and for all. At the center of this process is the new identity that God has given us in Christ—it is the foundation and seal of our salvation.

*2 Cor 5:17 Slt*

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

*Rev 1:5-6*

*5 [Jesus Christ] ... who loved us and washed us from our sins with his blood, 6 and made us kings and priests to his God and Father.*

*Rom 8:5 Slt*

*5 For those who are according to [the nature] of the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to [the nature] of the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.*

2 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 8:5; Rev. 1:4-6; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:22; Eph. 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17

*1.5.17 Summary: Chosen: saved NOW—by grace alone, through living faith and genuine repentance*

Our salvation is a gift from God—not our achievement, but His work. Through Jesus Christ, He has created the only way we can come to Him. Those who believe in Him and accept Him as Lord receive new life—here and in eternity.

*Ephesians 2:8-9*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Salvation through the blood of Jesus alone

Nothing we do can cleanse us—only the blood of Jesus forgives our sins. His death on the cross was the highest price so that we could be free.

*1 John 1:7 Slt*

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*

### **Forgiveness of sins – the key to salvation**

God opens the way to forgiveness—he calls us to repentance. Those who confess their sins are freed from guilt and enter into a new relationship with God.

*Acts 3:19 Slt*

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.*

### **Justified by faith alone**

It is not works that make us righteous, but faith in Christ alone. He declares us righteous when we trust in him – not by our own strength.

*Romans 3:28*

*We conclude, then, that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.*

### **Rebirth – the new life in Christ**

Salvation is more than forgiveness—it is a complete new creation. Those who believe in Jesus receive a new heart and a new life.

*John 3:3 Slt*

*Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!*

### **Saved through the inner renewal of the heart**

True circumcision takes place in the heart – God changes our inner being so that we serve him with all our heart.

*Phil 3:3 Slt*

*For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*

### **Salvation is manifested in repentance and obedience**

Those who follow Jesus do not remain unchanged. Genuine faith is manifested in a new life that honors God.

*Mt 7:21 Slr*

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

### **Jesus is more important than anything else—the true proof of salvation**

Those who are truly saved put Jesus above everything else. He is more valuable than possessions, reputation, or even one's own life.

*Luke 14:26*

*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his brothers, his sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

### **Those who confess Jesus will be saved**

Faith does not remain hidden—those who confess Jesus will be confessed by him.

*Romans 10:9 Slr*

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

### **Your new identity in Christ shows the greatness of your salvation**

If you belong to Christ, you are a new creation. God has brought you out of darkness—your old life is gone.

*2 Cor 5:17 Slr*

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

## **1.6 More appearance than substance: nominal Christians and nominal disciples without true repentance, rebirth, and following Christ**

The New Testament repeatedly warns against a faith that is only outward and does not bring about a genuine change of heart. Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). Nominal Christians or false disciples may formally profess Christ or live in religious traditions without having experienced genuine repentance and rebirth through the Holy Spirit. They resemble the Pharisees, who appeared pious on the outside but were empty on the inside (Matthew 23:27).

Jesus clearly states that there are people who appear to follow him and are outwardly known as his disciples, but who have no genuine relationship with him and are neither born again nor saved. The reason is that they have never truly accepted Jesus as Lord of their lives and continue to follow their own will instead of God's will. Their lives remain characterized by self-will, worldly thinking, and selfish nature. They have never submitted themselves wholeheartedly to God's will and have ultimately remained their own masters.

True discipleship, on the other hand, requires an intimate relationship with Jesus, which is manifested in faith, love, and obedience. *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples"* (John 8:31 F). Discipleship means more than a mere confession—it is manifested in a life that has been transformed by the grace of God. Those who are truly converted and saved surrender their own selves completely to God and align themselves with His will. A truly born-again child of God receives His Spirit, allows himself to be guided by Him, and lives according to the Word of God—despite possible setbacks. He trusts in Jesus, bears fruit for God, and turns away from unrighteousness. *"For the Lord knows those who are His"* (2 Tim. 2:19 NIV).

True followers are saved and will be saved eternally. Nominal Christians and false disciples without true conversion and following of Christ are not saved now and will be lost eternally.

*Matthew 7:20-21 Slt*

*20 Therefore, you will know them by their fruits. 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

*Titus 1:16 Slt*

*16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny him, being detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.*

*Lk 17:34 Slt*

*34 I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.*

Gal 5:4-6; Phil 3:17-19; Mt 13:27-30; John 1:11-12; Luke 17:34-36; Titus 1:15-16; 3 John 1:11; 1 John 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 1:18-19; Matthew 23:27; John 8:31

## **1.7 Dead works: They save neither NOW nor FOREVER**

Dead works are the futile attempts of a person to find a relationship with God on their own [<https://youtu.be/j6MWVxE7AEw?feature=shared>]. A genuine relationship with God comes only through grace and solely through the blood of Jesus Christ, which he shed for us on the cross—if we believe in it. We must turn away from dead works—the futile attempt to please God by our own strength and effort—repent, and believe in the God who justifies the lost. Only through the blood shed by Jesus for our sins is our conscience cleansed from these dead works, so that we are purified and become capable of serving the living God.

Here lies the decisive turning point from death to life—both for ourselves and for our works. When we have died and risen with Christ, serving God becomes our new nature and mission. From now on, everything we do for God is acceptable through Jesus' forgiveness and cleansing. God wants us to do such good works for him in abundance, because they bear fruit and honor him.

Works of faith for God show that our faith is alive. They reflect our gratitude and love for Jesus and show that he is truly Lord in our lives.

Through them, we live in reverence for God and his Word. These works of faith are the fruit of the gospel in our lives and are pleasing to God through Jesus. Those who, as beloved of God, also show God their love through works (of faith) will find eternal life.

*Mark 7:6-7 Meng*

*6 These people honor me (only) with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7 they worship me in vain, because they make human precepts their teachings.*

*Hebrews 6:1 Slt*

*1 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith in God.*

*Gal 5:6 Meng*

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value, but only faith working through love.*

*James 1:12 Slt*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

Mt 7:24-29; Mk 7:6-7; Heb 6:1; Rom 3:28; Gal 5:6; Jn 15:8; Rev 3:1-13; Heb 6:1; Rom 3:28; 2 Cor 3:5; Jn 15:8; Mt 7:24-29; Rev 3:1-13; Lk 19:11-27; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 22:12

## **1.8 Chosen from eternity – preserved by God's faithfulness and eternally saved**

The gospel promises not only salvation in the present, but also eternal salvation—a life in communion with God that never ends. This eternal salvation is the goal of our faith and is completed in union with God in his glory.

The following subchapters highlight the various aspects of this eternal salvation and distinguish it from other paths.

### *1.8.1 Eternal salvation: What does it look like?*

The eternally redeemed in heaven will

- stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands, and cry out loudly, "Salvation belongs to our God and the Lamb!"
- Serving God and the Lamb as priests
- Seeing God's face and living in his light
- Reigning as kings forever
- Receive food from Jesus from the tree of life in God's paradise
- be safe from the second death
- Eat the hidden manna and receive a white stone with a secret new name
- Have power over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron; Jesus will also give them the morning star
- be clothed in white robes and not be blotted out of the book of life, for Jesus will confess their names before the Father and his angels
- stand as pillars in the temple of God and never leave again; Jesus will write the name of God and the new Jerusalem and his new name on them
- sit with Jesus on his throne
- serve God in the temple day and night, and God will dwell with them. They will have no hunger or thirst, and neither sun nor heat will trouble them. The Lamb in the center of the throne will guide them and bring them to the springs of life. God will wipe every tear from their eyes
- be in close fellowship with God, who lives among them, and they will be his people

*Isaiah 35:10*

*10 Then the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*

*Rev 7:15-17 Slt*

*15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent*



over them. 16 They will never again be hungry or thirsty, nor will the sun beat down on them or any heat. 17 For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

*Rev 21:3 Meng*

*And he [God] will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.*

Isa 35:10; Rev 7:14-17; Rev 2-3; Rev 21; Rev 22:3-5

### *1.8.2 Distinction: Eternal damnation, purgatory, and universal reconciliation*

#### **From eternity to eternity—a clear warning against false hope**

When the Bible wants to emphasize true "eternity," it uses the expression *from everlasting to everlasting*—which can also be translated as *from age to age*. This expression describes God's own indestructible life: only God and Jesus possess life that never ends.

All clear passages in the Bible speak of eternal damnation for unbelievers. They make it clear that this "eternity" lasts as long as God's own life: *from eternity to eternity*. Therefore, it is virtually impossible for someone who enters a state of perdition to experience a change at some point.

Some less clear passages in the Bible leave room for theological speculation. Some deduce from this that God will be "all in all" in the end and that death will be abolished. However, to construct a universal reconciliation from this is neither biblical nor responsible. For the Bible does not say this clearly—and what it does not say, we should not teach.

The possible abolition of the second death could just as well mean that those lost in it will be completely burned and destroyed after their judgment—not that they will be saved. It is true that the first death was also destroyed, which some interpret as an indication of a later abolition of the second death. But nowhere does Scripture explicitly testify that the second death will also be overcome or abolished. Such hope remains speculative and must never be made the basis of binding doctrine.

God's Word speaks simply, clearly, and with serious intent: Lostness is *from eternity to eternity*. Those who profess the doctrine of universal reconciliation raise false hopes. This hope leads people to no longer fear God and His holiness. They become sluggish, let themselves go, and no longer do everything in their power to save themselves and others.

The idea that someone suffers "from eternity to eternity" in torment, only to then *perhaps* be saved or destroyed, is neither biblical nor logical. It contradicts both common sense and the testimony of Scripture.

Any teaching or even hint of universal reconciliation is spiritually dangerous. It obscures the responsibility of human beings to make a decision *now*. It weakens the urgency of repentance and trivializes judgment.

What the "uncertain" Bible passages can teach us is this alone: We cannot define God by our theologies. He remains sovereign. He has given us insight into eternal judgment—but not beyond that. What happens after the final judgment remains God's secret. And that is a good thing.

Our task is to stand up for the truth in the here and now and to prepare ourselves and others for judgment. Anyone who goes beyond this and adds things that God has not said risks not only their own salvation, but also that of many others.

*Rev 15:7 Slt*

*7 And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.*

*Rev 14:11 Slt*

*11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.*

*Rev 11:15 Slt*

*15 And the seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

Rev 15:7; Rev 11:15; Rev 14:11; Eph 1:9-10; 1 Tim 4:10; 1 Cor 15:24-28; 1 Tim 6:16; Rev 1:18; Rev 4:9-10; Rev. 10:6; 1 Cor. 15:53-54; Heb. 8:7; John 17:2; Heb. 7:16; John 14:19; Rev. 1:6; Eph. 1:9-10; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Ezek 28:18; Matt 3:12; John 15:6; 1 Cor 3:15

### *1.8.3 Jesus Christ: He is the door to the Father and the way to heaven*

If we reduce Jesus to the door to eternal life, we do not do him justice. Jesus is both the door and the way to eternal life. ONLY those who enter through the door of Jesus into a right relationship with God will be saved. And only those who walk the way of Jesus to eternity will arrive there.

*Matthew 7:12-14 Meng*

*[Jesus Christ speaks] 12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. – 13 Enter (the kingdom of God) through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 But narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

*John 10:9 F*

*"I am the door" [says Jesus]. If anyone enters [through the door of Jesus] into a healthy relationship with God, he or she will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*

*John 14:6 F*

*"I am the way" [says Jesus]. No one can come to the Father except through this way.*

Matthew 7:12-14; John 10:9; John 14:6

### *1.8.4 We are already saved NOW – but the goal of our salvation still lies ahead of us.*

At our rebirth, God made many things new, indeed, everything new. Some of this we experience consciously, other things are already true

and accomplished spiritually, but we must first grasp them in faith, understand them, and preserve them until the end. This is part of our path to salvation. We live in this tension: we already have eternal life, and yet we still hope for it. This makes us long for it and wait patiently for it.

Here is an overview that illustrates these contrasts and the tension between them:

John 3:36 Meng

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Romans 2:7 Meng

Namely, eternal life to those who, persevering in good works, seek glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and fury to those who are stubborn and do not obey the truth, but serve unrighteousness.

John 5:24 Meng

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Rom 6:22 Meng

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end result to eternal life.

John 6:40 Meng

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Gal 6:8 Meng

For whoever sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but whoever sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

John 6:47 Meng

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life!

John 12:25 Whoever loves his life loses it, but whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 6:54 Meng

Whoever eats my flesh and

John 10:27-28

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know

drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

John 17:3 Meng

But this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.

1 John 5:20 Meng

We are in the true one, (by being) in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Jude 1:21 Meng

and keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting fully confidently for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, (which will lead you) to eternal life!

1 John 5:11-121 Meng

And what does this mean for us? It means that God has given us eternal life, the life that is in his Son.

1 John 5:12 Whoever is in union with the Son of God has life; whoever is not in union with the Son of God does not have life.

## Further examples:

	Spiritually true	Call to action	
Colossians 3:3+20	We have already died	We will either die physically or be transformed	1 Cor 15
Eph 2:1+6; Col 2:12	We have already been raised	God will raise us up (physically)	1 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 15
Eph 2:6; Col 1:13; Heb 12:22	We have already been transferred to heaven	We should run our race to heaven unswervingly and blamelessly in faith until we arrive there	1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:14; Heb 12:1
Col 3:9; Eph 4:22	We have already taken off the old self	We are to put off the old self with all its deeds	Eph 4:25; Col 3:8; James 1:21; 1 Pet 2:1
Col 3:10; Gal 3:27	We have already put on the new self	We should put on the new man with all his characteristics—Christ	Rom 13:14; Col 3:12+14
Rom 6:6; Gal 5:24	God has already crucified our old self with Jesus	We should crucify and kill our old self	Matthew 10:38; Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5
Romans 6:7+22; Romans 7:6; Galatians 5:1	Through Christ, we are freed from the law and from sin	We have yet to experience this liberation, and we must live it out	Rom 7; Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 8:9; Gal 5: :1+13; 1 Pet 2:16

	Our salvation		
Rom 3:23-25; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 John 5:10-13	(now) is a gift that we can only receive through faith, without our own works.	Our salvation (eternal) depends on our continued faith and works of faith here on earth	John 15:6; Col 1:23; 1 John 4:16; 2 John 1:9; Jude 1:5
John 6:40; 1 John 5:13	We already have eternal life	We must still attain eternal life (by over-coming)	Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 6:12; Rev. 2+3

*John 5:24 Meng*

*Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.*

*Rom 8:24-25 Meng*

*24 For we have been saved, but (so far) only in hope. ... 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet see, we wait for it with patience.*

John 5:24; Romans 8:23-25

### *1.8.5 God's faithfulness preserves us to the end*

God's faithfulness is the foundation of our salvation. He has begun the good work in us and will complete it (Phil. 1:6). Even when we are weak, he remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13). His desire is that no one should be lost, but that all should have room for repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

We are tested along the way, but God ensures that no temptation is too great (1 Cor. 10:13). He keeps us from falling and will present us blameless before him (Jude 1:24). His hand holds us fast; no one can snatch us out of it (John 10:27-29).

Our hope does not rest on us, but on God. Nothing can separate us from his love (Romans 8:38-39). Jesus intercedes for us and can save us completely (Hebrews 7:25). We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, a pledge of our eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Therefore, we should hold fast to our hope without wavering, for God is faithful (Hebrews 10:23). He will strengthen us to the end, and to him be the glory forever (Romans 16:25-27). Those who trust in him can be certain: He will bring us through!

*Heb 7:25 SlT*

*Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

*Phil. 1:6 SlT*

*6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

*2 Tim 2:13 SlT*

*If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.*

*2 Pet 3:9 SlT*

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Heb 7:25; 2 Tim 2:13; 2 Pet 3:9; Phil 1:6; 1 Cor 10:13; Jude 1:24; John 10:27-29; Rom 8:38-39; Eph 1:13-14; Heb 10:23; Rom 16:25-27

### *1.8.6 Our Calling and Election*

Much could be written about calling and election. My collection of evidence on this subject alone fills almost an entire book. The essence of all the research is as follows:

1. In God's Word, there is a crucial difference between whether God the Father and Jesus the Son of God speak of the "elect" in the New Testament or whether the apostles do.
2. The Triune God always speaks of election from an eternal perspective. He sees those who will truly arrive in heaven and calls them the elect.



3. God's elect are not saved automatically or through an irreversible rebirth, but through God, who guides them in His grace, intercedes for them, protects and preserves them, does not allow them to be tempted beyond their ability to sin, and brings His elect through to the end.
4. The apostles use a completely different language when referring to the "chosen ones." In each of their verses about the chosen ones, it becomes clear that the apostles have no prior knowledge of the election. Rather, they present circumstantial evidence: those who live in accordance with the gospel and show the corresponding fruits of faith and life are assumed by them to be the chosen ones (of faith). And those who, as believers, remain joyful in their faith in Jesus despite resistance and persecution, can be known with certainty to be chosen, for they bear the fruits of the truly chosen.
5. In some cases, the apostles refer to believers in Christ in the same verse or passage as the chosen ones—those who truly believe NOW—and in other cases as the called ones—those who will receive their heavenly inheritance in the FUTURE. This clearly shows the two stages of faith now (the elect of faith) and the hope of eternity not yet attained (the called of eternity).
6. Therefore, all those chosen NOW (to believe) must first confirm their election (to live with God now) and calling (to eternal glory) and effect their salvation by trusting in God's love, preservation, and goodness, but also with fear and trembling.
7. From a human perspective without the (foreknowledge) of God, it is NEVER possible to speak with absolute certainty of ETERNAL election and fulfilled calling until the end, until someone has truly been faithful to Christ until death.

That is why Christ can say: Many are called, but few are chosen.

Many are called to follow the Lamb's call to discipleship and to take up the cross. From a human perspective, all could follow this call to follow Christ. But few follow this call.

However, all who have begun to follow Jesus are called to make a pilgrimage to the heavenly city and to arrive there. By no means do all faithfully follow their heavenly calling to the end.

On this pilgrimage, assurance of salvation exists only and exclusively in doing the will of God.

Nowhere in the entire Bible is there assurance of salvation through a magical initial experience that makes the subsequent life of faith and obedience (faith in God is, by definition, obedience to God) unnecessary.

The Old and New Testaments are in complete agreement on this point.

Does a person have free will in relation to salvation?

From God's point of view, no: every chosen one who arrives in heaven owes his entire salvation to God alone

- to be allowed to hear the gospel at all
- to be able to truly believe
- to be able to follow Christ to the end

are all gifts from God and not their own achievement.

On the other hand, from a human perspective, man is called upon on all fronts to do his part, without which his salvation will not be achieved.

From a divine perspective, we do not have free will, but God chooses and determines us for eternal salvation.

From a human perspective, however, we are completely forbidden to use this truth as even the slightest argument for non-belief on our part, or disobedience on our part, or unfaithfulness on our part.

As human beings, we can and must live and act **as if we ourselves and every other human being had free will.**

### *Calling and election*

First, in the first chapter of his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul confirms the *election* of the Thessalonians based on the obvious work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Then, in the second chapter, he reminds them that they are *called*. Called to share in God's reign and glory at a later time. When we use the word "chosen," we instinctively assume that salvation is already certain and inviolable. The word "called," however, carries with it a certain uncertainty as to whether those who are called will actually fulfill their calling. Thus, it becomes clear that the *present* salvation of the Thessalonians is certain for Paul. Their future salvation, on the other hand, is not yet certain.

Is that correct?

From a *human* perspective, calling and election are the same thing. As long as those who are called obey and obviously follow their calling, they can also be granted the status of "chosen ones," as happened with the Thessalonians when they obeyed their calling to faith. They were called to believe in God, followed this call, were saved, and became chosen ones in terms of their current status as saved people.

Thus, every called person can potentially be an elect person if he or she follows and obeys God.

However, with regard to their eternal, that is, final salvation, Paul does not refer to the Thessalonians as chosen ones based on his imperfect human perspective, but as called ones. They have not yet arrived at eternal salvation; they are still waiting for it and eagerly anticipating it. Because they do not yet hold eternal salvation in their hands, they are still called to eternal salvation. But once they arrive in eternity, they will belong to God's chosen ones according to Paul's logic applied here to the Thessalonians, for then their calling will have been fulfilled and the Thessalonians will have fulfilled their calling to heavenly inheritance.

*Mt 22:12-14 Meng*

*Many are called, but few are chosen*

Jesus says to the wedding guest who does not have wedding clothes and throws him out of heaven.

This makes the word "called" even clearer: it means receiving a task that must be fulfilled: putting on the wedding garment.

"Called" refers to the human aspect and responsibility. And here, people can completely refuse to follow God's call. Followers of Christ can follow God's call within their discipleship either partially or completely. Calling always involves the question of whether the person called also does what he is called to do.

Election, on the other hand, is always the divinely intended end result, which is achieved through the work of God.

Those who obey the call to believe in Jesus are born again of the Holy Spirit and become chosen ones on earth.

Now the (faith) chosen one has the calling to hold fast to the gospel and live by it. If he does so until the end, he is a (heavenly) chosen one and finally saved in heaven.

And when such a chosen one has done everything that God has commanded him to do during his lifetime, he is also a chosen one in terms of his ministry calling.

At every stage, it is only through God's work and calling that it is possible to become and be chosen. Scripture makes this clear in many places. Without the work of God through Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit, no one can become chosen at all three stages.

This serves to glorify God, who accomplishes all this and to whom all honor is due. And it serves to protect us as followers of Christ, so that we cannot boast before God about anything—even if God includes us in his plans.

From a human perspective, therefore, being chosen means fully responding to the divine calling. Election presupposes a calling from God.

### **In summary, this means:**

Not everyone, but many are called by God to follow his Son Jesus Christ. If we follow God's calling, we are chosen (by faith) as long as we follow our calling.

Our second calling as the chosen ones (of faith) is to arrive in heaven. This includes following the gospel and the Word of God and praying for one another that we may be encouraged and grow strong in good works and words. If we follow our heavenly calling as the chosen ones (in faith) to the end, we will ultimately belong to the chosen ones (in heaven) who are already known to God.

And our third calling as the chosen ones (of faith) is to fully fulfill the ministry that God gives to each one of us. The degree to which we fulfill our calling to serve Jesus will one day determine our reward in heaven.

Calling and election are

- as a concept of security or a free pass, that allows us to sit idly by
- but as a concept of gratitude and encouragement, that protects us from pride and at the same time assures us that God loves us and is faithful to us.

The doctrine of election—applied correctly—means

- trusting in God's grace with all our strength and remaining steadfast in God, as if everything depended solely on us
- while knowing that every millimeter of success in my discipleship is solely due to God's electing grace and that I can take no credit for it myself

Or, in short

- \* believing as if all election were of no avail, and
- \* trusting in God's election as if all my own faith were of no help

Can someone who initially trusted and followed Jesus and was obedient abandon his calling? According to Jesus, however, the word and principle "called" and "called ones" always carries with it the possibility of not (or no longer) following the call (Mt 13:20-22).

However, the word and principle "chosen" and "chosen one" is always used in the New Testament from God's foreknowledge. God knows who will arrive with him in eternity and, for example, who will survive the terrible phase in the end times and remain faithful to him until the end. And these are the chosen ones from God's perspective. God has determined that they will spend eternity with him. From a human perspective, we do not have this knowledge of God. We can only recognize from the fruits in a person's life whether someone is likely to be among the chosen ones. According to this passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians, anyone who currently trusts in Jesus and obediently follows him can confidently count themselves among the chosen ones. All the signs and all the fruits point to this. And the most important thing is our trust in the life-saving power of the gospel and that we follow God's call in the gospel.

Here Paul reverses the order: First, in the previous section, Paul confirms the election of the Thessalonians based on the obvious work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They are NOW to be addressed as the elect—because they do not deviate in any way from how God imagines the elect: They follow Jesus through the Holy Spirit and bear fruit for God.

Then Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they are called. Called to one day share in God's reign and glory. Thus, Paul downgrades the certainty that exists in the word "election" (Matthew 24:22) to the uncertainty associated with the word "calling" (Matthew 20:16). How does that happen?

Because from a human perspective, calling and election are the same thing—as long as they coincide. As long as those who are called obey and obviously follow their calling, they can also be granted the status of "chosen ones." Those who obviously and actively follow their calling will likely reach the goal of their calling. And those who have reached their

goal and arrived in heaven belong to the elect who have remained faithful to their calling. It is certain that the Thessalonians are saved NOW. But it is not yet certain that they will be saved in the future. The call of heaven to attain eternal salvation still hangs over their lives and has not yet been fulfilled. However, it can be fulfilled and will be fulfilled if the Thessalonians follow the apostle's admonitions and encouragements. And if they continue to hold fast to the word of the apostles as the word of God. For the word of God is effective in their lives, and in it the faithfulness of God—to his word and thus to the Thessalonians—becomes clear.

All this gives us great hope: every person who is called can potentially be chosen, already in this life in terms of status—and even more so when he or she has arrived at eternal life with God.

It is not God's fault that there are fewer chosen ones than called ones (Matthew 20:16). God is faithful in the life of every person he calls. And as long as we faithfully follow Christ, we may know that we are chosen ones and call ourselves chosen ones from our human perspective.

**All whom God has called can receive the eternal inheritance as redeemed ones.**

*Heb 9:15 Slt*

*And for this reason he is also the mediator of a new covenant, so that, based on a death that took place for the remission of transgressions committed during the duration of the first covenant, those who are called should receive the promised good of eternal inheritance.*

All those called by God—not just the elect—can potentially receive the eternal inheritance as redeemed ones.

Here it becomes clear again that all those called by God can receive the eternal inheritance as redeemed ones. It is not only the elect. Potentially, everyone called by God can also be eternally saved. Does that happen? If not, then it is certainly not because of God. For Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that ALL whom God has called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised them as redeemed ones. God faithfully watches over those He has called; He wants His chosen

ones to receive the eternal inheritance. From a human perspective, we only see those who have been called, not those who will ultimately be chosen. But everyone who has been called can be completely and finally saved. That is extremely good news.

### **Chosen Faithfulness and Steadfastness**

*Rev 13:8-10 SlT*

*8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If any-one is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go; if anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. Here is the steadfast endurance and faith of the saints!*

God's chosen ones will live forever. God has written their names in the book of life since the foundation of the world. They are faithful to Christ and steadfast unto death, and they do not worship the image of the beast.

Here we see a great contrast. There are those who have been written in the book of life of the sacrificed Lamb since the foundation of the world. They will be saved and live forever. Are they passive, and does their salvation come to them without them having to do anything? No, they are very active. They do not worship the beast, which would mean their certain eternal destruction (Rev. 14:9-13). And for this decision and their steadfastness, they pay with imprisonment and martyrdom. The mystery of divine election and human responsibility merge here into one. And it becomes clear through everything that the enabler of overcoming is, at the deepest level, the Lamb himself, who, through his gracious work of election, makes it possible for his chosen ones to overcome in the first place.

The doctrine of election—applied correctly—means:

Believing and trusting completely in God's grace, and remaining with all my strength and perseverance in God, as if everything depended solely on me



And knowing that every millimeter of success in my actions has its cause and result solely in the electing grace of God, and that I can take no credit for myself.

*John 15:16 SlT*

*You did not **choose** me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*

*Mark 13:20 SlT*

*20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.*

*Matthew 22:14 SlT*

*14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

*1 Thessalonians 2:11-12*

*11 You know how we exhorted and encouraged each one of you, as a father does his children, 12 and earnestly urged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

*2 Pet 1:10 SlT*

*10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble.*

2 Peter 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; John 15:16; Mark 13:20; Matthew 22:14; Matthew 20:16; Hebrews 9:15; Revelation 13:8-10; Revelation 14:9-13; Matthew 24:22; Matthew 20:16; Matthew 13:20-22

*1.8.7 On the way to eternity: Many are called to 1) follow Jesus NOW and 2) arrive in eternity*

God's love and message of salvation applies to the whole world. Jesus, our Savior, says himself: Many are called. God's gaze is directed toward the whole world, so that all may be saved—no one should be excluded from salvation, even unto eternal glory.

*1 Tim 2:3-4 SlT*

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

*John 3:16 SlT*

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, **that whoever believes in him should not perish** but have eternal life.*

*Heb 2:10 SlT*

*10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

1 Tim 2:3-4; John 3:16; Heb 2:10; Matt 20:16; Matt 22:14; Matt 24:14;  
Rev 7:9

### 1.8.8 *On the path to eternity: What true discipleship means*

True and thus saved disciples of Jesus

[<https://viele-sind-berufen.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Viele-sind-berufen-Jesus-heilsgewiss-nachfolgen.pdf>]

- love Jesus more than anything else
- have the power of salt against sin
- love one another
- are and remain branches on the vine
- are guided by the Spirit of God

*Mt 10:37 Meng*

*37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

*John 13:34-35*

*34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

*Matthew 5:13 Meng*

*13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

*Rom 8:13-15 Meng*

*13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 The Spirit you received is not a spirit of slavery, so that you are afraid again, but you have received the Spirit of sonship, in which we cry, "Abba, (dear) Father!"*

Mt 10:37; Mk 9:47-50; Jn 13:34-35; Mt 5:13; Jn 15:5-6

# Follow Jesus with certainty of salvation

*Rejoice that your names are written in heaven Lk 10:20*

## 1. The foundation of discipleship

**Bible verse:** *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Matthew 16:24*

- Self-denial: You place your own desires and interests under the authority of Jesus.
- Devotion: Your life for Jesus and the gospel.

## 2. Discipleship costs everything

**Bible verse:** *"In the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have." Luke 14:33*

- Complete obedience: No area of your life is excluded.
- Willingness to give up possessions, comforts, and relationships if necessary.

## 3. The character of a disciple

**Bible verse:** *"A new commandment I give unto you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." John 13:34*

- Constant love for Jesus, who loved us so much.
- Love: Selfless devotion to others.
- Mercy and forgiveness in everyday life.

## 3. The struggle of a disciple

**Bible verse:** *"If you live according to your human nature, it will lead to death, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Romans 8:13*

- Do not compromise with sin!
- Those who overcome will be clothed in white for the feast. Jesus will not remove their names from the book of life, but will crown them and confess them before the Father and the saints. Rev 3:5

## 4. The goal of discipleship

**Bible verse:** *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" ( ) (Matthew 28:19)*

- Evangelism: Share the gospel.
- Discipleship training: 2-person teams, small groups & church: (Let yourself be) taught and accompanied.

## 5. The power for discipleship

**Bible verse:** *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses." Acts 1:8*

- Holy Spirit: Your source of wisdom, courage, and strength.
- Prayer and dependence on God.
- Find forgiveness, cleansing, and a new beginning with Jesus at any time. *1 John 1:8*

## 6. The path of discipleship to eternity

**Bible verse:** *"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." James 1:22*

- Read the Bible extensively, pray intensively, and get involved in a church community.
- Falling down and getting back up: Remain vigilant in your discipleship and in your relationship with Jesus.
- Do good to believers and everyone through the love of God, and do not slacken.

*Those who follow and love Jesus as disciples will never be lost, but will live forever.*

### 1.8.9 On the path to eternity: appropriate responsibility

There are different levels of faith, experience, and knowledge in following Christ. But no matter how long someone has believed in Christ and how deep their knowledge of God is, they are always part of God's family.

So we are all at different stages of development in following Christ. And Scripture makes it clear that God knows this very well and responds to it. God always gives us His unconditional love first, as He did with the lost and found son. No one must or needs to give anything to God first. Everyone may and must first allow themselves to be loved, gifted, and cleansed by God, just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and Peter at the Last Supper (John 13:1-17). Love only demands love in return to the extent that the other person is capable of giving it.

God demands nothing that people could not know and nothing that is not preceded by a positive experience of salvation, of God's goodness, and of experience. God judges everyone according to the measure given to them.

But we can be quite sure of one thing: God does not proceed according to a rigid pattern, but always judges and decides according to what a person could know and give.

But the Word of God clearly tells us that we are in danger of knowing more about God than we put into practice. Either we are sluggish in listening, or we forget too quickly what we could know. Paul constantly calls out to the Corinthians, "*Do you not know?*" The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews admonishes, even implores, his readers to remember what they once knew and to put it into practice (again), and in the letters of Revelation, Jesus points out to five of the seven churches that they are not living as they could if they took to heart everything they know or once knew. And besides mere rebuke and an unexpectedly low rank in the resurrection ( ), strongly repressing and forgetting what we know can have eternal consequences.

Those who have received much revelation from God through the Word of God are expected to do much—those who fundamentally know God's will and then have it made even clearer to them, confirmed by God's special work, have a special responsibility to implement what has been given to them.

From all this it becomes clear that Jesus—that God judges us according to our own personal measure, which corresponds to our own possibilities and our own responsibility.

*Luke 12:48 Meng*

*48 But to whom much is given, much will be required; and to whom much is entrusted, even more will be demanded.*

*Luke 13:30 Meng*

*30 And know this: there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.*

*Matthew 11:20-24*

*20 Then he [Jesus] began to denounce the cities where most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you!*

Matthew 25:24-30; Luke 12:48; Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 8:18; Hebrews 2:1-3; Revelation 3:2-3; Luke 11:31-32; Romans 1:20-21; Romans 2:1-3; Romans 2:17-24

### *1.8.10 God is a God of NOW*

Our faith is always a state of being and a way of life. True faith is only possible through the Spirit of God within us. True faith waits for the final salvation of God. True faith loves and acts through love. And true faith NOW will ultimately inherit eternal salvation.

The apostles are **not** concerned with the question: Has someone truly been born again, and can I then promise them eternal security once and for all? No, they say there is a certainty of salvation if you are in God's will NOW – therefore, do everything NOW to do God's will NOW and to increase and grow in it. There is room for sins that suddenly overcome us. But nowhere is habitual, conscious sinning presented as compatible with the assurance of salvation in Christ. Only those who repent of their sins as soon as they can and do not remain in their sins are assured. And everything culminates in the sudden, unexpected return of Christ. Who would want to sin (habitually) at that moment? We are saved by faith and by a faith that is obedient, that is obedient NOW.

God is a God of the NOW. The holy name of God, YHWH, means "I am who I am."

We cannot rest on our past successes.

We do not need to be dragged down by past failures.

We should and can leave everything behind us and reach out for what lies ahead...

We are NOW dependent on God's grace to be saved eternally, and we NOW have a Savior who helps and saves us.

*Exodus 3:14 Meng*

*14 Then God said to Moses, "I am who I am."*

*John 14:6 Slt*

*6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

*Leviticus 6:6 Meng*

*6 A fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall never go out.*

Ex 3:14; Lev 6:6; John 14:6; Heb 4:14-16; John 5:24-29; Matt 5:21-26; Mark 9:47; Luke 15:11-32

### *1.8.11 Followers of Jesus are and will be saved*

Jesus called his disciples, and they left everything and followed him. Despite all their mistakes, their names were written in heaven from the beginning, and they were saved because they had followed Jesus and continued to follow him.

However, Jesus does not accept discipleship with conditions and reservations. Jesus must be more important to you than anything else in the world if you want to be a disciple of Jesus. And only those who remain with Jesus even in difficult times are or remain true (saved) disciples of Jesus.

And even those who follow Jesus and are disciples and thus saved must continue to become disciples of Jesus.



*Luke 10:20 Meng*

*[Jesus said to the 70 disciples in his service] Rejoice rather that your names **are written** in heaven!*

*Matthew 19:28 Meng*

*Jesus answered them, "Truly I say to you, you who **have followed** me, when the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory, you will also sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Mt 19:27-29; Mk 10:28; Lk 18:28; Lk 10:20; Jn 14:3; Lk 9:57-62; Mt 10:37-39; Lk 14:26-33; John 8:31; John 15:8

### *1.8.12 Arriving in eternity: Many could be saved eternally, but few will be*

Few will be saved, but all who do everything in their power to turn from their previous life against God's will to a life according to His will.

Those who do not turn away from their old life contrary to God's will and do everything in their power to pass through the narrow gate of heaven will not pass through the heavenly gate into eternal life. And there are last who will be first, and first who will be last. This shows us that only God knows our true relationship with Him and that we can be very deceived.

*"The door to the kingdom of heaven and to salvation is narrow,"* says Jesus. And: *"Do everything you can to get in!"* Here, the focus shifts completely away from God's election to the responsibility of the listeners. They themselves are responsible for going through the narrow door. Many will try and fail. Why not? The New Evangelical Translation says (v. 27): *"You never listened to me!"* Other translations speak of the listeners' wrongdoing, of failing to do what is right, of evildoers whom Jesus does not know. Here, Jesus strongly links salvation with doing what is right, with the will of God, and with listening to Jesus. It is of no use just to be close to Jesus, to hear about him, and to know everything about him. Those who do not do what Jesus says and who do not become disciples of Jesus, moving from being evildoers to being God-fearing and practicing the word of God, will not be saved. We must listen to

what Jesus says if we want to enter the kingdom of God through the narrow gate. But if we listen to Jesus, we will also be in the kingdom of God together with Jesus, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets.

And beyond that, the order or ranking will also be very different from what we would expect according to earthly standards. Only Jesus truly knows what, how, and how much each of us does for him based on our God-given abilities, and he will place each of us in the place that belongs to us from God.

This parable of Jesus may easily lead us to think of unbelievers who do not accept the gospel. But is that correct? Here, as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of a narrow gate—and the context makes it clear that it is the gate of heaven. And then Jesus makes it clear that it is not the unconverted who are not allowed into heaven, but those who practice injustice, who do not DO God's will. It is not conversion (alone) that is decisive, but the life after conversion. Jesus speaks these words to the pious who had God's Word – and yet did not follow God's Word and Jesus. Jesus' entire speech suggests that only a few of the (seemingly) pious will be saved. Is this ever preached from our pulpits? No, I have never heard it. Only encouragement ever comes from our pulpits. Encouragement is good. But if we omit Jesus' clear warnings, we become guilty before God and man, and guilty of the fact that some or even many of them will one day stand before a closed gate of heaven. Those who do not live a lifestyle of complete devotion to God and His will based on the teachings of Jesus, those who do not do everything in their power to get to heaven, will **not** arrive in heaven.

But as for God: God himself wants to lead many people into glory as his children. That is why many are called. God wants to save many and bring them to their destination. Let us not limit him. And he leads all his children to glory. Let us follow him.

And although

*Mt 7:14 Meng*

*Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and only a few find it*

God still saves many people across time, languages, and cultures in the end. Yes, few are saved, but all who do everything in their power to turn from their previous life against God's will to a life under his will will be saved.

*Mt 7:13-14 Meng*

*13 Enter (the kingdom of God) through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 But narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

*Luke 13:22-29 Meng 22 So he [Jesus] went from town to town and village to village, teaching and making his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He answered them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter in and will not be able. 25 When the master of the house has risen and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' and he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from. 26 Then you will begin to protest, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets,' 27 but he will reply, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you who practice injustice!' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves are thrown out. 29 And people will come from east and west, north and south, and sit down at the feast in the kingdom of God. 30 And know this: there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."*

*John 6:66-70 Meng*

*66 From that time on, many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; 69 and we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you, the twelve? And one of you is a devil."*

*2 Tim 1:15 Meng*

*You know that everyone in the province of Asia has turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

*Heb 2:10 SlT*

*10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

*John 14:1-2 SlT*

*1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*

*Rev 7:9 SlT*

*9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.*

Luke 13:22-29; John 6:66-70; 2 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 2:10; John 14:2; Revelation 7:9

*1.8.13 Follow your calling: On the path to eternity, there are two paths for every person and two paths for every follower of Christ*

We can

- go through the wide gate and the broad way to destruction
  - through the narrow gate and the narrow path to heaven
- or*
- take the straight path to heaven and then leave it again

1 Peter 2:6-10; Matthew 7:13; Matthew 7:14; 2 Peter 2:10-22; Mark 4:16-17; Matthew 13:30; Revelation 21:1-8; 2 John 1:9; 3 John 1:9-12; 1 John 2:3-11

*Mt 7:13-14 SlT*

*13 Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is*

*broad that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and few find it.*

*Mark 4:16-17 Slit*

*16 And likewise, where it was sown on rocky ground, these are those who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; 17 but they have no root in themselves, but are fickle. Later, when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, they immediately fall away.*

*2 Peter 2:21 Slit*

*21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.*

## 2 Evaluation of ALL 27 books and 545 salvation-related Bible passages in the New Testament

The books of the New Testament testify to God's plan for humanity and the church of Christ. They reveal how, through God's love in the gospel of Jesus, we are saved from our sinful nature and made children of God. They also show us, as redeemed followers of Jesus, the way to a life with God—in the hope of the glory of eternal life.

But how do they answer a central question: Can a Christian lose his salvation? Will a follower of Jesus be lost?

To answer this question, **ALL 27 books** and **ALL 545 salvation-related passages** in the New Testament were examined in detail.

The core message of each biblical book is summarized briefly in **detail level 5**. A more detailed presentation can be found in **detail level 6** – which corresponds to the scope of this book edition.

All chapter headings in this book are linked to the main website [viele-sindberufen.de](http://viele-sindberufen.de). There you will find levels 5 and 6 as well as the **most comprehensive analysis at level 7**. At this level, the Bible passages relevant to salvation are thoroughly examined.

The **results** of the investigations **at level 7** are **divided** into three clear sections, which you can access directly via the table of contents on the website.

<b>Overview</b>	The thematic and most detailed summary of the statements on salvation in a book of the Bible
<b>Bible passages</b>	Overview of the salvation-related Bible verses in the book with links to the commentary and Bible verse
<b>Commentary</b>	Each salvation verse is first commented on in detail and then summarized in its message

The table of ALL 545 salvation-related Bible passages in the New Testament is the basis for all studies and interpretations. Therefore, it is listed here for your own research and overview. Alternatively, it can be downloaded from the website "Many Are Called."

**Table of ALL 545 passages in the New Testament relevant to salvation**

Bible reference(s)	lost / condemned	Present salvation	Eternal salvation	By election (E) / calling (C)	By God's grace (G) / initial faith	Through persevering faith expressed in works	Loss of salvation	Reward / Rank in heaven	Subject / Comment
Matthew 1:21+23		x	x		G				our Savior
Mt 3:1-12		x	x			x	x		Realign for life
Matthew 4:17+23		x	x	C	G				hear and obey
Mt 5:1-12			x				x	x	The truly happy
Matthew 5:13							x		Powerful or bland
Mt 5:14-16							x		you seem contagiously good
Mt 5:17-20	x	x	x		G		x	x	Authentic new creation
Mt 5:21-26			x				x	x	The first mortal sin
Mt 5:27-30			x				x	x	The second deadly sin

Mt 5:43-48							X		X	The quality of salvation
Mt 6:5-6; Mt 6:17-18							X		X	Good+bad influencer
Mt 6:7-15			X				X	X		Deadly sin no. 1 reloaded
Mt 7:1-2; Matthew 7:12-14	X		X				X			As you do unto me, so God will do unto you
Matthew 7:15-23	X		X				X			Salvation for doers, not talkers
Matthew 7:24-29	X		X				X			Surviving 9/11
Mt 8:5-12		X	X				X			(Un)belief worldwide
Mt 9:1-2		X				G	X			Faith, forgiveness, salvation
Mt 9:11-13		X				G	X			No one is too sinful
Mt 10:6-15		X	X				X			Responsibility to listen
Mt 10:28-33			X			F	X	X	X	good fear/fearlessness
Matthew 10:37-39	X	X	X				X			The greatest love
Matthew 10:40-42									X	Not without reward
Matthew 11:3-6			X				X	X		turn away or remain
Mt 11:20-24	X									High responsibility
Mt 11:25-30		X			E		X	X		The inviting revelation
Matthew 12:30-37	X	X	X				X			Life-threatening speech
Matthew 12:41-42	X		X				X			Saved judges
Mt 12:47-50		X					X			The true family of Jesus
Mt 13:10-16	X	X		E/C			X	X		Open senses bring happiness



Matthew 13:18-23	x		x	C			x	x		saved fruit bearers
Matthew 13:36-43	x		x	E/C			x			Lawlessness and sin kill
Matthew 13:44-46		x				x	x			This calculation works out perfectly.
Mt 13:47-50	x		x				x			eternal effect of grace
Mt 15:7-20	x									Lips close, heart far away
Mt 16:15-19		x		E/C		x	x			Recognizing Jesus saves
Matthew 16:21-28	x	x	x				x	x		Suffering for Life
Matthew 18:1-17	x	x	x		G	x	x	x	x	Salvation and eternal death
Matthew 18:20-34			x				x	x		Forgiven 77 times for life
Matthew 19:13-14		x			G	x				Heaven for children (same)
Matthew 19:16-26			x			x	x		x	Jesus First, otherwise nothing
Matthew 19:27-30			x				x		x	Saved and richly rewarded
Matthew 20:20-28							x		x	useless struggling or serving
Mt 21:18-19	x							x		Jesus cursing
Mt 21:28-32	x		x			x	x			Actions save, confession does not
Matthew 21:38-44	x		x				x	x		The fruitless lose everything
Matthew 22:1-14	x		x		G	x	x	x		Rejects, second choice + dresses
Matthew 22:36-40							x			The most important of all commandments

Mt 23:13	x								Deadly teaching(s)
Mt 23:26-32	x								unclean and lost inside
Mt 24:3-27	x		x		F		x	x	Temptation, distress, and salvation
Matthew 24:37-51	x		x				x	x	evil slaves in pieces
Matthew 25:1-13	x		x			x	x	x	Wisdom and oil save
Matthew 25:14-30	x		x				x	x	Act, don't hide
Matthew 25:31-46	x		x				x		The final judgment of all nations
Mt 26:26-28		x			G				through the body and blood of Jesus
Mt 28:16-20		x	x			x	x		Great Commission
Mark 1:4		x			G	x			Repentance saves
Mark 1:14-15		x			G	x			change and save faith
Mark 2:5		x			G	x			believe & be forgiven
Mk 2:17		x			G				Hope for those sick with sin
Mark 3:33-35		x					x		Becoming part of Jesus' family through action
Mark 4:10-20		x	x		G		x	x	preserving the seed of the word
Mark 4:24-25	x		x				x	x	as I have done unto you, so God will do unto me
Mark 6:7-13	x	x	x		G	x			Salvation or Judgment
Mark 7:5-13	x								Human or divine
Mark 7:14-23	x								Unclean from within
Mk 8:27-29		x	x			x			saving knowledge of the Messiah
Mark 8:34-38	x		x			x	x	x	Conditions for salvation
Mark 9:1		x							God's reign is coming

Mk 9:33-41									X	Change of motivation
Mark 9:38-40									X	different for Jesus, but reward
Mk 9:42-50	x		x					x	x	have the power of salt against sin
Mark 10:13-16	x	x			G	x				Becoming like children saves
Mark 10:17-27	x		x					x		Jesus in first place
Mark 10:35-45								x		jesusnah d. serving & suffering
Mark 11:12-14	x								x	Cursed fruitlessness
Mark 11:24-25		x						x		Forgiven for forgiveness
Mark 12:1-11	x									Rebellious officials
Mark 12:28-34								x		The most important commandments
Mark 12:38-40	x									A very harsh judgment
Mark 13:4-23			x	E	F			x	x	Do not be misled
Mark 13:33-37			x					x	x	Vigilant faithfulness saves eternally
Mk 14:22-24		x	x		G/F	x				New Covenant, Body & Blood of Jesus
Mark 14:38								x		Watching and praying protects
Mark 16:14-20	x	x	x			x				Faith decides
Luke 1:16-17						x	x			Who is righteous?
Luke 1:50-55	x	x	x		G	x	x			Judgment and mercy
Luke 1:68-79		x	x		G/F	x	x			redeemed for peace

Luke 2:11-14		x	x		G				Savior+Messiah+Lord
Luke 2:30-35	x	x			G	x			The Fork in the Road
Luke 3:2-6		x			G	x			Repentance and baptism for forgiveness
Luke 3:7-14	x	x	x			x	x		Snakes or fruit bearers
Luke 3:15-17	x		x				x		Chaff or wheat?
Luke 4:33-34		x	x						Good news
Luke 5:20		x			G	x			Faith and forgiveness
Luke 5:31-32		x			G	x			The Sick and the Healthy
Luke 5:34		x	x		G	x	x		Wedding guests
Luke 6:20-49	x	x	x			x	x	x	empty "Lord," "Lord"
Luke 7:18-23		x	x				x		Do not be misled by Jesus
Luke 7:24-30	x	x				x			God's plan for salvation
Luke 7:36-49		x			G	x			Forgiveness, love, faith
Luke 8:1		x			G	x			The Good News
Luke 8:9-15	x	x	x		G	x	x	x	Parable of the Word
Luke 8:16-18	x		x				x	x	pay attention, listen, do
Luke 8:19-21		x					x		What connects us to Jesus?
Luke 9:1-6	x	x	x			x			Pure responsibility
Luke 9:18-20	x	x	x			x	x	x	Recognizing Jesus & Following Him
Luke 9:35		x	x			x	x		Father and Son
Luke 9:46-48								x	Great Little Ones
Luke 9:49-50		x					x		different and yet good
Luke 9:57-62		x	x			x	x		No reservations!
Luke 10:5-16	x	x	x			x			Light and responsibility
Luke 10:17-20		x					x		Names written down

Luke 10:21-22		x		E						the divine mystery
Luke 10:25-37			x				x			Salvation through good deeds?
Luke 11:14-23	x									Dangerous association
Luke 11:27-28		x					x			hearing and obeying saves
Luke 11:31-32			x			x	x			Works of faith save
Luke 11:33		x				x	x			The decisive eye
Luke 11:37-54	x									Three times "Woe!"
Luke 12:1-10	x		x		G/F		x	x		Hypocrisy+fear? Confess!
Luke 12:33-34			x				x		x	Treasure & Heart in Heaven
Luke 12:35-48			x				x	x	x	Burning lamps save
Luke 12:58-59	x				G	x				Hypocrites in prison
Luke 13:1-8	x		x		G	x	x			fruitful repentance for life
Luke 13:22-29	x		x			x	x		x	The narrow gate open worldwide
Luke 14:11							x		x	exalt or humble
Luke 14:12-14							x		x	give without expectation
Luke 14:15-24	x		x		G	x	x			Deadly excuses
Luke 14:25-35	x					x	x	x		Where does my heart beat?
Luke 15:7+9-10, 31-32	x	x			G	x	x	x		heavenly joy

Luke 16:9-13	x		x				x			True worship
Luke 16:16-17		x			G		x			Moses, Law, Word of Joy
Luke 16:30-31	x		x			x	x			Moses & the Prophets
Luke 17:1-4	x		x				x	x		k. Offend & forgive
Luke 17:10							x			The right attitude
Luke 17:20-21		x								The essential is invisible
Luke 17:22-36	x		x				x	x		with Jesus you.the trial by fire
Luke 18:11-14	x	x			G	x				Who is righteous before God?
Luke 18:15-17	x	x			G	x				can accept saves
Luke 18:18-30	x	x	x			x	x		x	only my complete devotion is sufficient
Luke 19:5-10		x				x				Giving everything saves
Luke 19:12-27	x		x				x	x	x	Faithfully using gifts
Luke 19:41-44	x									Missing a deadly opportunity
Luke 20:9-16	x									Enemies of God
Luke 20:45-47	x							x		Beware of pious appearances
Luke 21:8-19			x		F		x			Stand <del>on</del> and gain life
Luke 21:25-28							x			Lift up your heads
Luke 21:29-36	x		x				x	x		Escaping the trap
Luke 22:14-30	x	x	x		G	x	x			The new covenant in Jesus' sacrifice

Luke 22:31-34		x			F		x	x		Resurrection saves
Luke 22:39-46		x					x			Preserving prayer
Luke 23:28-32	x									Weeping over oneself
Luke 23:39-43	x	x	x		G	x				Go through the narrow gate
Luke 24:44-49		x			G	x	x			Repentance to God + Forgiveness
John 1:1-13		x			G	x				Two-factor salvation
John 1:29+41		x			G		x			The redemption of humanity
John 3:1-20	x	x	x		G	x				Salvation through rebirth
John 3:31-36	x	x	x		G	x				God's wrath or eternal life
John 4:7-15		x	x		G	x				Water of life
John 4:34							x			Food for life
John 4:42						x				Believing means knowing
John 4:53						x				Believing even without signs
John 5:14	x		x				x			Continuing to sin has consequences
John 5:23-29	x	x	x		G	x	x			Belief versus doing good
John 5:37-47	x	x			G	x				Reasons for (not) believing
John 6:26-29		x	x	E	G	x				Food for life
John 6:35-40		x	x	E	F	x				Certainty of being chosen
John 6:43-58		x	x	E	G/F	x	x			true food+true drink
John 6:63-71	x	x		E		x	x			Faith is a gift
John 7:7	x									Hatred of Jesus kills
John 7:17		x				x	x			Ready to do God's will
John 7:37-39		x				x	x			Thirst and the water of life

John 8:7-11	x	x				x	x			All are sinners
John 8:12			x				x			Follow the light to life
John 8:21	x									Die in his sin
John 8:31-47	x	x		E			x			Child of God or child of the devil?
John 8:54-55	x	x					x			True knowledge = obedience
John 9:35-41	x	x			G	x				Believe in the Son of Man
John 10:1-26	x	x		E/C		x	x			Signs of the saved
John 10:26-30		x	x	E/C	F		x			more characteristics
John 11:23-27			x		G		x			saving faith
John 11:52		x	x	E						God's foresight
John 12:24-26		x	x	x			x	x	x	die, follow, honor
John 12:35-36	x						x	x	x	Use the light with faith
John 12:37-50	x	x	x	E/C		x				Believe with your heart and eyes
John 13:8-11	x	x			G/F	x	x			the saving washing(s)
John 13:18-19	x			E	F		x			Election and preservation
John 13:34-35		x					x			The New Commandment
John 14:1-6			x		G/F		x			The Way, the Truth, and the Life
John 14:15-24			x				x			To love Jesus means to follow him
John 14:29		x			F		x			Remaining steadfast in foreknowledge
John 15:1-17		x	x	E/C			x	x		Vineyard Vine Vine



John 15:18-25				E			x		Chosen out of the world
John 16:1-4					F		x	x	Be prepared!
John 16:27		x				x	x		The Father loves you
John 17:2-3		x	x	E					Knowing Christ saves
John 17:6-8		x		E	G/F	x	x		Jesus reveals the Father
John 17:9-24	x	x	x		F		x		Christ preserves
John 18:37		x				x			the true reality
John 20:21-23					G				Saved by the Spirit
John 20:29		x				x			Blessed are those who believe
John 20:30-31		x				x			Believe in Jesus and live
Acts 2:21+36-42		x			G	x			Call upon Jesus for salvation
Acts 3:18-19		x			G	x			Turn to new life
Acts 3:22-26	x	x			G	x	x		a prophet like Moses
Acts 4:11-12		x			G	x			just a name
Acts 5:1-10	x							x	mortal sin
Acts 5:30-32		x			G	x	x		the spirit of obedience
Acts 6:7		x				x	x		Faithful obedience
Acts 7:51-53	x								unrepentant = uncircumcised
Acts 8:12-24	x	x			G	x			Hypocritical
Acts 9:31		x			F	x	x		The fear of God is contagious
Acts 10:34-44 + Acts 11:14		x			G	x			Only the gospel saves
Acts 11:22-23					G	x	x		Encouragement to stay

Acts 13:38-41	x	x			G	x			Despised or acquitted
Acts 13:46-48	x	x	x	E/C	G	x			The elect believe
Acts 13:50-52	x								Warning to the persecutors
Acts 14:3		x			G	x			Confirmed message of love
Acts 14:21-22		x	x		G	x	x		you. Tribulations for salvation
Acts 15:1-11	x	x	x		G	x	x	x	Salvation by grace alone
Acts 15:28-29 + Acts 16:4-5							x	x	Cultural considerations and biblical sexual ethics
Acts 16:14-15		x		E	G	x			The Lord opens the heart
Acts 16:17 + Acts 16:30-34		x	x			x	x		Jesus is the door and the way
Acts 17:2-4		x	x			x	x		Understanding Jesus as the Messiah
Acts 17:11-12						x			Scripture leads to Jesus
Acts 18:5-11	x	x		E/C		x			The gospel divides
Acts 18:28						x			Jesus is the Messiah
Acts 19:1-7		x				x			Faith, Jesus, Holy Spirit
Acts 19:18-20		x				x	x		Consequences of being saved
Acts 20:2			x				x		Key factor: encouragement
Acts 20:20-32			x		F	x	x	x	remain in the true teaching
Acts 24:24-25	x		x				x		Live righteously and abstemiously
Acts 26:19-20		x				x	x		The proof of life
Acts 28:23-28	x				G	x			not willing or open ears
Romans 1:1-7		x	x	C	G	x	x		That is the gospel
Romans 1:16-17		x			G	x			God's power saves believers

Romans 2:6-11	x		x				x		Doing good for eternal life
Romans 2:25-29	x	x	x		G		x		Circumcision of God's Spirit
Romans 3:19-20	x								Keeping the commandments does not save
Romans 3:21-28		x			G	x			God's gift saves
Rom 4:3+5		x			G	x			Faith for righteousness
Rom 4:12		x					x		Following Abraham's faith
Romans 4:23-25		x			G	x			Whoever believes will be saved
Romans 5:1-5		x			G	x			Peace with God through grace
Romans 5:9-11		x	x		G/F	x			future salvation you. Jesus
Romans 5:17-19	x	x			G				Blood relationship
Rom 6:6-8		x	x		G	x	x		died to life
Romans 6:15-23		x	x		G	x	x		Slave with heavenly check
Romans 7:4+6		x			G	x	x		Fruit through Jesus + Spirit
Romans 8:1-2		x			G	x			d. The law of the Spirit sets us free
Romans 8:4-5		x					x		d. The Spirit of God determines
Romans 8:6-11	x	x	x		G/F	x			d. The Spirit brings+leads to life
Romans 8:12-17		x	x		G	x	x	x	Two paths
Romans 8:23-25		x	x		G		x		Waiting patiently saves

Romans 8:28-39		x	x	E/C	G/F	x	x		chosen, called, righteous, +
Romans 9:14-33	x	x	x	E/C	G	x			Chosen for salvation or lost
Rom 10:1		x			G		x		Hope for everyone
Romans 10:4		x			G	x			Every believer will be saved
Romans 10:8-13		x			G	x			Call upon Jesus + confess him
Romans 11:3-6				E	G/F		x		Proven in crisis
Romans 11:16-24		x			G/F	x	x	x	The severity + goodness of God
Romans 11:28-32		x		E/C	G	x	x	x	Knowledge of grace preserves
Romans 12:1-2		x			G		x		Mercy and worship
Romans 13:11-14		x	x			x	x		Our approaching salvation
Romans 14:9-12			x				x		Do not condemn+despise
Romans 14:15-23		x	x				x	x	Love saves me + others
Romans 15:4			x				x		d. Scripture teaches hope z. Goal
Romans 15:15-16							x		a holy sacrifice
Rom 16:17-19			x		G		x	x	Remain obedient without being led astray
Romans 16:25-27					G/F		x		be strengthened+obey
1 Cor. 1:1-9			x	C	G/F		x		blameless through God's faithfulness
1 Corinthians 1:18	x	x	x		G	x	x		Powerful saving crossword

1 Corinthians 1:21-31	x	x		E/C		x				Called and chosen
1 Corinthians 2:4-5		x				x				Powerful, saving sermon
1 Corinthians 2:9-10		x			G	x				For those who love God
1 Corinthians 2:12		x			G					Spirit of God, not of the world
1 Corinthians 3:6-8					G/F		x		x	Growth providers + wage earners
1 Corinthians 3:11-15		x	x		G	x	x		x	Trial by fire
1 Corinthians 3:16-17	x							x		God's temple
1 Corinthians 4:5							x		x	Our Secret Motives
1 Corinthians 5:1-13	x		x				x	x		Church discipline for salvation
1 Corinthians 6:7-11	x	x	x		G	x	x	x		Correction for preservation
1 Corinthians 6:14-20		x					x			Honoring God with the body
1 Corinthians 7:19							x			Keeping the commandments counts
1 Corinthians 8:8-13							x	x		Do not become a stumbling block to others
1 Corinthians 9:14-18								x	x	Woe to me!
1 Corinthians 9:22-27			x				x	x		Truly abstinent = crown
1 Corinthians 10:1-13					F		x	x		OT+NT Deadly sins

1 Corinthians 10:31-33		x					x		Do everything for the glory of God
1 Cor 11:27-32			x		F			x	Discipline for salvation
1 Corinthians 15:1-58	x	x	x			x	x	x	Death and Resurrection of Christ
1 Corinthians 16:22	x							x	Cursed unloving people
2 Corinthians 1:1									The church of the saints
2 Corinthians 1:12					G		x		upright+ sincere d.d. grace
2 Cor 1:18-21		x			F	x			In Christ is the yes
2 Corinthians 2:15-16	x	x							a fragrance of life or death
2 Corinthians 3:4-6		x			G/F		x		Empowered by God's Spirit
2 Corinthians 4:1-4	x	x					x		open, commended, veiled
2 Corinthians 4:5		x				x	x		Jesus Christ is Lord
2 Corinthians 4:7-14			x		F		x		Death and life of Christ in us
2 Corinthians 5:1-10		x	x		G	x	x	x	Pleasing to Jesus, and life's work
2 Corinthians 5:11		x				x	x		the fear of the Lord sends
2 Corinthians 5:14-17		x			G	x	x		Died for life
2 Corinthians 6:1-10		x	x		G		x	x	No futile grace
2 Cor 6:14-18 + 2 Cor 7:1	x	x	x				x		Sanctification for time and eternity

2 Corinthians 7:10	x	x	x		G/F		x		Pain from God for salvation
2 Corinthians 9:6							x	x	Sow generously and reap
2 Corinthians 9:13							x		Probation blesses others
2 Corinthians 10:13-18					G/F		x		Speech+fruit ≥ Speech alone
2 Corinthians 11:2-4			x				x	x	Jesus, Spirit, and Gospel
2 Corinthians 11:11-15	x								False apostles
2 Corinthians 12:19-21							x		Warding off (mortal) sins
2 Corinthians 13:1-13							x		True faith proves itself
Gal 1:1-4		x			G				Jesus saves from sin and the world
Gal 1:6-12	x	x				x	x	x	No other gospel
Gal 2:15-16	x	x			G	x			d. Standing before God
Gal 2:19-21		x			G	x	x		Gospel, grace, Christ
Gal 3:1-5		x			G	x	x	x	Really in vain?
Gal 3:6-14	x	x			G	x	x		Living by faith
Gal 3:24-29		x				x			Through faith Child- ren+Heirs
Gal 4:5-11		x			G	x	x	x	Saved in vain?
Gal 4:19								x	Birth pains
Gal 4:28		x							Place of grace
Gal 5:1-5		x				x	x	x	v. Separated from Christ+lost
Gal 5:5-6		x	x				x		Faith and love count
Gal 5:7-10	x	x		C			x	x	Follow (only) the truth

Gal 5:24-26		x			G	x	x		Having and living God's life
Gal 6:1-2							x		Fall and restoration
Gal 6:7-10	x						x	x	Personal or spiritual life
Gal 6:15-16		x			G	x	x		a new creation
Eph 1:1							x		United through faithfulness
Eph 1:2-14		x	x	E	G	x			Sealed with faith
Eph 2:1-7	x	x	x		G				Grace now and forever
Eph 2:10		x			G	x	x		gifted for God's glory
Ephesians 2:12-13	x	x			G				Close to God through his blood
Eph 2:18-22		x							in the Spirit access to the Father
Eph 3:11-13		x					x		Access to God through faith
Eph 4:1-6		x		C			x		called to hope and love
Eph 4:17-22	x	x					x		No longer living as before
Eph 4:20-32		x			F		x		Sins of the tongue grieve God
Eph 5:3-11	x	x					x	x	neither mention nor do
Eph 6:8								x	Serving Jesus will be rewarded
Eph 6:10-13							x		Fight the good fight
Phil 1:5-6			x		F		x		Experiencing faithfulness God's faithfulness
Phil 1:19-20			x		F		x		Intercession & Jesus saves
Phil 1:21			x				x		Life = Christ? Death = gain!
Phil 1:28	x	x					x		Those who remain steadfast will be saved
Phil 2:12-13			x		G/F		x		with fear and trembling
Phil 2:14-16			x				x		hold fast to the word of life



Phil 3:2-9	x								False missionaries	
Phil 3:10-15			x	C			x		x	striving toward the goal
Phil 3:17-21	x	x	x					x		Enemies of the Cross of Christ
Phil 4:1-4		x				x	x			Fight well now, save now
Colossians 1:21-23	x	x	x		G	x	x	x		Remain steadfast in the gospel
Col 2 <a href="#">N+E+F</a>	x		x				x	x	x	Keep the prize of victory
Colossians 3:5-8	x						x			God's wrath Sins
Col 3:11-14		x		E	G	x	x			Christ lives in us
Colossians 3:23-25	x		x				x	x	x	Inheritance above? Praise God while you live!
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10	x	x	x	E	G/F	x	x			Fruit confirms election
1 Thessalonians 2:11-13			x	C	B		x			called to heaven
1 Thessalonians 2:15-16	x									who displease God
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20									x	our heavenly crown of glory
1 Thessalonians 3:2-6		x					x	x		Tempted and brought down?
1 Thessalonians 4:3-8			x				x	x		The Lord avenges immorality
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18			x				x			Standing firm in faith saves
1 Thessalonians 5:2-11	x		x	C			x			not destined for wrath
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24			x		F		x			kept blameless
2 Thessalonians 1:3-12	x	x	x		F	x	x			prove worthy of salvation

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17		x	x	E/C	G/F	x	x		chosen to follow the calling
2 Thessalonians 3:3		x			F				God is faithful
2 Thessalonians 3:6; 13-15							x		Church discipline for preservation
1 Tim 1:3-11	x						x		Main goal: love
1 Tim 1:12-16		x	x		G/F	x	x		The patience of Christ saves
1 Tim 1:18-20							x	x	Fight the good fight, keep your conscience clear
1 Tim 2:14-15			x				x		believe+love+remain holy+chaste
1 Tim 4:1-7	x							x	Apostasy through listening to deception
1 Tim 4:8		x	x				x		Life exercises
1 Tim 4:16			x				x		Watch your life and your preaching
1 Tim 5:6								x	pursuing one's own pleasure kills
1 Tim 5:8								x	worse than an unbeliever
1 Tim 5:11-15								x	Preventing laziness
1 Tim 5:24-25	x		x				x	x	Sins or good deeds?
1 Tim 6:3-14			x				x	x	Godliness vs. deadly errors
1 Tim 6:17-21			x				x	x	God instead of money on the straight path
2 Tim 1:1			x	C		x			Salvation is IN Jesus Christ
2 Tim 1:5							x		sincere faith
2 Tim 1:9-14		x	x	C	G/F	x	x		Grace calls, faithfulness preserves
2 Timothy 1:15-18			x		G		x		Finding mercy on the great day
2 Tim 2:10			x	E	G/F		x		help the elect to salvation
2 Tim 2:11-14			x		G/F		x		steadfastly following Jesus+confessing

2 Tim 2:16-21	x	x					x	x	Belonging to Jesus+Avoiding injustice
2 Tim 2:24-26		x					x		Spiritually mature preachers
2 Tim 3:1-8	x								failing the test
2 Tim 3:11-13		x			F		x		Salvation and preservation
2 Tim 3:14-17			x		G/F		x		Role models+Scripture save
2 Tim 4:2-4		x					x		Proclaim with patience
2 Tim 4:6-8			x				x		Fight the good fight, keep the faith
2 Tim 4:9-10								x	Love the world instead of Christ
2 Tim 4:14	x								Evil for evil
Titus 1:1-3			x	E			x		More fear of God, more hope
Titus 1:4		x							Titus, a true believer
Titus 1:5-16 Titus 3:9-11	x	x					x	x	d. Denying one's confession through one's actions + condemning oneself
Titus 2:10-15 + Titus 3:1-15	x	x	x		G/F	x	x	x	Those who truly believe allow themselves to be taught by
Philemon 1:1-25		x					x		Salvation through God+people
Heb 1:3		x	x		G				The exalted sacrificial lamb
Hebrews 1:14			x		F				the faithfulness of God
Hebrews 2:1-3			x				x	x	Take care of your life!
Hebrews 2:10		x	x	C	G/F				Jesus wants to save many eternally
Hebrews 2:14-15		x			G				Jesus disempowers the evil one
Hebrews 2:17-18		x			G/F				Jesus, the high priest, helps
Hebrews 3:1-6			x	C	F		x		hold fast with confidence I

Hebrews 3:7-14		x	x		G/F		x	x		hold fast with confidence II
Hebrews 4:1-11			x				x	x		not lag behind
Hebrews 4:12-13			x		F					The living word of God
Hebrews 4:14-16		x			G/F		x			Grace for timely help
Hebrews 5:7-9			x		G		x			Obedying Jesus for salvation
Hebrews 6:4-12		x	x		G/F		x	x		saving credits+zeal until the end
Hebrews 6:11-14			x				x			patient waiting for fulfillment
Hebrews 6:18-20			x				x			Doing everything possible
Hebrews 7:24		x	x		G/F		x			Jesus can always save everyone
Hebrews 8:10-12		x			G/F					Forgiven + God's law in the heart
Hebrews 9:15			x	C	F					All who are called can live forever
Hebrews 9:27-28		x	x		G/F	x	x			saved+waiting for salvation
Hebrews 10:14-18		x	x		G/F	x				forever accomplished
Hebrews 10:19-22		x			G	x	x			sprinkled with blood for life
Hebrews 10:23-39		x	x		G/F	x	x	x		persistent faith+gain
Hebrews 11:5			x		G	x	x			Persistent faith saves
Hebrews 11:7	x		x				x			Obey + trust
Hebrews 11:13-16			x				x			Trusting God until death

Hebrews 11:24-26			x				x		Looking to the reward
Hebrews 11:27-40			x				x		Trust in God until the end
Hebrews 12:1-3			x				x		Run freely to the end
Hebrews 12:12-14			x				x	x	Run with strength and holiness
Hebrews 12:15-17			x				x	x	Watching out for one another on the way
Hebrews 12:25+28			x				x	x	Be careful not to reject God
Hebrews 13:4			x				x	x	God judges false sex
Hebrews 13:7							x		Emulate other believers
Hebrews 13:9							x		d. Grace + sound teaching strong
Hebrews 13:12-14			x				x		bearing shame with Jesus z. salvation
Hebrews 13:17							x	x	Listen to your spiritual leaders
James 1:1-12			x				x		Be tested as joy
James 1:13-16		x	x					x	Do not be deceived! Temptation→ Desire→ Sin→ Death
James 1:17-18		x	x	E/C	G				a new creation
James 1:21-22		x	x		G/F		x		d. the word+doing it saved
James 2:5			x	E			x		Those who love God will inherit the kingdom
James 2:12-13	x						x	x	merciless / judgment
James 2:14-26	x	x					x	x	Dead faith does not save
James 3:1-2								x	Do not be quick to teach

James 4:1-4	x	x						x		Friend of the world = enemy of God
James 4:5-10	x	x			G	x	x	x		Pride or humility
James 5:1-6	x									Rotten wealth
James 5:7-8			x				x			Be patient
James 5:9									x	Do not grumble against one another
James 5:10-11			x		G/F		x			Look at the steadfast prophets
James 5:12			x				x		x	Do not swear
James 5:19-20		x			G		x	x		Convert the sinner
1 Peter 1:1-5		x	x	E	G	x	x			preserved in hope and faith
1 Peter 1:6-9			x				x			proven faith loves+inherits
1 Peter 1:13			x		G/F		x			consciously hopes for grace
1 Peter 1:14-25	x	x	x		G/F	x	x			d. Faith purified by love
1 Peter 2:1			x				x			Word growth for salvation
1 Peter 2:6-10	x	x		E/C		x				Salvation and Fall at the Cornerstone
1 Peter 2:24-25		x			G	x	x			Died to sin Live for God
1 Peter 3:10-12	x	x					x	x		Only doing what is right saves
1 Peter 3:20-21		x			G/F	x				you. Jesus a good conscience
1 Peter 4:3	x									Not knowing God in deeds
1 Peter 4:12-14							x		x	Rejoicing through fire as reward
1 Peter 4:17-19	x		x		F		x			Not easily saved

1 Peter 5:3-5	x		x				x	x	Do not lord it over others, but be an example
1 Peter 5:8-9		x					x	x	Be alert and resist the devil
1 Peter 5:10			x	C	G/F				The God of all grace is faithful
1 Peter 5:12		x			G	x	x		We stand in true grace
2 Peter 1:1-5		x	x	E/C	G	x	x		Confirming your calling and election
2 Peter 2:1-10	x	x	x		F		x	x	Saved from temptation
2 Peter 2:10-22	x	x						x	leaving the straight path
2 Peter 3:7-14	x		x		G/F	x	x	x	the patience of the Lord
2 Peter 3:17-18							x	x	Do not lose your firm footing
1 John 1:1-10 1 John 2:1-2	x	x			G/F	x	x		God is light
1 John 2:3-11	x	x					x		Knowing God = living like Christ
1 John 2:12-14		x				x	x		Levels of faith + experience
1 John 2:15-17		x					x	x	Whoever does what God wants remains and lives forever.
1 John 2:18-23	x	x					x		Confessing the Son is salvation
1 John 2:24-28		x				x	x	x	Living in lasting union with Christ
1 John 3:1-10	x	x					x		From God or from the devil
1 John 3:13-18	x	x				x	x	x	lasting love saves
1 John 3:19-20		x			G/F				God's grace and faithfulness

1 John 3:24-28		x					x		Obeying God's commandments = Life
1 John 4:1-6	x	x			G/F	x	x		No confession of Jesus, no salvation
1 John 4:7-8	x	x					x		He who is born of God loves
1 John 4:13	x				G/F				Spirit or not Spirit
1 John 4:15		x					x		lasting confession
1 John 4:16-17			x				x		Love gives confidence
1 John 4:20-21_1 John 5:1-5	x	x			G		x		through faith and new birth to love and obedience
1 John 5:10-13	x	x			G/F	x	x		Whoever has Jesus has life
1 John 5:16-18		x					x	x	Sin kills
1 John 5:18-20	x	x			G	x	x		Do not sin without hesitation
2 John 1:1-6		x	x	E			x	x	Truth+Love+God's Commandments
2 John 1:7-11	x		x				x	x	Watch out for the reward of not losing salvation
3 John 1:9-12	x	x					x		Our actions show who we are
Jude 1:1-2		x	x	C	G/F				as beloved and preserved
Jude 1:3-4	x	x	x				x	x	Jesus, you deny your life
Jude 1:5-6		x	x		G			x	First saved, then destroyed
Jude 1:17-19	x								passionate people without spirit
Jude 1:20-21		x	x		G/F	x	x		remains and builds and trusts
Jude 1:22-23	x	x	x				x	x	Doubt, Flames + Mercy
Jude 1:24		x	x		G/F		x		God can get us through
Rev. 1:4-6		x			G/F				Purified and beloved



Rev. 1:9		x					x			Patiently suffering kings
Rev. 1:17-20	x	x	x							Jesus has the keys
Rev. 2:1-7		x	x				x	x		Away with the lampstand!
Rev. 2:8-11			x				x			Faithful unto death and life
Rev. 2:12-17			x				x	x		Do not tolerate false teachers!
Rev. 2:18-29			x				x	x		Repent and hold fast
Rev. 3:1-6		x	x				x	x		Do not let the thief in
Rev. 3:7-13		x	x		G/F		x	x		Hold on to what we have
Rev. 3:14-22		x	x		G/F		x	x		Jesus spits out the luke-warm
Rev. 4:8-10		x	x		G					redeemed for our God
Rev. 6:9-11			x		G		x			Through death to life
Rev 7:3		x			F		x			God's protected servants
Rev. 7:9-17			x		G/F		x			Grace, tribulation, and faithfulness
Rev. 11:17-18	x		x		G		x		x	corrupted or rewarded
Rev. 12:10-12			x		G/F		x			two cornerstones of salvation
Rev. 12:17		x					x			Keeping the commandments + confession
Rev. 13:8-10		x	x	E			x			chosen faithfulness
Rev. 14:1-5			x		G/F		x			redeemed followers everywhere
Rev. 14:9-13	x		x				x	x		d. United with the Lord until death
Rev. 15:2-4			x				x			the conquerors of the beast
Rev. 17:5-6			x		G		x			sanctified blood witnesses
Rev. 17:8		x		E						Consequences of the Book of Life
Rev. 18:4-5		x	x				x	x		Leave the city, my people!

Rev. 19:4-5		x	x		G		x		The redeemed serve God
Rev. 19:6-9			x		G/F		x		righteous deeds of the saints
Rev. 20:4-6			x				x	x	The martyrs reign
Rev. 20:11-15			x	E			x	x	the book of life
Rev. 21:1-8	x		x		G		x	x	Overcome or die eternally
Rev 21:27			x	E			x		(Un)pure and (not) liars
Rev. 22:3-5			x						Life in eternity
Rev. 22:6		x	x				x		Those who do God's word are blessed
Rev. 22:10-14	x		x		G		x	x	evil dirty o. righteous holy
Rev. 22:18-21	x		x		G		x	x	Do not change God's Word

## 2.1 Focus of the New Testament books and interpretation of the passages relating to salvation

These subchapters show how the books of the New Testament answer the question of whether a Christian can lose his salvation. The Gospels emphasize discipleship and obedience, the Epistles emphasize faith and works, the Acts of the Apostles emphasizes the importance of the community of faith, and Revelation calls for vigilance and overcoming. Despite different emphases, the central message remains the same: love for Jesus and His Word—visible in faithful belief in Him—is the key to eternal life.

### 2.1.1 *Matthew*

Matthew is the book of obedience to God.

Only those who change their lives and begin to obey God because of the revealed love of Jesus on the cross and through the reception of forgiveness of sins can now be saved.

In the course of turning to God, you must detach yourself from your sins and purify yourself for salvation. When and after you turn to Jesus, you

must separate yourself from every recognized sin as quickly and thoroughly as possible and purify yourself from it as if it were a diseased limb that is poisoning your blood and will kill you if not amputated. And only those who remain with Jesus now and forever in a life of obedience and vigilance, who love Him so much and serve God, bearing fruit without being led astray and remaining vigilant until the end, will be saved eternally.

### 2.1.2 *Mark*

Anyone who recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, repents of their old life and turns to God, believes in the good news of Jesus his Savior, and follows Jesus can be saved. But this repentance and following Jesus cost one's (own) life. Only those who value Jesus above all else, who listen to and respect God's Word, do it, and bear fruit will ultimately be saved eternally. This includes consistently cutting sin out of one's life, not becoming a stumbling block to those who are despised, forgiving others, and following Jesus vigilantly, faithfully, and without being led astray until the end. Those who faithfully serve their brothers and sisters in faith and willingly suffer for Jesus will receive their reward in heaven. Every one of God's chosen ones can rely on God's faithfulness, who wants to and will bring them to heaven.

### 2.1.3 *Luke*

According to Luke, there are two cornerstones for entering the eternal kingdom of God:

1. Repentance to God in order to obtain forgiveness for my sins on this earth through Jesus, and subsequently
2. listening to Jesus and confessing him in words and deeds without being led astray, listening to Jesus in everything he says as a good and wise king and Lord, loving Jesus more than anything else and loving my neighbor as myself, until we stand before him one day.

Those who esteem themselves higher than God and others, who renounce God with words and/or deeds and do not change their attitude and repent in time in this life, will be lost and/or lose their salvation. In God's eyes, they are dead and lost.

### 2.1.4 *John*

Those who, through the grace of God, recognize Jesus as the Son of God and believe in Jesus have eternal life NOW. They follow Jesus obediently as chosen sheep, do His will, bear fruit, and remain in Him. Jesus preserves them, intercedes for them with the Father, and prepares them through His words for the times when, without His word, they would stumble over Jesus and fall away from Him. Those who only appear to follow Jesus or who stumble and leave Jesus in the course of their discipleship do not (any longer) have the word and love of God in them. But Jesus brings his chosen sheep to eternal salvation, and no one can snatch them out of his hand or the Father's hand. The true disciples of Jesus are recognized by their love for one another, by their abiding in Jesus, and by their doing his will.

### 2.1.5 *Acts*

Jesus is the Messiah. This realization is crucial for the salvation of the Jews and for every human being. Anyone who hears credible testimony about the gospel and Jesus as the Messiah and does not accept it but rejects it, especially as a devout believer in God, will be judged by God. Those who have only seemingly converted or who sin intentionally, even as followers of Jesus, do not know if and how much time of grace they still have to repent for eternal salvation. Preaching salvation from works, twisting the truth of God, wanting to do business with the Word of God, sexual immorality, abandoning faith, and a dissolute lifestyle instead of abstinence kill preachers and listeners. Good news of God's grace and love that does not first instill fear of God in sinners because of their eternal responsibility in the future judgment is not the gospel and, worse, is a false gospel.

Repenting of one's old sinful life, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thus receiving forgiveness of sins, receiving the Holy Spirit as a sign and pledge of our salvation, and then listening to Christ the Lord and His Word continuously—this is how one is saved here and now and immediately. Yes, faith in the gospel saves, good works do not. But those who are saved by grace do good works and thus preserve themselves in salvation. Receiving grace from God and remaining faithful to the Lord Jesus with all your heart are the way to salvation. Those who are saved permanently lead a life that proves their changed attitude and repentance toward God. Disciples of Jesus remain steadfast in their faith even in times of trouble. Preparation for difficult times, encouragement, sound teaching, vigilance, admonition, and cultural consideration keep us and others in God's salvation.

### 2.1.6 *Romans*

Since the Fall of Adam, all people are alienated from the life of God and sinful by their natural state. They are lost and live under the wrath of God. The gospel of Jesus Christ calls people to obedience of faith to-

ward God . Obedience and faith are inseparable. Faith makes us obedient, and obedience comes through faith. God's power in the gospel saves everyone who believes:

*If you call on the name of Jesus and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Whoever believes will be saved: God grants him and her his righteousness through faith. Whoever believes will be saved: Jesus Christ was given up for our transgressions and raised for our acquittal. In the Gospel, we recognize God as our loving Father and Jesus Christ as our merciful Lord. We are declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, our atoning sacrifice, and not through our own works (of the law). This makes pride in our own achievements impossible.

Those who are IN Christ and connected to him have come from sin and death to life. A truly converted person has received the Spirit of God and allows himself to be guided by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God in us is the guarantee of eternal life. Our final salvation is a gift of grace and like a check that is tied to the condition of following the path of righteousness as God's slave until eternity in order to be redeemed.

Fruit for God is the mark of those who are truly saved, whose lives God has placed on a new foundation through Jesus Christ. Those who love God and their neighbor fulfill what God wants and remain in God's salvation, as do all those who do not allow themselves to be led astray from the true gospel or follow the desires of their old nature. The knowledge of God's election protects us from pride in our own wisdom. Election is manifested in remaining faithful to God, even when everyone around us falls away from God.

### 2.1.7 1 Corinthians

The word of the cross can save every person:

Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead (for our justification ). Through faith in this good news, our sins are forgiven in the course of our conversion. We must hold fast to this gospel, which saves

us now and forever, throughout our lives if we want to enter into eternity.

Those who convert become a temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them from then on. (Only) through the Holy Spirit can we call Jesus Lord, recognize God and God's gifts, and live according to God's will. Those who have God's Spirit, love and follow Jesus, and do not live in (deadly) sin can now be certain of their salvation. And when we sin: timely and prompt correction to turn away from our sin and/or from acting against our own conscience keeps us in God's grace, whether through our own insight, correction by fellow believers, or through church discipline.

Mortal sins that lead to the loss of salvation if unrepentant are: sexual immorality, extramarital sex, adultery, practicing homosexuality, idol worship, and greed. Mortal sinners are also thieves, robbers, slanderers, drunkards, blasphemers, those who take advantage of their brothers and sisters, and the like. They too will not see heaven. Allowing oneself to be ruled by the desire for evil, challenging God, and murmuring are also mortal sins if unrepentant. No one is safe from such temptations and sins on their own. Salvation comes only from humbly looking up to God, who does not tempt us beyond our strength and who can help us resist temptation or get back up after a fall.

God's forgiveness and the necessary divine consequences of sin in a local church are two different things. God loves his church and disciplines the church as a whole so that we are not condemned together with the world. But God pronounces eternal woe on those who do not faithfully carry out their God-given ministry—they will not see heaven, nor will those who do not love the Lord. The salvation of other people depends on our credible life and speech as followers of Christ. Our own reward in heaven depends on what we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ in our lives in this life. In his faithfulness, God will give us steadfastness to the end, so that we may stand blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may have this certainty.

### 2.1.8 2 Corinthians

Our eternal salvation depends on our continued simple devotion and relationship of faith to Christ: we must believe in the right Christ, the right gospel, and receive the right Holy Spirit and remain in Him if we want to be saved eternally.

Not having received God's grace in vain means living NOW and today in accordance with the answered prayer and grace received, to the glory of God, and not giving offense to others in any way, so that they too may believe in Christ. This also includes steadfastness in times of need and persecution.

The Lord is so to be feared that the salvation of others and our own faithful following of Christ become our most ardent desire as those who are saved ourselves.

Our proven faith has a positive impact on others and their relationship with God.

The more we learn to love and give to Christ here, the greater our reward and happiness in heaven will be. Our longing for heaven, to be with the Lord and see him one day, makes it an honor for us now to please him with our lives.

False apostles with a false (prosperity) gospel, disguised as angels of light, are dangerous and deadly to our spiritual and eternal life.

We must guard against strife and jealousy, anger and quarrels, slander and malicious gossip, arrogance and great disorder in the church, as well as impurity, fornication, and a dissolute lifestyle ( ). The fall of a church or a disciple of Jesus into all kinds of such sins is not necessarily immediately threatening to salvation – but continued sinning in these areas without repentance is. Timely repentance spares one from severe (God-ordained) church discipline measures.

However, whether someone truly has the right faith in Jesus Christ and whether Jesus truly dwells in a person is revealed in their proven faith.



### *2.1.9 Galatians*

Seeking God's approval through one's own works and one's own strength has nothing to do with salvation through the gospel of Christ's grace. Anyone who truly calls Christ their Lord through faith, anyone who has truly entered into the grace of salvation from their sins through the gospel of Christ, is a new creation and is saved. Temptations, doubts, and falling into individual sins do not change this. As long as the follower of Christ is willing to repent and remains steadfast in the grace of Christ and thus in the true gospel, and follows the Spirit of God for the good of others and for his own self-denial, he will also be saved eternally, as we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians.

Those who were originally converted but later reject the grace of God in the gospel by trying to stand before God on their own strength and obey God's law, for them Christ died in vain and they are lost. Living saved for and through Christ is only possible by grace, only through the true gospel, and only through Christ and His Spirit. Our faith is always a state of being and a way of life.

True faith loves and is active through love. True faith waits for God's final salvation. Even a follower of Jesus can still go two ways, and the Galatians should not be deceived about this. Following one's own life and desires leads to destruction. Those who follow the Spirit as a continuous way of life and do good to other people and their brothers and sisters in faith will enter into eternal life. And their reward there will correspond to their life here.

### *2.1.10 Ephesians*

All natural people in the world follow their own fallen nature, are disobedient to God, and are lost under the wrath of God.

Followers of Christ are chosen and redeemed out of God's love and grace to be His children through the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. As heirs and as God's new creation, they are destined to praise God's glory. All this happens through hearing the gospel and believing in its message of salvation, a gift from God's grace. As

a direct result, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment on our inheritance and as a guarantee of our complete redemption, that we now belong to Him.

Where grace and faith meet, there is salvation. And even saving faith is a gift from God. And that has one goal: to do good works through which God's name is honored.

Our calling as followers of Christ is to live humbly and in love as part of the one body of Jesus and temple of God, and to preserve the God-given unity of the body. Sins of the tongue grieve the Holy Spirit. The best antidotes are to put off the old man with his behavior, be renewed in your mind, and put on the new man. For followers of Christ, it is important to become strong by putting on the spiritual armor of the Lord in order to be able to resist the attacks of the evil one. As redeemed people, we must not participate in things that provoke the wrath of God, even in our thoughts and words. Participation in these things is not harmless; it is a matter of life and death. But those who live for Christ on earth will be rewarded by the Lord in eternity.

#### *2.1.11 Philippians*

People without Christ in this world are "twisted and corrupt." False missionaries, and thus lost themselves, are those who proclaim salvation through outward appearances and works of their own effort. Those who are earthly-minded will end up in destruction. Eternal life is the prize for a faithful life of following Christ with all one's strength.

What encourages and strengthens us to "hold fast to the word of life" until the end? God's faithfulness and help, our unity as believers, our prayer and intercession for one another, Scripture, our fear of God, strongly inspiring positive examples of healthy discipleship, guarding against earthly and therefore God-hostile people, no matter how pious their disguise, and the certainty that all who are fighting NOW for the spread of the good news and living NOW according to the good news are NOW written in the book of life.

Those who do not "hold fast to the word of life" that they once truly accepted will be lost. For them, those who brought them the gospel will have worked in vain and literally "labored in vain."

### *2.1.12 Colossians*

The natural man is dead in his transgressions and in his uncircumcised sinful nature.

When we turn to God in faith, we put aside the things that do not please God, such as sexual immorality, shamelessness, passion, evil desires and greed, and idolatry. We become redeemed followers of Jesus, chosen ones, saints and beloved of God. That is our status as saved people NOW with God.

On our journey, we still struggle with our old nature; we are not yet perfect. In order to stand before Jesus in heaven one day and receive from him the prize of eternal life, three things are necessary: to remain firmly grounded in faith now, to serve the Lord Christ wholeheartedly, and not to be led astray from the true gospel and the hope of the gospel—to live eternally with Jesus.

### *2.1.13 1 Thessalonians*

Those who serve idols, persecute God's messengers, and hinder the spread of the good news displease God and are subject to His wrath. Those who respond to God's call in the Gospel are chosen, whether it be to respond to the call to repentance and faith for salvation here and now, or to respond to God's call to eternal glory through obedience to the Gospel, bearing fruit in faith—even through adversity and suffering—and through vigilance in faith until the end. Vigilant are those who do not sleep, who are sober, who clothe themselves with the breastplate of faith and love, and who wear the helmet of the hope of salvation.

The foreknowledge of necessary persecution and tribulation is important for believers to remain steadfast in their faith and is also a

source of comfort and encouragement for their preservation. God has only the best in mind for us in everything. He and our faithful life with and adherence to Jesus until eternity will save us. A holy life preserved by God is the key to heaven and to standing blameless before Jesus one day. We can pray for this for ourselves and others.

Our crown of glory when our Lord Jesus returns will be those who came to God through us.

External circumstances can cause followers of Christ to fall away from the faith to such an extent that they are lost. On our way to heaven, God's call to our sanctification is crucial for our salvation: sexual purity, victory over natural desires, and protection from deception by fellow believers are necessary for us to meet our Lord not as avenger, but as savior. And yet it is also true that not everything that is or could be reprehensible about us when we stand before Jesus robs us of our eternal salvation.

#### *2.1.14 2 Thessalonians*

Whoever believes in the truth of love for his salvation through the grace of Christ in the Gospel is chosen by the grace of God in this life. And he is called by God to eternal life. Whoever faithfully follows his calling to eternal life until the end will be honored as one chosen to spend eternity with his Lord. He and she are already known to God beforehand.

The intercession and encouragement of our brothers and sisters and our spiritual growth help us to walk this path, and especially God's faithfulness and protection from evil. However, if we fall and remain in sin, church discipline is God's help to bring us back onto the straight path to heaven. But not every bad attitude results in the loss of salvation.

### *2.1.15 1 Timothy*

No one can come into a saving relationship with Jesus on earth through their good deeds. Before the beginning of the Christian life there is repentance, conversion, forgiveness of sins, and Jesus Christ becoming the Lord of your life.

The main goal of all subsequent Christian teaching is love:

love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.

Any teaching, and any teacher, that does not have this as its main goal is spreading a deadly false doctrine and, at best, useless teachings that dangerously distract from what is essential.

Only those who fight the good fight of faith and do good works of faith will ultimately attain eternal life.

The patience of Christ and the comfort and exhortation of Scripture and our brothers and sisters in faith on this path are our best source of strength and confidence.

We fight the good fight when

- we keep faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the number one priority in our lives and maintain a good conscience
- we remain in faith and love and lead a holy life with diligence for God, self-control, and contentment
- we are vigilant and always take good care of ourselves and what we teach

On the other hand, the destroyers of salvation are

- when we continually sin against our conscience
- False teachings in pious guise, such as purely human commandments and formal requirements as prerequisites for salvation
- When we deny our faith through evil deeds that speak louder than our words.

- Love of money, laziness, greed, self-centeredness, irresponsibility, and unmercifulness

### *2.1.16 2 Timothy*

Those who disobey God and are false followers of Christ will be lost forever.

The promised (eternal) life is (only) IN Jesus Christ. Sincere faith in Jesus saves NOW and here and is commissioned for a life of following Christ.

(Only) those who fight the good fight according to God's rules until the end will receive the crown of eternal life from the Lord. This includes steadfast faithfulness to Christ, even in suffering; our confession of Christ in words and deeds; our adherence to the true gospel; and ongoing purification from unrighteousness in our lives.

The best tools on our journey are remaining in the teaching of Scripture, following good examples, and staying away from hypocritical people. In any case, those who rejoice in the visible return of Jesus, that is, who love Jesus more than anything else in the world, will be saved.

Preservation by our faithful God and through the assistance of His Spirit is promised to us on our journey, which will bring us to our destination, even if we are unfaithful in some things along the way and may fall again and again.

The eternal salvation of their listeners and the church depends on true preachers of the gospel who preach the true gospel according to Scripture. A follower of Christ is [unfortunately] free to leave the following of Christ for eternal life.

### *2.1.17 Titus*

The lost are trapped in evil thoughts and deeds and do not live as God wants them to. Through the gospel of God's grace, people are saved. As a result, they begin to live in reverence for God according to their knowledge of Him and have hope for eternal life on their path of faith and reverence.

Every follower of Christ must give up many bad habits along the way and practice new good habits. God gives us believers time, His Word,

and preachers for this purpose. According to His will, they should not cause offense either within the church or outside it with their own lives and those of their families. They must be spiritually mature and blameless. (Only) healthy teachers and teaching, and where necessary sharp admonition, keep us and all God's children worldwide on the path to heaven.

There are false believers in the church of Jesus Christ. And there are false teachers who pay too much attention to secondary issues of faith, thereby distracting believers from what is truly essential for their eternal salvation. They are only out for personal gain, do not submit to authority, and must be sharply rebuked once or twice. If they do not listen, they condemn themselves and must be excluded from the church for the protection of the church.

#### *2.1.18 Philemon*

Our practical lives prove the authenticity of our faith in Jesus Christ. Let us honor our human saviors who brought us the gospel.

#### *2.1.19 Hebrews*

Our salvation is conditional: we must pay close attention to what we have heard (in order to do it) in order to be saved eternally. If we trust, follow, and obey Jesus Christ, if we continually sanctify ourselves, if we hold fast to the hope of eternal life with all the determination we had at the beginning until we reach our goal, we will also be saved eternally. If, on the other hand, we disregard our present salvation, abandon our fear of God, and no longer do God's will with all determination, we will drift past our goal—eternal life—like a ship in distress passing by the saving island.

#### *2.1.20 James*

Dead and lost is he whose (apparent) faith does nothing for God and his neighbor.



Patience in working for and waiting on the Lord and steadfastness in suffering save eternally. The merciful will stand in God's judgment. The crown of honor and thus eternal life will be won by those believers who endure the trials that God allows in their lives. For they love God. And in the end, it is those who love God by doing His will who will be saved eternally.

Those who, as followers of Jesus, do NOT overcome their temptations, but allow themselves to be carried away and taken over by them in their great life line, will ultimately reap death, not eternal life. The brothers and sisters in faith should not be deceived about this.

But the good news is that anyone can be moved to repent from their life far from God at any time and be saved from their sins and death.

#### *2.1.21 1 Peter*

No one is saved by formalities. Only those who follow God's gracious call to repentance in the gospel will be saved. Disobedience, unbelief, and lostness are one and the same. God's Spirit and the blood of Christ give His chosen ones—those who believe in Him and follow Him—mutual love and enable them to love and follow Jesus.

And so the path to the final fulfillment of the eternal and indestructible hope of the chosen ones in eternity proceeds as follows: We love and trust God, and because of our trust, God preserves, strengthens, and empowers us on the way. If we as believers do what is right, guard our tongues, turn away from evil, do good, and strive for peace, we will attain eternal life and see good days.

Our faith in and love for Jesus must be strengthened and proven in trials, suffering, and persecution. Faith that survives such challenges is true faith that will experience eternity. But whoever does evil, whoever he may be, has God against him and will feel His wrath.

### *2.1.22 2 Peter*

Those who follow false prophets and teachers with destructive heresies and deny with their lives the Lord who redeemed them will be lost.

We will only be saved eternally on the condition that we take advantage of our opportunities for repentance and conversion to God through the grace of Jesus Christ and allow ourselves to be brought back again and again into the path of a holy life of reverence for God—trusting completely in the grace and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A key characteristic of true believers is that they fight against the lusts that contend in the world and within themselves, and that they do not lead unrestrained lives, but are abstinent in their conduct.

According to Peter, how responsibly we use our opportunities in faith today determines whether our faith will be sufficient tomorrow to persevere until heaven and to stand before Christ one day—as those called and chosen by God here on earth. And this happens above all through our (re)thinking of the earlier cleansing of our sins and our diligent, self-controlled, and exemplary commitment of our whole being to God's cause.

### *2.1.23 1 John*

Those who have clearly recognized the truth of Jesus and love and follow him can be described as chosen by God. And for them, the truth remains in them and will be with them forever.

- Living in the truth
- loving one another as brothers and sisters in faith
- Living according to God's commandments

These are the initial commandments and lasting commandments and signs of authenticity for true followers of Christ who will inherit eternal life. The Holy Spirit within us helps us to do this.

Faith in Christ is a path. It is important to stay on this path NOW. But even if we sin along the way and our conscience accuses us, God is greater than our conscience. If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Those who purify themselves in this way again and again and who live NOW as God wants and loves can be confident NOW. They can look forward to the Day of Judgment with confidence, because their basic orientation is to live like Jesus in this world.

Those who adhere to false teachings about the person of Jesus and thus also about the work of Christ, those who love the world, and those who otherwise do evil will be lost without repentance.

#### *2.1.24 2 John*

Those who believe in the incarnation of Christ, love their brothers and sisters in faith, and live according to God's commandments will be saved and remain saved. Those who do not remain with Christ and in this life will lose their reward in heaven or even their salvation.

#### *2.1.25 3 John*

True Christians can be recognized by the fruits of their lives: whoever does good is a child of God. Whoever does evil has never known God.

#### *2:1:26 Judas*

Those who accept

- accepts the good news of God's love and Christ's mercy and holds fast to it until the end
- has reverence for God and cultivates a lifestyle marked by keeping God's commandments

- is preserved by God in his love and faithfulness and preserves themselves by remaining, praying, and eagerly awaiting Christ
- protect themselves from false teachers and from following their own desires
- protect themselves from doubting or defiling paths that lead to eternal fire, or allow themselves to be brought back from there in time.

People who lack reverence for God, who abuse God's grace in order to lead a dissolute life, and who deny Jesus Christ through such a life will be lost.

### *2.1.27 Revelation*

Our eternal salvation under God's rule has three cornerstones: The shed blood of the Lamb first makes us fit for heaven and members of God's family. Second, God preserves those who faithfully follow him in his faithfulness and grace. And third, those who remain faithful to Jesus until death because they hold fast to God's word without compromise or addition and keep his commandments and remain faithful to Jesus as witnesses will be saved eternally.

The third is not possible without the first two, and without the third, the first two are useless. God's grace, faithfulness, and preservation, and the perceived responsibility of Christ's followers on earth merge in wonderful harmony and lead to the reign and praise of God in eternity, into which Christ, who loves us, has gone before us as the author and finisher of our faith.

### *2.1.31 Conclusions*

#### **Salvation by Grace**

Salvation is possible only through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of mankind and purchased God's grace through his blood. Without their own works, people are accepted by

God, but only through works of faith and faithfulness to the end will they enter heaven. Faith without works is dead, and a life of sin, self-centeredness, or a false gospel leads to eternal separation from God.

### **Love for God and obedience**

Not all whom God loves will be saved, but only those who love God and serve Him. God's chosen ones show their salvation through the fruits of their lives. What is decisive is not comparison with others, but a personal, sincere faith that is expressed in obedience and good works.

### **Conditions of salvation**

Jesus only accepts sinners if they leave their old life of sin behind and follow him. Salvation begins with repentance, but requires a life of faithfulness. Those who turn away from grace or consciously persist in sin risk their salvation. The path to salvation requires self-denial, carrying one's own cross, and surrendering to God's will.

### **The balance of grace and responsibility**

Salvation is a gift of grace, but Jesus' followers are called to remain faithful, do good works, and remove sin from their lives. Jesus is not only Savior, but also King, whom believers must obey. Those who do not follow him in love and obedience will lose their salvation.

### **The way to the kingdom of heaven**

One enters the kingdom of heaven through repentance and grace. Once saved, one must remain a follower of Jesus and make him the greatest treasure of one's life. God preserves his chosen ones, but only if they remain faithful, keep the law of love, and stay away from (serious) sin.

### **The essence of true faith**

True faith is manifested in a life that loves God and neighbor. Even fallen followers can (always) return to God's grace through repentance and penance. A living faith leads to a life that bears fruit and fulfills God's will.

### **Conclusion**

Salvation is a work of God's grace that is accepted through faith. But only those who remain faithful to Jesus, love him, and follow his will will ultimately enter into eternal life. Those who begin in grace but end in sin or unfaithfulness will not spend eternity with God.

## **2.2 Salvation in numbers: Evaluation of ALL 545 New Testament passages related to salvation**

In the New Testament, all 545 Bible passages, or about 35% of the entire text, that relate to our temporal and eternal salvation, including reward in heaven and lostness and damnation, were searched for and examined.

And they were related to the most important reasons and causes for this:

election and calling, God's grace and faithfulness, initial/first faith and continued faith expressed in works of faith.

The results are summarized below.

Despite a very high degree of clarity in the vast majority of Bible passages, it is clear that some assignments to individual topics may be subjectively variable.

It is important to note that these are not scientific mathematical correlations. However, through the accumulation and compilation of the individual themes, God himself makes it clear what is important to him. And this becomes clear to a certain extent through these investigations. However, a frequency-based investigation of salvation themes can only make supporting statements. Ultimately, the direct statements of the individual biblical texts have normative power.

The first and most important table showing the distribution of all salvation-related Bible passages in the New Testament simply shows the distribution and accumulation of the topics sought in the New Testament with their underlying causes. This makes it clear how much and what God has to say on each topic. This table is the most meaningful of all in terms of where God places particular emphasis in His Word.

**Distribution of Salvation Topics in the New Testament  
with their underlying causes  
across ALL 545 salvation-relevant Bible passages**

		approx.	exact	Number
Theme Causes	Lost / condemned	33 %	34 %	186
	Present salvation	50 %	53 %	291
	Eternal salvation	50 %	48 %	259
	By election (E) / calling (C)	10 %	11 %	60
	By God's grace (G) / faithfulness (F)	40 %	41 %	221
	By initial faith	33 %	35 %	189
	Through persevering faith expressed in works	67 %	68 %	369
	Loss of salvation	25 %	23 %	128
	Reward / Rank in heaven	10 %	9 %	48

In a single Bible passage, several topics and causes can appear  
at the same time. Therefore, the totals add up to more than  
100% across a total of 545 Bible passages.

### States of salvation

About **one-third** of all Bible passages in the New Testament that deal with eternity and salvation address the **fundamental lostness and eternal damnation of people** through God's judgment.

Almost exactly **half of all passages deal with our possible salvation NOW** as fallen human beings from our natural enmity against God, our distance from God, and our sins to a restored relationship with God through repentance and rebirth.

About the other **half of the Bible passages deal with the eternal salvation promised** by God to the followers of Jesus when believers move from faith to sight and enter into eternal glory.

About a **quarter of all Bible passages** deal with the **possible loss of relationship with God and salvation on the path of true believers to heaven**, where they will not arrive after the revelation of their lives in God's final judgment.



About **10%** of all Bible passages deal with **the reward of believers** in heaven **or with the rank** they will have in heaven.

### **Reasons for states of salvation**

The distribution of the causes for acceptance or non-acceptance by God in eternity—without assignment to a specific topic—is as follows:

About **10%** of the passages in the New Testament that deal with eternity and our present or eternal salvation refer to **God's election** (57%) **and calling** (43%).

Around **40%** of the Bible passages cite **God's grace** (2/3) and **faithfulness** (1/3) as the cause for the respective event.

About **one-third** of all Bible passages deal with **saving initial faith** in order to enter into a healthy relationship with God.

About **two-thirds** of all Bible passages deal with **continued faith** after initial faith, **which is expressed in works of faith** on the path to eternity.

### **It becomes clear that**

**Lostness and damnation** are **major themes** in the New Testament (33%), but **even more so is the salvation that God wants to give to a lost world in this life** (53%). However, **God devotes almost as much attention** (47%) **to the attainment of eternal salvation by those who are now saved.**

Yes, how we as humans can enter into a healthy relationship with God is just as important to God, in terms of frequency of mention, as the important area of salvation, how we as those who are now saved can ultimately arrive in heaven.

**God is the agent** in every kind of salvation—this is **clear in half of all Bible passages** (40% God's grace and faithfulness +10% God's election and calling).

However, God's saving action toward us humans includes **faith** as such **an essential element** (33% initial faith +67% continued faith expressed in works) that **salvation of any kind is inseparably linked to faith on our**

**part.** It remains to be seen whether this faith alone is God-given, God-wrought, or also something that God demands of us as our own prerequisite for salvation.

An alarming number of Bible passages (about **25%**) deal with the **possible loss of salvation by those who have entered into a right relationship with God through initial faith**. These passages are explicitly not about those who are not truly converted but consider themselves converted, but rather about those who once made a good start with Jesus. The others, who in reality never entered into a healthy relationship with God, are found in the Bible passages on "lost and damned."

It is noteworthy that **God pays about twice as much attention to our continued faith after our conversion as to our initial faith, which has now led to our conversion and salvation**. God cares deeply about our continuing faith in him!

Jesus repeatedly emphasized that we should not be so concerned with our rank in heaven, but rather serve ourselves and others here on earth. Therefore, from God's own perspective, the **Bible passages about our future reward and rank in heaven** are limited to **about 10%**, which is important but modest.

## **2.3 Loved and saved NOW – preserved FOREVER: The love and fear of God in all the books of the New Testament**

The New Testament is a collection of 27 books that offer different perspectives on God's work through Jesus Christ and his relationship with humanity. Each of these books unfolds in its own way central themes of the Christian faith, such as the love of God, salvation, and the importance of a healthy fear of God. The present study addresses the question of what the individual books of the New Testament say about three central themes:

1. **The love of God and salvation in the here and now:** What role does the experience of God's love and forgiveness play in the current state of a believer?
2. **The fear of God:** How is reverence and fear of God described, and what significance is attributed to it in relation to the life of faith and salvation?
3. **Eternal salvation:** What prerequisites and conditions are mentioned in the biblical books for final salvation?

The aim of this study is to find out whether the experience of God's love and salvation in the present is sufficient to spend eternity in heaven, or whether the fear of God plays a complementary or even indispensable role. At the same time, it will examine the requirements of the various books of the New Testament for salvation in the present and for eternal salvation.

An essential aspect of the study is the book-by-book approach, which allows us to identify possible differences or similarities in the perspectives of the biblical authors. This offers the opportunity to discover either a diversity of insights or a remarkable unity in the presentation of God's truth. A consistent message from all authors would particularly emphasize the central message of Scripture and present God's truth more clearly and forcefully through a multitude of witnesses.

This study aims not only to provide a systematic examination of the topics mentioned, but also to deepen our understanding of the way to God

and the conditions for eternal life in heaven, as testified to in the New Testament.

### *2.3.1 Matthew*

Jesus came for sinners and forgives sins, no matter how great the guilt (Matthew 18:20-34). He shows that he calls not the righteous but sinners to repentance, and places mercy above legal sacrifices (Matthew 9:11-13).

Jesus emphasizes that not only deeds, but even thoughts and words can lead to damnation if they are motivated by hatred or lust (Mt 5:21-26; Mt 5:27-30). He calls for reverence for God, who also decides the eternal fate of his disciples, and teaches that true discipleship means putting everything else aside (Mt 10:28-39) and forgiving others in order to remain in God's forgiveness (Mt 18:20-34).

Jesus confirms John the Baptist as the messenger of salvation and points to the power of the Gospel to save (Matthew 11:3-6). In the parable of the sower, he shows that only deeply rooted and fruitful faith endures (Matthew 13:18-23). The parable of the weeds illustrates the final judgment, in which the righteous who have borne fruit will shine in God's kingdom, while the unrighteous, whose lives were like weeds, will experience his judgment (Mt 13:36-43).

### *2.3.2 Mark*

John the Baptist called people to repentance and baptism in order to receive forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). Jesus made it clear that the kingdom of God belongs to those who accept it humbly like a child (Mark 10:13-16). At the Last Supper, he revealed that his shed blood is the new covenant through which many will be redeemed (Mark 14:22-24).

Jesus warned that wealth can be a major obstacle to entering the kingdom of God because it is often difficult to rely completely on him (Mark 10:17-27). True fellowship with Christ is not based on human conditions, but on doing the will of God (Mark 3:33-35). Likewise, it is crucial

to forgive others in order to receive God's forgiveness oneself (Mark 11:24-25).

Jesus warned against hypocrisy and exploiting others under the guise of religion, which will result in severe judgment (Mark 9:38-40). Those who lead others away from the faith bear a great responsibility and will be severely punished. It is better to avoid everything that leads to sin than to lose eternal life as a result (Mark 9:42-50). Ultimately, only those who remain steadfast in their confession of Jesus and in the purity of their conduct until the end will be saved (Mark 13:13).

### 2.3.3 *Luke*

Jesus brings salvation and fulfills God's promise to Israel (Luke 1:68-79). He reveals that true joy does not lie in power over spirits, but in being recorded in heaven (Luke 10:17-20). Jesus prays for his own, that their faith may not fail, and urges them to strengthen others in their faith (Luke 22:31-34).

John the Baptist warns that true repentance must bear fruit, otherwise God's judgment will come (Luke 3:7-14). Jesus makes it clear that only those who build their lives on the foundation of his word will remain steadfast (Luke 6:20-49). He warns that everything hidden will come to light, which is why mindfulness is required (Luke 8:16-18).

Jesus teaches that the way to the kingdom of God is narrow and not everyone will make it (Luke 13:22-29). Those who lose their lives for Jesus' sake will preserve them (Luke 17:22-36). The final judgment is coming inexorably ( ), and only those who are vigilant will be able to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:29-36).

### 2.3.4 *John*

God revealed his love by sending his Son, so that all who believe in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:1-20). Jesus emphasizes that his sheep hear his voice and follow him, thereby receiving eternal life

(John 10:26-30). He prays for the unity of his followers so that they may experience his glory (John 17:9-24).

Jesus calls on us to lay down our lives for his sake in order to gain them for eternity (John 12:24-26). He warns us not to continue in sin, lest something worse happen (John 5:14). True discipleship is shown by remaining in Jesus' word (John 8:31-47).

Jesus teaches that those who consider their lives worthless for his sake will preserve them for eternity (John 12:24-26). Those who do not remain connected to him will be thrown away like useless branches (John 15:1-17). At the final judgment, all people will be resurrected, but only those who have been saved by Jesus and have done good through and after that will enter into life (John 5:23-29).

#### 2.3.5 *Acts*

Jesus is the only name through which people can be saved (Acts 4:11-12). Peter preaches that everyone who believes in Christ will receive forgiveness of sins and that the Holy Spirit will come upon all who accept the gospel (Acts 10:34-44). The Council of Apostles also testifies that salvation comes by grace alone (Acts 15:1-11).

Those who lie to the Holy Spirit expose themselves to judgment, as the example of Ananias shows (Acts 5:1-10). The apostles exhort the believers to remain steadfast in their faith, since the kingdom of God is attained through tribulation ( ) (Acts 14:22). Paul warns the church against false teachers who will infiltrate the church after his departure in order to destroy it, and urges vigilance (Acts 20:20-32).

Paul testifies to the gospel in the face of opposition and turns to the Gentiles after the Jews reject his message (Acts 18:5-11). Simon tries to buy the gift of God with money, but is admonished to repent because he is caught in sin (Acts 8:12-24). Paul urges the elders to remain steadfast in the faith, for the word of grace has the power to lead the saints to eternal inheritance (Acts 20:20-32).

### 2.3.6 *Romans*

God's love and salvation are revealed in the gospel of Christ and offered to all people in the world. The gospel is God's power for salvation for all who believe and reveals his righteousness (Romans 1:16-17). All people have sinned, but through Jesus' work of redemption they are justified by grace (Romans 3:21-28). Whoever believes in their heart and confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord will be saved (Romans 10:4). Nothing and no one can separate believers from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-39).

But God's love is also accompanied by fear of Him. Those who live according to the flesh will die, but those who live according to the Spirit will be saved (Romans 8:12-17). God is gracious, but also severe toward those who turn away from him (Romans 11:16-24). Paul warns against divisions and false teachings that endanger faith and thus spiritual life (Romans 16:17-19).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness until the end. God will reward everyone according to their deeds, giving eternal life to the righteous and judging the ungodly (Romans 2:6-11). Those who are led by the Spirit of God will share in the resurrection and eternal life (Rom. 8:6-11). The children of God will not live according to the flesh, but will follow the Spirit of God ( ), be transformed by the Spirit, and receive eternal life (Rom. 8:12-17).

### 2.3.7 *1 Corinthians*

God loves all people, and those who believe in the gospel experience his amazingly great love. Christ, the crucified one, is God's power and wisdom for all who believe in him (1 Cor. 1:21-31). God chooses the insignificant to reveal his glory, and through Christ we receive wisdom, righteousness, and salvation (1 Cor. 1:21-31). Whoever wants to boast should boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:21-31).

Those who proclaim the gospel do so not for their own glory, but out of obligation, for woe to those who do not (1 Cor 9:14-18), woe to those who allow themselves to be led astray from following Christ and into

sin. The people of Israel serve as a warning example that disobedience leads to judgment (1 Cor 10:1-13), and this also applies to those who believe in Christ. For the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, but through Christ there is purification and sanctification (1 Cor 6:7-11).

Those who build on the foundation of Christ will be tested, and only what has been built for God will remain (1 Cor 3:11-15). For us believers, it is necessary to fight for the imperishable crown of victory and not allow ourselves to be distracted from the goal (1 Cor 9:22-27). The resurrection is the hope of all believers who hold fast to Christ and his gospel, for Christ has conquered death for those who follow him and hold fast to the gospel until the end (1 Cor 15:1-58).

### *2.3.8 2 Corinthians*

God loves us so much: through Christ, God has reconciled us to himself and commissioned us to tell others about this reconciliation (2 Cor 1:18-21). In him, God's "yes" to all his promises is fulfilled (2 Cor 1:18-21). We are the temple of the living God, in whom he desires to dwell (2 Cor 6:14-18).

God's grace should not be received lightly, but should lead to steadfastness, even in affliction and distress (2 Cor 6:1-10). Those who associate with unbelievers expose themselves to the influence of darkness (2 Cor 6:14-18). Every sin will be revealed, and Christ will act with righteous judgment (2 Cor. 13:1-13).

The proclamation of the gospel brings life to the saved, but destruction to the lost (2 Cor. 2:15-16). Everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for their life (2 Cor. 5:1-10). False teachers distort the gospel, but their end will be according to their deeds (2 Cor. 11:11-15).



### *2.3.9 Galatians*

This is how we know God's love for us: Christ sacrificed himself for our sins to free us from the present evil world (Gal 1:1-4). The law led to Christ, but now we are justified by faith and have become heirs of God (Gal 3:24-29).

But let us also fear God: any gospel other than the true one brings a curse, and whoever falsifies it is under God's judgment (Gal 1:6-12). Anyone who invokes the law is obliged to keep it in its entirety. True and saving righteousness comes from faith alone (Gal 5:1-5).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to the end. God cannot be mocked: every believer will reap what he sows (Gal 6:7-10). Those who sow in the Spirit will reap eternal life, while those who follow the flesh will reap destruction.

### *2.3.10 Ephesians*

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ and called us to holiness before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:2-14). Through him we have access to the Father and are incorporated as building blocks into his spiritual house (Eph 2:18-22).

But God's love is accompanied by fear of him. Anger and unforgiveness must have no place in the lives of believers, so that the devil has no access (Eph 4:20-32). Immorality, greed, and shamelessness lead to exclusion from the kingdom of God, so believers should distance themselves from these things (Eph 5:3-11).

Everyone will be rewarded by God for their deeds (Eph 6:8). Those who are saved through Christ no longer live under the power of sin, but can follow Christ in freedom and thus experience God's infinite grace now and forever (Eph 2:1-7).

### *2.3.11 Philippians*

True righteousness does not come through one's own works, but solely through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:2-9). God himself will complete his work in believers until Christ returns (Phil. 1:5-6).

But God's love is accompanied by fear of him. Believers should work out their salvation with fear and trembling, since God himself works in them to will and to do (Phil. 2:12-13). Christ is the true gain, and everything else is worthless in comparison to him (Phil. 3:2-9).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness until the end. The lives of believers should glorify Christ, whether through their lives or their deaths (Phil. 1:28). They should live without grumbling and shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:14-16). Their hope lies in the prize of the heavenly calling (Phil. 3:10-15).

### *2.3.12 Colossians*

God made us alive with Christ, forgave our sins, and declared the debt note invalid by nailing it to the cross (Col 2:13-15). Those who believe in Christ are renewed and become more and more like him (Col 3:11-14).

Those who turn away from Christ and follow false teachings lose their goal and salvation (Col 2:18-20). Believers should put off their earthly nature so as not to experience God's wrath (Col 3:5-8).

Those who serve Christ will receive their heavenly inheritance, while the unrighteous will be held accountable for their deeds (Col 3:23-25).

### *2.3.13 1 Thessalonians*

God has chosen believers in Christ and confirmed them through the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:2-10). He himself will complete his work in them and preserve them until Christ's return (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

Believers should live in reverence for God and remain steadfast in their faith despite trials and challenges (1 Thess. 2:9-13). A pure life is necessary to receive God's approval and not fall under his judgment (1 Thess. 4:3-8).

Believers should grow in love and encourage one another so that they may stand blameless before God at Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). Christ will return to take His own, those who truly belong to Him, and they will be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

#### *2.3.14 2 Thessalonians*

Believers are chosen by God and sanctified by the Spirit to share in the glory of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17). His comfort and grace give them strength for every good work.

Believers should not cease to do good, but should keep away from those who do not obey the apostolic teaching (2 Thess. 3:6; 13-15). This is not done out of hostility, but to move the brothers to repentance.

Christ will appear in glory to give rest to his believers and to judge those who have rejected the gospel (2 Thess 1:3-12). These will be punished with eternal destruction and excluded from God's glory.

#### *2:3:15 1 Timothy*

Christ came into the world to save sinners, and his patience is an example to all who believe in him (1 Tim. 1:12-16).

Believers should fight the good fight and remain steadfast in faith, since some have suffered shipwreck through unfaithfulness (1 Tim. 1:18-20). Those who allow themselves to be led astray by false teachings or persist in sin expose themselves to God's judgment (1 Tim. 4:1-7).

Those who remain steadfast in the truth will save themselves and others (1 Tim. 4:16). The works of each person will be revealed, and God will judge them (1 Tim. 5:24-25). Those who fight the good fight of faith will lay hold of eternal life (1 Tim. 6:3-14).

### *2.3.16 2 Timothy*

Christ has revealed eternal life through the gospel and gives his believers assurance in him (2 Tim. 1:9-14). Those who die with Christ will live with him, and his faithfulness remains even when we are weak (2 Tim. 2:11-14). The Lord saves his servants from all dangers and will bring them safely into his kingdom (2 Tim. 4:17-18).

Faith requires commitment and discipline, like a soldier or an athlete who must abide by the rules (2 Tim. 2:3-5). Those who deny Christ will themselves be denied by Christ (2 Tim 2:12). Believers should proclaim the word of God even when there is opposition, for Christ will judge the living and the dead (2 Tim 4:1-4).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to the end. The Lord will show mercy to those who remain faithful to him (2 Tim. 1:15-18). Paul has fought the good fight and kept the faith, which is why he is entitled to the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

### *2.3.17 Titus*

The grace of God has appeared to save all people and to train them to live a life of righteousness and godliness (Titus 2:10-15). Christ gave himself to create a pure people who are eager to do good.

Faith must remain sound, and false teachers must be rebuked so that their faith does not suffer further damage (Titus 1:5-16).

Those who cause divisions show by their behavior that they reject the truth, and after two warnings they are to be rejected and will not be saved (Titus 3:1-15).

### *2:3:18 Philemon*

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### *2.3.19 Hebrews*

Jesus is our merciful high priest who atoned for the sins of mankind and can help us in times of temptation (Hebrews 2:17-18). Through him, believers can approach God's throne with confidence and receive mercy (Hebrews 4:14-16). His priesthood is eternal, and he completely saves all who come to God through him (Hebrews 7:24-25).

But God's love is accompanied by fear of him. Believers should eagerly seek God's rest so that they do not fall like the disobedient (Hebrews 4:1-11). Those who remain patient in faith will obtain God's promises (Hebrews 6:18-20). However, those who sin wilfully expose themselves to destruction in God's judgment, for without faith it is impossible to please him (Hebrews 10:23-39).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to the end. Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, through whom believers receive eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15). Those who despise God's Son will be judged all the more severely (Hebrews 10:23-39). But those who persevere in faith can look forward to a heavenly home that God has prepared for them (Hebrews 11:13-16).

### *2.3.20 James*

All good gifts come from God, who freely gives us new life through the word of truth (James 1:17-18). Those who humble themselves and draw near to God will experience his grace and presence (James 4:5-10).

But a dead faith in God without works is useless, for even the demons believe and tremble (James 2:14-26). Friendship with the world means enmity with God (James 4:1-4).

Eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to the end. Temptation leads to sin, which ultimately brings death (James 1:13-16). But those who remain steadfast in trials will be rewarded with the crown of life (James 1:12). Those who persevere like the prophets and Job will experience God's mercy and reward (James 5:7-8).

### *2.3.21 1 Peter*

Through the resurrection of Jesus, God has given a living hope and preserves believers for the final revelation of salvation (1 Peter 1:1-5). God himself strengthens and confirms his children after all their sufferings so that they may stand in his glory (1 Peter 5:10-11).

Those who want to enter into eternity should bridle their tongues, turn away from evil, and seek peace (1 Peter 3:10-12). The enemy seeks whom he may devour, but believers should resist him, standing firm in the faith (1 Peter 4:17-19).

Suffering for Christ's sake is not a cause for despair, but for joy, since it means sharing in his glory (1 Peter 4:12-14). Judgment begins with believers, and only the faithful will be preserved, while the end of the ungodly will be terrible (1 Peter 4:17-19).

### *2.3.22 2 Peter*

God has given us everything we need for a holy life through his divine power. Through his promises, we share in his divine nature and escape the corruption of the world (2 Peter 1:1-11). The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation (2 Peter 2:9).

Believers should eagerly supplement their faith with knowledge, self-control, and love so that they do not fall into spiritual blindness (2 Peter 1:4-9). They should beware of false teachers so that they do not lose their firm footing but grow in grace (2 Peter 3:17-18).

Those who confirm their calling and election will surely enter the eternal kingdom of Jesus (2 Peter 1:10-11). The Lord does not delay His promise, but is patient so that all believers may repent before the final judgment comes and not go to eternal destruction together with the unbelievers (2 Peter 3:9-14).

### *2.3.23 1 John*

We are God's children and may experience his love because we believe in his Son (1 John 3:1-10). Eternal life is in Christ, and whoever is connected to him has it assuredly (1 John 5:10-13).

But those who turn to the world turn away from God, for the world and its desires are passing away; only those who do God's will remain forever (1 John 2:15-17). Hatred of fellow believers leads to spiritual death, for true spiritual life from God is manifested in love for one's brothers and sisters (1 John 3:1-10).

Those who remain in Christ will not need to be ashamed when he returns (1 John 2:24-28). There are sins that do not lead to death and are forgiven through prayer, but some sins result in final separation from God (1 John 5:16-18).

### *2.3.24 2 John*

God's truth remains forever in believers, and in Christ they receive grace, mercy, and peace (2 John 1:1-6).

Many deceivers deny the true teaching of Christ, and believers should be careful not to lose their spiritual reward (2 John 1:7-8).

Those who go beyond the teaching of Christ have no fellowship (any longer) with God, but those who remain in the truth remain connected with the Father and the Son (2 John 1:9-11).

### *2.3.25 3 John*

Nothing brings greater joy than when believers live in the truth and support one another in love (3 John 1:3-8).

But God's love is accompanied by fear of him. Those who do good belong to God, but those who do evil have not known him (3 John 1:9-11).

Those who remain in the truth are recognized by God and by believers (3 John 1:12).

### *2.3.26 Jude*

Those who are called are loved by God and kept safe by Jesus Christ (Jude 1:1-2). God has the power to keep his believers from stumbling and to bring them joyfully into his glory (Jude 1:24).

Those who do not believe God will be judged, as Israel was once judged after leaving Egypt and wandering in the desert (Jude 1:5-6). Believers should practice mercy, but protect themselves from the influence of sin (Jude 1:22-23).

Those who remain on the foundation of faith are preserved in the protection of God's love and await eternal life in the mercy of Jesus (Jude 1:20-21). God himself keeps his chosen ones spotless in his glory for all eternity (Jude 1:24).

### *2.3.27 Revelation*

Christ loves us and has cleansed us with his blood to make us a holy people (Rev. 1:4-6). He stands at the door and knocks—whoever lets him in will have fellowship with him and reign with him (Rev. 3:14-22).

Those who do not remain awake will be judged unexpectedly, but those who remain faithful will have their names written in the book of life (Rev. 3:1-6). Faithfulness unto death will be rewarded with the crown of life, and those who overcome will be spared from the second death (Rev. 2:8-11).

Those who overcome the great tribulation will stand before God's throne, will have no more need, and will be provided for eternally (Rev. 7:14-17). The enemy is defeated, and the believers have overcome through the blood of the Lamb and their faithful confession (Rev. 12:10-12).



*2.3.28 Summary: Loved and saved NOW – preserved FOREVER:  
The love and fear of God in all the books of the New Testament*

An examination of the 27 books of the New Testament reveals remarkable consistency in their statements about the love of God, salvation in the here and now, the importance of the fear of God, and the conditions for eternal salvation. Twenty-six of the 27 books deal with all three aspects: the love of God, salvation through faith, the necessity of a healthy fear of God, and the way to eternal salvation. This consistency impressively testifies to the divine inspiration of Scripture and underscores the central message of the New Testament.

### **The Gospels**

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) consistently emphasize the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. They show that present salvation comes through repentance, faith, and acceptance of God's grace. At the same time, they warn against a life without the fear of God and encourage a lifestyle characterized by holiness and obedience. All the Gospels emphasize that eternal salvation depends on faithfulness to Christ and requires consistent discipleship.

### **The Epistles**

The letters of the apostles, especially those of Paul, take up the themes of the Gospels and deepen them. They make it clear that God's love is the foundation of salvation, but also that salvation must be preserved through faith. Fear of God is described as essential for a life of following Christ. The letters emphasize that eternal life is not only a gift but also a goal that is achieved through perseverance, obedience, and faithfulness. Differences can be seen in the emphases: while, for example, the letters to the Corinthians warn of the danger of overestimating oneself, the letter to the Romans focuses on justification by faith alone, but works as the fruit of a truly renewed life.

### **Revelation**

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, summarizes the central themes of the New Testament in an eschatological framework. It urges reverence for God and shows the consequences of a life of sin, including the loss of salvation. At the same time, God's love is made visible through the ultimate salvation of believers who overcome and remain faithful. Revelation emphasizes that eternal salvation requires an active, victorious life of faith, made possible by the blood of the Lamb .

### 3 Salvation and possible loss of salvation: Cross-book teachings of the New Testament

The 545 salvation-related passages in the New Testament were already examined in chapter 2.1 according to Bible books. This chapter now considers them thematically and comprehensively on the topic: Many are called—Can a Christian lose his salvation? Will a follower of Jesus be lost?

The thematic analysis confirms the statements of the individual books of the Bible, but paints a more nuanced picture with over 80 subchapters. Each chapter contains an ultra-short overall statement as its title, while

**detail level 5** provides the main statement with an example verse and further verse references.

**Detail level 6**—the basis of this book edition—provides a more detailed presentation with several example verses.

Levels 5, 6, and the most **detailed level 7**, in which all underlying Bible verses are analyzed, are available on the website <https://vielesindberufen.de>.

In summary, the New Testament makes it clear that even after genuine conversion, there are two paths for born-again Christians, which are reflected in the division of chapter 3:

Chapter 3.1 The way of the Spirit and following Christ to eternal salvation on the narrow path to heaven.

Chapter 3.2 The way of the "flesh" away from salvation to judgment and destruction.

Believers who do not resist temptation but allow themselves to be carried away by it will ultimately reap death rather than eternal life. Believers should have no illusions about this. It becomes clear that Jesus and the apostles are referring here to the broad outline of life—the fundamental direction in which a follower of Jesus walks—and not to every single failure from which we can quickly and repeatedly turn away. It is about the direction of the path: on the one hand, overcoming temptations, which leads to eternal life, and on the other hand, giving in to one's own life and desires, which leads to eternal death. Jesus and the apostles are in complete agreement on this in the New Testament.

A detailed table with the most important Bible passages on the topic of **"Two paths for born-again Christians"** can be found on the website for Chapter 3 in Level 7. Here are just a few biblical references:

*Matthew 25:14-30*

*14 "It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability. 18 But the one who had received one talent went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ... 24 Then the one who had received one talent also came forward ... I have hidden your talent in the ground: here is your money back! 26 His master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! ... 28 Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And throw that worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*Romans 8:12-13 Meng*

*12 Therefore, brothers, we have no obligation to the flesh to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

*Gal 6:7-10 Meng*

*7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but he who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

*James 1:12-16 Meng*

*12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. — 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.*

Mt 25:23-30; Rom 8:12-13; Gal 6:7-10; James 1:12-16; Matthew 18:7-9; Hebrews 10:26, James 1:1-12, 2 Peter 2:19-22, 1 John 3:15; 1 John 5:16; Revelation 2-3; Jude 1:4-5

### **3.1 The Way of the Spirit and Following Christ to Eternal Salvation**

The path to eternal salvation is not broad, comfortable, or full of compromise—it is a path of the Spirit, of devotion, and of genuine discipleship to Jesus Christ. On this path, the promise of eternal life becomes reality, but it requires conscious decisions and a heart that is ready to follow Christ's call. It is not about outwardly religious behavior or merely following rules, but about allowing oneself to be guided by

God's Spirit and living life in His light and in love, obedience, and faithfulness to God. The subchapters show that true discipleship means loving Jesus, living out of the grace received, and bearing fruit in life. It is about serving God from the heart and not pleasing people—a way of life that leads to eternal communion with God.

### *3.1.1 Unserved people find salvation through the saved: Mission and evangelism are the key to people being saved*

Man knows enough to be lost, but not enough to be saved. Every person in the world needs to turn their life over to God and to the crucified and risen Jesus Christ in order to receive forgiveness of sins and new life. No one can be justified before God by keeping rules and commandments—the law only shows us our sin. Therefore, the Word of God must be proclaimed so that people recognize their sinfulness and know that they need to repent in order to be saved through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus commissioned us to proclaim this good news worldwide. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved; those who do not believe will remain lost. Jesus himself was sent by the Father to bring the Word of God and to separate light from darkness as the light of the world. Likewise, Jesus sends us as his disciples into the world. His goal is to restore the glory of God, lost since paradise, to all who believe.

Only through the proclamation of the Gospel can people be saved. Without the Gospel, they are eternally lost. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to preach the Gospel to all people so that they may have the opportunity to be saved and find peace with God.

*Mark 16:15-16 Slr*

*15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

*Acts 4:10-12 Meng*

*10 Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God*

*raised from the dead—it is by this name that this man stands before you healthy! 11 This (Jesus) is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone; 12 and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

*Romans 10:13-14 Meng*

*13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-17; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 10:13-17; John 3:16; John 17:18-23; Romans 3:20; Romans 1-4; Romans 10:8-11

### *3.1.2 We are saved solely through the one true Word of God and through nothing else but the Word of God*

The Bible testifies of itself that it is God's Word. In it we find life and the way to eternal life. It testifies to God's will, wisdom, and commandments, and to Jesus Christ, both in the Old and New Testaments. The only key to God and eternal life is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is foreshadowed in God's Word in the Old Testament and presented in its full form in the New Testament. Without God's Word, we would not know the gospel and would have no binding divine guideline for our lives. The Word of God testifies to us that there is only one Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, and only one true gospel, upon whose observance our right relationship with God and our eternal salvation depend. False teachings contrary to God's Word are spiritually deadly. If we want to remain saved, we must not add anything to the words of God in His Word, nor must we take anything away from His words if we ourselves want to be eternally saved.

The Word of God IS the Word of God; it does not merely contain the Word of God. The Word of God IS both human words and God's words, down to the level of every single letter.

We can only learn God's will from His Word and must not add anything of our own or anything human to it. Otherwise, we become hypocrites who honor our own idea of God more than what God reveals to us about himself. And a hypocrite, as Jesus makes clear, is far from God—and therefore not saved. To be saved, our hearts must cling to God and his word, and not (only) our mouths to God and our hearts to traditions, whether Jewish or Christian and ecclesiastical.

We need God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to understand the Scriptures. The Word of God can and may be interpreted only by those who do nothing else but the Word of God and want to implement it in their lives. Any other use of the Word of God becomes judgment for those who do not follow it and inevitably leads to false teachings about the Word of God and faith.

*2 Peter 1:20-21 Meng*

*20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

*John 1:14 Meng*

*14 And the Word became flesh [human].*

*John 7:16-17 Slt*

*My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether this teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.*

*2 Tim 3:14-17 Meng*

*14 But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and have become fully convinced of, knowing from whom you learned it, 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*Mt 5:18 For truly I [Jesus] say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law until all is accomplished.*

*Gal 3:16 Slt*

*16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say, "and to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "and to your seed," who is Christ.*

*Lk 24:25-27 Meng*

*25 Then he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

*Ezra 7:10 Slt*

*[Ezra] arrived in Jerusalem because the good hand of his God was upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study and do the law of the LORD, and to teach the law and the statutes in Israel.*

*Rev 22:18-21 Meng*

*18 I (John) testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book; 19 and if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon!" "Amen, come, Lord Jesus!" 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.*

Matthew 23:23; Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39; Luke 10:26; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:15; Acts 4:12; John 17:17; 2 Peter 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:2; 2 John 1:8-11; Matthew 5:8; Revelation e 22:18-20; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 3:16; Psalm 119:18; John 14:26; Luke 24:44-49; Ezra 7:10; Psalm 119:172-176; John 5:39; John 6:38; John 7:17; John 9:31; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Romans 2:12; 2 Peter 3:16; Mark 7:6



3.1.3 *The correct teaching of the gospel is an unconditional and true prerequisite for obtaining salvation.*

Our salvation and that of all people depends on the

- **proclamation** of the gospel and the
- proclamation of the **correct gospel**

. The acceptance of the gospel by its listeners depends significantly, but not exclusively, on

- whether it is proclaimed by credible and faithful disciples of Jesus.

In the end, the gospel itself is the true key to our salvation.

We have already presented and discussed the only true and saving gospel in another chapter. We need teachers who themselves live according to God's Word and who teach the gospel and the Word of God correctly. God builds his church primarily through his Word and through various ministries of his Word. Good and correct teaching is crucial for the salvation of God's people and builds up God's people and strengthens them in faith and confidence in eternal salvation. Heresies and false teachers, on the other hand, kill faith and thus God's people, resulting in the loss of salvation.

The bad example set by hypocrites—who speak of God's Word but do not do it—has such a serious effect that ultimately people are deterred from faith and even the name of God is blasphemed because of it, ultimately preventing people from salvation.

In summary, we preach not only with our words but also with our lives—and thus have a great responsibility to honor God's name with our lives and to make the message of the gospel credible and confirm it.

And yet, in the end, salvation lies in (belief in) the revealed gospel of God. Even a true gospel preached with dishonest motives saves those who accept and believe it.

*2 Tim 4:2 SlT*

*2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season.*

*1 Tim 4:16 SlT*

*16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

*1 Cor 15:1-2 SlT*

*1 But I remind you, brothers, of **the gospel** I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, 2 **by which you are also saved, if you hold fast to the word** I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*Gal 1:9 Meng*

*9 As we have said before, so now I say again: "If anyone preaches a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed!"*

*2 Tim 4:2-4; 1 Tim 4:16; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Gal 1:9-12; Phil 1:14-18*

### *3.1.4 Whoever believes will be saved: Belief in the true gospel is the main prerequisite for obtaining salvation*

Belief in the true gospel is THE prerequisite for obtaining salvation. And holding fast to faith is THE prerequisite for entering eternity at the end and inheriting all that God has promised. There is no other way than to believe in the true gospel, to live according to the gospel, and to hold fast to the gospel until the end if we want to be saved.

*Mark 16:15-16 Meng*

*15 Then he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

*1 Corinthians 15:1-2 Meng*

*1 But I remind you, brothers and sisters, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and in which you stand firm, 2 and by which you are saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— otherwise you would have believed in vain.*

*Romans 5:1-2 Meng*

*1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

*Hebrews 10:39 Slt*

*39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 5:1-2; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Hebrews 6:11-12; Hebrews 10:39

*3.1.5 True repentance from your old life in a genuine conversion is the prerequisite for obtaining salvation.*

True faith always goes hand in hand with turning to God. We leave our old life behind, which was contrary to God's will, and begin a new life that is aligned with God and His will. This new life is manifested in clear actions that testify that our conversion to God is genuine.

Without such a profound conversion, there is no saving faith; true saving faith always goes hand in hand with a radical change of life.

*Luke 3:7-8 Meng*

*7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones."*

*Luke 13:3 Meng*

*I [Jesus] tell you, unless you change your ways, you will all perish as well.*

*Acts 26:20 Meng*

*[Paul] [I] preached first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then to those throughout the whole land of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.*

Luke 3:7-17; Luke 13:3; Mark 1:15; Luke 15:10; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20; Acts 11:18

### *3.1.6 Only redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ brings salvation*

No one can come to God without the forgiveness of their sins and redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His blood, which he shed for us on the cross, cleanses and sanctifies us so that we are accepted in the eyes of God. Through his blood we experience redemption, righteousness, and salvation. Only through him are we able to live a life that pleases God. And only through His blood will we be able to stand before God one day, regardless of the challenges we must overcome. There is no salvation, either now or in eternity, except through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect and spotless Lamb of God, who takes away our guilt before God.

*Mt 26:28 Slt*

*[Jesus says:] 28 For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

*John 6:54 Meng*

*[Jesus says:] Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.*

*Acts 20:28 Meng*

*Therefore, guard yourselves and all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.*

*Rom 5:9 Meng*

*9 So now that we have been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

*Heb 9:14 Meng*

*How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!*

*1 Peter 1:18-19*

*You know that you were not redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

*Rev. 7:9-14 Meng*

*9 After this I saw a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ... 14 ... Then he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

*Rev 12:11 Meng*

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*

Mt 26:28; Jn 6:54; Acts 20:28; Rom 5:9; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 7:9-14; Rev 12:11

### *3.1.7 Those who want to be saved must accept Jesus as King and Messiah and obey him faithfully from now on*

John makes it clear that anyone who wants Jesus as the sacrificial lamb in their life must also accept him as king over their life. And as subjects, we obey a king. A king is the king of his people because of his birth, ancestry, and being. A king is never democratically elected. Anyone who wants to live in the king's country must recognize the king and serve him. And no one has the freedom to refuse obedience to the king in any matter. The king has the authority to command and the unrestricted right to decide. And how easy it should be to be subject to this king: Jesus, the King of kings, has done only good for his people and wants only good for his people, he who gave his own life for his people. King Jesus, be exalted!

*Luke 1:33 Meng*

*And he [Jesus] will reign as king over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.*

*Rev. 1:5-6 Meng*

*Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth! To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

*Rev. 17:14 Meng*

*14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.*

*Matthew 18:23-27 Meng*

*23 Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.*

*James 2:8 Meng*

*You do well to obey the royal command of our Lord, as it is written in Scripture: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

*Mt 2:2; Lk 1:33; Mt 22:2-7; Jas 2:8-10; Mt 18:23-27; Rev 1:5-6; 1 Tim 1:17; Rev 17:14*

*3.1.8 Those who love Jesus (in return) will be saved. To love Jesus means to believe in him and obey him.*

We are able to love because God first loved us. Jesus gave himself for us, even to death on the cross, and forgave all our sins. This gives rise to our natural response: to return God's love with love. Those who love Jesus follow his commandments. To love him means to be guided by his word and to do his will.

Those who love Jesus receive the crown of eternal life. Loving God is shown through obedience to him. Those who remain steadfast in the trials that God allows win the prize of eternal life. Those who faithfully

overcome these challenges show that they love God with all their heart. It is those who love God who will be saved eternally.

*John 15:9 Slt*

*9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.*

*1 John 4:19 Meng*

*We love [God] because he first loved us.*

*John 14:21 Slt*

*21 Whoever keeps my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me; but whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.*

*James 1:12 Slt*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

Luke 7:42; John 14:15-21; James 1:1-12; 1 John 4:19; John 15:9-11; Luke 7:42; John 13:34

### *3.1.9 The fruit of life from grace received is a sign of genuine and lasting salvation*

God's saving grace has a specific goal: the redeemed should no longer live for themselves, but for God and for His glory. They should bear fruit that honors Him in the fear of God and good works. Those who live this way to the end through the power of grace will receive eternal life. But where God's grace does not bear fruit, salvation remains in danger. Those who do not keep the fruit until the end will also be lost.

By turning to God, we have received new life from him, and the ability to bear fruit has been given to us. Everything we need for this is already within us. If we remain closely connected to Jesus, our vine, we will naturally bear fruit that glorifies the Father through his grace and power. This is the meaning and purpose of grace: that the redeemed bear fruit and honor God.

Those who do not bear fruit despite God's goodness and love jeopardize their salvation. God shows great patience and wants believers to turn away from a fruitless life and repent. He gives us time to repent, but a permanently fruitless life carries the danger of having received grace in vain—that is, without it having brought about any change.

John the Baptist and Jesus warn urgently against a fruitless faith that functions only according to external rules without a genuine connection to God in the heart. In doing so, they also address the religious elite. The apostles take up these warnings and make them a central part of their preaching.

Fruitlessness leads—even in unfavorable circumstances—to permanent separation from God and eternal judgment. The fruit consists in turning away from worldly desires and sins and leading a life of righteousness, love, and good works for God—with perseverance until the end.

In the parable of the fourfold field, Jesus explains that only those who bear fruit will truly be saved. The fruits will reveal the true followers of Jesus; a good tree bears good fruit. Those who do not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. True fruit is evident in a life of repentance, goodness, truth, love, works of righteousness, sanctification, and confession of Jesus.

Those who remain in this fruit until the end will be saved.

*Luke 13:6-9 Meng*

*"Look, I have been coming around this fig tree for three years now, looking for fruit on it, but I find none. Cut it down! Why should it take up space?" 8 But he answered him, "Sir, leave it alone for one more year! I will dig around it and fertilize it one more time. 9 Perhaps it will bear fruit in the future; if not, then cut it down."*

*2 Peter 3:9 SlT*

*9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, but he is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*



2 Cor 6:1 SlT

*1 But as co-workers, we also urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.*

Hebrews 6:7-8 Meng

*7 For the land that drinks in the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

Titus 2:11-13; Matthew 3:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Hebrews 6:7-10; Luke 13:6-9; 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Peter 1:3-9; John 15:1-8

*3.1.10 Only those who serve Jesus wholeheartedly and do not merely seek to please people will be saved in the end.*

The highest commandment for all people is to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength and to serve Him—and to love our neighbor as ourselves. God comes first. Any service that does not have the glory of God as its primary goal ultimately becomes idolatry, regardless of good intentions or motives.

Adam fell into sin because he loved Eve more and served her will more than God's. This decision led him and Eve out of paradise. The only remedy is to love God above all else and serve Him alone. Jesus Himself emphasizes this as the highest commandment and ties it to the conditions of discipleship: only those who serve Him more than anything else in the world will be saved.

**Serving God is the way to eternal life.** But we can only truly serve God when we are redeemed from our self-willed lives without him. Only through Jesus, our Redeemer, can we become servants of God. As our Lord, Jesus expects us to serve him vigilantly and consistently, without wavering, but remaining faithful until the end. This service is like a race in which the goal is to live with devotion and love for the Lord. Not everything that outwardly looks like service to the Lord is truly so. Genuine service to Jesus springs from a heart filled with His grace and is characterized by constant devotion.

**Our service has a great promise: eternal life.** But this service is based on Jesus' service to us: He redeemed us through His death and made us children of God. It is His service that brings us into the right relationship with God, preserves us in Him, and leads us to eternal life through His grace. At the same time, we can marvel that our own faithful service to Christ, made possible by his grace, is part of God's plan for our salvation.

The prize of eternal life is awarded to those who do not do their own will, but the will of the Lord. How motivating it is to know that Christ himself has shown us the way!

In his greatest hour of need, he did not do his own will, but that of the Father, and was crowned with honor and glory for it. Likewise, when we serve him wholeheartedly, he wants to honor us and welcome us into his glory.

*Matthew 4:10 NIV*

*10 Jesus answered him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"*

*Hebrews 9:14 Meng*

*14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!*

*Luke 12:37 Meng*

*37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake [i.e., serving] when he returns! Truly, I say to you, he will gird himself [ ] and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them.*

*John 12:26 Meng*

*26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

Mt 4:10; Mt 6:24; Heb 9:14; Eph 6:7; Lk 12:37; Acts 20:24; Rom 12:11; Rom 16:18; Col 3:22+24; Col 2:18; Jn 12:26; Mt 20:26; Mt 20:28; Mt 22:37; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7-8; Col 2:18; Lk 22:42; Phil 2:5-11

3.1.11 *The conditions of discipleship are in reality the conditions of temporal and eternal salvation*

Salvation has two fundamental building blocks, as Jesus makes clear in the conditions of discipleship:

3. **The right knowledge:** recognizing and accepting Jesus as Lord and Messiah.
4. **Practical discipleship:** This knowledge leads to a life that is characterized by genuine devotion. This means:
  - Putting one's own needs and desires behind Jesus' will
  - Willingly accepting suffering for Jesus' sake
  - Giving one's life for Jesus when necessary
  - And standing by Jesus and his message – no matter what challenges that may bring

Only those who have this attitude and way of life in following Jesus will stand when Jesus comes in glory and we stand before him.

**Those who want to lose their lives, on the other hand, are following the wrong path:**

- He wants to save his own life instead of entrusting it to Jesus.
- He loves the world or even his own family more than Jesus.
- They do not stand by Jesus and his message.

Such a person will not be recognized by Jesus when he returns in his glory and in the glory of his Father and the holy angels.

*Mark 8:34-38 Meng*

*34 Then he called the crowd and his disciples to him and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? 37 For what can a man give in exchange for his life? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." ...*

*Matthew 10:37 Meng*

*Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

Lk 9:18-23; Jn 16:27; Mt 10:37-39

*3.1.12 Giving EVERYTHING for Jesus is the only saving motto in life—and that means complete devotion to our Lord according to our own abilities.*

The Word of God is full of positive encouragement, impressive admonitions, and fateful warnings to give EVERYTHING for Jesus now. For from our human perspective, our calling and our election are not so firm that they cannot be shaken. Both can be influenced by our actions. God's expectations and standards for us are entirely individual, not absolute. Our personal ALL is OUR all according to our abilities. No one needs to give more than they have. But no one can afford to give less than they can, lest they embark on a shaky and uncertain path to eternity.

**Not giving EVERYTHING for Jesus** now and in the future offers no promise of salvation.

But those who give EVERYTHING for Jesus NOW create the best foundation for their **present** and **future** closeness to God and salvation.

Everyone has their own personal EVERYTHING and does not need more, nor should they allow themselves to give less, lest they stumble.

*2 Peter 1:5-11 Meng*

*5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if these (qualities) are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But whoever lacks these (qualities) is blind and shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. 10 Therefore, dear brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these*

*things, you will never stumble. 11 For in this way, you will be granted entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*2 Peter 3:14 SlT*

*14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.*

*1 Corinthians 9:25 SlT*

*25 But everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.*

Luke 13:24; Matthew 13:44; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 Corinthians 9:25; Hebrews 6:18; 2 Peter 1:1-10; Luke 12:48

*3.1.13 (Only) those who walk on two legs will arrive in heaven:  
devotion for grace, obeying commandments for eternal  
salvation*

This is how we walk on two legs on the path to heaven:

1. 100% devotion to God through Jesus Christ: for salvation and grace = obeying the 1st to 3rd commandments
2. Love your neighbor as yourself: for the preservation of grace and salvation = obeying the 4th to 10th commandments

Keeping the 2nd without first doing the 1st definitely does not save. No mere humanist will ever be saved.

Fulfilling the first commandment and loving God more than anything else is the foundation of all salvation and the ticket to the kingdom of God.

**Without Jesus First, everything is nothing.**

But those who fulfill the 1st cannot do without the 2nd if they want to enter the kingdom of heaven. We are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves just as we are commanded to love God—and it is even proof of the authenticity of our love for God.

We can only walk into heaven on two legs! What does it mean to walk on two legs? I cannot walk into heaven on one leg alone.

Only when I recognize that God is more important than anything else and when I am willing to give up everything I have for Jesus and follow Him will I become a disciple who is worthy of his Lord and will be saved. And that is only possible with divine help. It is only possible through God's grace.

And even after my conversion, basic adherence to the 10 Commandments remains the condition for entering heaven. This is what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout the Gospels.

The good news is that if our basic orientation is right, Jesus will forgive and accept us again and again, just as he did with his disciples, who, unlike the rich young man, left everything behind and followed Jesus.

*Luke 10:27 Meng*

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind" and "your neighbor as yourself."*

*Matthew 19:16-26 Meng*

*17 If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" he replied. Jesus answered, "These: 'You shall not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, 19 honor your father and mother,' and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself. 20 The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

*22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. 23 But Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this,*

*they were greatly astonished and said, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*

*1 John 4:19-21 Meng*

*19 But we love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God must also love his brother.*

Luke 10:27; Matthew 18:22; Matthew 19:16-26; 1 John 1:9; Matthew 5-7; 1 John 4:19-21

*3.1.14 Salvation lies in the fear of God and not (only) in mere reverence*

**Those who fear God need not fear (God).**

**Those who do not fear God must fear (God).**

**Those who fear God fundamentally keep His commandments.**

**Those who do not fear God put their own word above God's.**

**Those who fear God will receive forgiveness when they sin.**

**Those who do not fear God will not receive forgiveness in eternity.**

We love the glory of God's holiness in worship.

We forget the terror of God's holiness when we sin.

We reduce the terror of God's holiness to only apply to the unredeemed. Jesus and the apostles also teach us, as followers of Christ, the terror of God's holiness. When we lose sight of the terror of God's holiness, which is also capable of destroying His followers in hell, we are in danger of sinning in such a way that we lose our salvation.

And even toward the unredeemed, we see less and less the need to protect them from the terror of God's holiness.

In short, we suffer from an increasing loss of awareness of the (terrible) holiness of God, who will not be trifled with and will consistently condemn every unredeemed person and also judge every redeemed person eternally.

*Luke 12:4 Slt*

*4 But I say to you, my friends: ... **Fear him who**, after he has killed, also **has power to cast into hell!** Yes, I tell you, fear him!*

*Luke 12:6-7 Slt*

*6 Not one [sparrow] is forgotten before God. 7 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **Therefore do not be afraid**; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

*Romans 11:20-21 Slt*

*20 Quite right! Because of their unbelief they were broken off, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid! 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he may not spare you either.*

*John 6:20 Slt*

*But he said to them, "It is I; do **not be afraid**."*

Mt 28:3-4; Lk 12:4-12; Rom 11:20-22; Heb 10:30-31; 2 Cor 5:11; Rev 1:17; Mt 10:1-5; Acts 5:1-11

*3.1.15 Your separation from this world is the condition for your salvation. Those who love the Father in heaven more than this world will be saved.*

The followers of Christ live in the world, but they do not belong to it. Jesus expects his disciples to consciously separate themselves from the values and ways of the world and to lead a different, God-centered life. This difference is the unmistakable characteristic of true disciples.

On the other hand, those who conform to the world and adopt its standards do not live in the footsteps of Jesus and therefore cannot be



saved. God calls on his children to actively turn away from the godless darkness of this world, to separate themselves from its impurity, and to live a life of holiness. Only in this way can we experience the full promise that God has given us as his children in eternity.

**How is love for the world overcome, and how can we love God more than the world?** It is the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who loved us first, and the living hope of the glory that awaits us in eternity—whether after our death or after the resurrection.

**A true, born-again believer who overcomes the world through Jesus Christ will inherit eternal life.** But those who, despite God's great love, set their hearts on the world instead of loving God, run the risk of losing their salvation.

*Gal 1:4-5 Stt*

*[Jesus Christ] 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*Phil 3:18-21 Meng*

*8 For many walk—as I have told you often before and now tell you even with tears—as enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 their end is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power with which he is able to subdue all things.*

*1 John 5:4-5 Meng*

*4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

*2 Corinthians 6:16-18 + 2 Corinthians 7:1 Meng*

*16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 17 Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord,*

*"and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you," and 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty. 7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.*

Gal 1:4-5; Phil 3:18-20; Gal 1:4-5; 1 John 4:10; 1 John 5:4-5; 2 Cor 6:16-18 + 2 Cor 7:1

*3.1.16 Righteousness saves from death: Saving righteousness is not only credited, but also a lifestyle that is in right relationship with God and does His will.*

Those to whom Christ freely imputes his righteousness by grace are now righteous before God.

However, only those who live righteously "as righteous" until the end in accordance with this gifted righteousness will receive the crown of righteousness—eternal life in heaven. This means doing righteous deeds, fighting the good fight, reaching the goal, keeping the faith intact, and looking forward to the visible return of Jesus.

True righteousness before God, which saves and qualifies us for heaven, is not only credited to us, but is also a lifestyle that is in right relationship with God and does His will.

*Romans 5:1 NIV*

*Since we have now been justified **by faith**, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Rev 22:11 SlT*

*Let the righteous continue to practice righteousness!*

*2 Tim 2:22 Meng*

*Flee the desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, **faith**, love, and **peace**, along with those who call on the Lord **from** a pure heart.*

*Rev 19:6-9 SlT*

*6 And I heard something like the voice of a great multitude, and like the*

*sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty has taken His place as King! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory! For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready. 8 **And it was given to her to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.** 9 And he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" And he said to me, "These are the true words of God!"*

Mal 3:18; Rev 22:11; Rom 5:1; 2 Tim 2:22; 2 Tim 4:7-8; Rev 19:6-9

*3.1.17 (Only) those who accept the invitation to the heavenly wedding feast will be saved—and only IF they are clothed in garments of salvation and righteousness.*

Yes, we receive the saving garments for the heavenly wedding as a free gift – by washing our garments in the blood of the Lamb and making them bright, that is, by truly repenting. But after our conversion, we preserve our garments by not allowing them to be defiled and stolen by sin or by straying from the narrow path. (Only) those who overcome in this way will be clothed with bright garments and walk with Jesus in eternity.

The white garments and our righteousness also consist of what we do for God after the washing, of our deeds and works of righteousness for God.

Here, gift and our own actions merge. Our righteousness is mainly a gift, but it is not only a gift. It also bears fruit in our lives, which God regards as part of our righteousness.

So we need both: God's free gift of our righteousness—this is how he makes us worthy to participate in the wedding feast of the Son of God in the first place—but also the fruit, the works of faith that grow out of this God-given righteousness in our lives.

The bride of the Lamb are the saints who have been freely given the garments of salvation and who do works that can stand before God and

that God will one day weave into the pure white linen that he will give to his bride in heaven.

*Rev. 22:14 Meng*

*14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city!*

*Rev 19:6-9 Slt*

*The **bride of the Lamb** was given **fine linen to wear, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.***

*Mt 22:11 Meng*

*11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He said to him, 'Friend, **how did you get in here without wedding clothes?**' The man was speechless. 13 Then the king told his servants, 'Grab him by his hands and feet and **throw him outside into the darkness**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

*Rev. 3:4-6 Slt*

*4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis **whose clothes are not defiled; they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.** 5 The one who conquers will be clothed in white, and I will never blot out his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

*Rev 19:6-9; Rev 3:5; Rev 22:14; Mt 22:11; Rev 7:14; Rev 16:15; Isa 61:10; Rom 1:17; Rom 3:22; Rom 4:3; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9; Job 29:14; Matt 5:20; Matt 6:1; Luke 1:75; Rom 6:13+16+18; 2 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 9:10; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; 2 Tim 2:22; Tit 3:5; Eph 2:10; Heb 6:1; James 2:18-26; Rev 7:14; Rev 12:11*

*3.1.18 (Only) those who hear God's word and act upon it will be saved*

Every time we hear God's word, it brings with it responsibility. We must take this seriously and implement it in our lives in order to be saved.

Those who forget and do not live by God's words jeopardize their salvation. Those who keep God's instructions in their hearts and live them out with love and devotion until the end will be saved.

*Luke 12:48*

*To whom **much is given, much will be required;** and from the one **who has been** entrusted with **much**, even more will be demanded.*

*Rev 3:1-3 Meng*

*I know your works: **you** have a reputation of being alive, **but you are dead.** 2 Wake up and strengthen the rest (of the congregation) who were about to die! For I have not found your deeds complete before my God. 3 **Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; keep it, and repent.** But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.*

*James 1:22-25 Meng*

*22 **But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he looks at himself and goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 **But whoever** looks into the perfect law of liberty and persists in it, **not being a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, will be blessed in his deeds.***

*Acts 20:31-32 Meng*

***31 Therefore, be alert and remember that for three years, night and day, I did not cease to admonish each one of you with tears.** 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which has the power to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who have been sanctified.*

*Hebrews 2:1-3 Meng*

*1 Therefore **we must hold fast to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.** 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

Luke 12:48; Acts 20:31-32; Hebrews 2:1-3; James 1:22-25; 2 Peter 1:3-9; Revelation 2:4-5

### *3.1.19 Those who obey God and do His will will be saved*

Those who know God's will and do not do it will be lost. It is not enough to merely profess God's will; what is crucial is that our lives confirm this through good fruits and our actions. The Gospel proclaims that we are saved by God's grace alone, without our own efforts. But to remain saved requires us to give up our own will and life in order to do God's will. Anyone who teaches otherwise is a false prophet, a false teacher, and a wolf in sheep's clothing.

How much obedience is necessary to be saved? It is the fundamental obedience of a follower of Jesus that counts—a life that, despite missteps like Peter's, always finds its way back to Jesus in repentance. Those who hold fast to Jesus and return to obedience after every fall will be saved.

It is important to note that Jesus does not allow us to postpone our repentance and conversion, but considers them urgent. Delayed obedience is dangerous. And who could hesitate with such a wonderful Savior? Let us quickly turn to Christ and remain steadfast in him.

*Matthew 7:24-29 Meng*

**24 Therefore, *everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.***

*Mt 7:21 Meng*

**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will *enter the kingdom of heaven*, but *only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.***

*Heb 5:8-9 Meng*

**8 And *[Jesus]*, *despite his sonship, learned obedience through his suffering.* 9 *Having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.***

Matthew 7:24-29; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 5:25; Luke 12:58; Ephesians 4:26; Acts 5:32; Hebrews 4:11; John 21:15-17

*3.1.20 Those who have the power of salt and resist sin will be saved in the end*

For Jesus, a life of sin—the conscious and persistent violation of the Ten Commandments—is incompatible with lasting salvation for eternity. As his disciples, we are called to preserve the "power of salt" within us: to recognize our sins, to forsake them, and to maintain peace among ourselves by caring for the welfare of our brothers and sisters in faith. In this way, we remain in a state of salvation.

However, those who consciously and unrepentantly tolerate sin in their lives—those who lose their saltiness—will inevitably be lost forever, even if they outwardly appear to be followers of Christ.

But the good news is that we do not have to be perfect and flawless in order to remain saved. The good shepherd searches for the lost sheep until he finds it and brings it home safely. The father waits longingly for the return of the prodigal son. And just as we are to forgive our brothers and sisters 70 times seven times, so too will our Father in heaven, , forgive us again and again when we turn to him.

*Mt 5:13 Slt*

*13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

*Mk 9:42-50 Meng*

*42 "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea. 43 And if your hand causes you to sin [wants to lead you into evil], cut it off! It is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 44 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble ["tempts you to do evil"], cut it off! It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 46 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have both eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. 49 For everyone will be salted*

*with fire [as every sacrifice is seasoned with salt]. 50 Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."*

*James 1:12 Slt*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

Mark 9:42-50; Matthew 5:13; James 1:12; Luke 15:7; Matthew 18:22; Luke 15:20-24

*3.1.21 Those who love God through Jesus more than themselves and who love their neighbors as themselves will be saved.*

Our salvation is bound to the person of Jesus. He must be more important to us than anything else. That is the most important condition of our redemption.

And the second condition for salvation to eternal life is not to judge others and to treat them at least as well as you treat yourself.

Those who love themselves more than others, however, have gone through the wide gate and are on the broad path to damnation.

*Mark 12:28-31*

*"Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus replied, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord, 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**' There is no commandment greater than these."*

*Luke 14:33 Slt*

*33 So likewise, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

*Matthew 7:12-14 Meng*

*12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. – 13 Enter (the kingdom of God)*



*through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 But narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

*Mt 7:1-2 Meng*

*1 Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you use, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Mark 12:31; Matthew 7:12-14; Matthew 7:1; James 2:8-13; James 4:10-12; Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 6:12; John 13:34; Luke 6:27-35

*3.1.22 (Only) those who are forgiven and who forgive others will see God's salvation*

Forgiveness is the beginning of every relationship with God. Those whose sins are not forgiven by God are not and will not be saved.

Those who forgive their brothers and sisters in faith and all people without limits and from the heart are saved and remain saved. Those who do NOT forgive their brothers and sisters in faith and other people WITHOUT LIMITS and FROM THE HEART and do not repent will come under the wrath and unforgiveness of God for their own sins and into (eternal) prison to pay for their own sins.

God leaves the timeframe for our own forgiveness of others open enough to give us the opportunity to process what has happened. And he sets it narrowly and urgently enough that we know that our (eternal) life depends on our timely forgiveness. Jesus and the apostles themselves forgave immediately and promptly, setting an example and a standard for us.

*Mt 6:12 Meng*

*12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*Mt 18:20-34 Meng*

*"You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you asked me*

to; 33 shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" 34 And **in anger** his master handed him over to **the torturers** until he had paid all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to you, **if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.**"

*1 Cor 4:12–13 Meng*

*12 When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;  
13 when we are slandered, we answer kindly.*

Mt 6:12; Mt 6:12; Mt 18:20-34; Mt 6:14-15; Lk 23:34; 1 Cor 4:12+13;  
Eph 4:20-32; Mt 5:25+26; 1 Jn 3:15

### *3.1.23 Those who love their brothers and sisters in faith will attain eternity*

Jesus emphasized love for our brothers and sisters in faith as the most important new commandment. Those who hate their brothers and sisters show that they were either never truly converted or, if they were once converted, that they have lost eternal life from God. True discipleship is manifested in the love we show one another.

Murder begins in our thoughts. Anger toward a brother or sister and a contemptuous attitude already bring us into judgment in God's eyes. Serious insults, which are equivalent to mental murder, make us guilty before God of hellfire.

God gives us only a short time to resolve our relationship with our brothers and sisters. He makes the urgency clear, for we do not know how much time we have left to repent of this life-threatening sin.

*John 13:34 Meng*

*34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

*1 John 3:14 Meng*

*14 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death.*

*Matthew 5:22 Slt*

*22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to judgment. But whoever says to his brother, "Raca," shall be liable to the council. But whoever says, "You fool," shall be liable to the hellfire.*

*Mt 5:23-26 Meng*

*23 So if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go first and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. 25 Settle matters quickly with your adversary while you are still on the way to court with him, lest your adversary hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.*

John 13:34; 1 Peter 1:22; Matthew 5:22; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:26; Luke 12:58; Matthew 5:23-26

### *3.1.24 Those who keep themselves and others in good conscience before God will be saved*

Acting contrary to one's conscience on a permanent basis is spiritually fatal—both for the follower of Christ who does so and for those who are led astray by his behavior. An unblemished conscience before God keeps us in salvation and is therefore crucial. Our conscience needs continuous training and clear guidance from God's Word in order to be shaped according to His will.

Every follower of Christ has an individual conscience that develops over the course of their life of faith. Therefore, we should not judge one another based on outward appearances or formalities. Rather, the love of Christ calls us not to cause our brothers and sisters to have conflicts of conscience through unloving behavior or lack of consideration. Those who lead others to act against their conscience can destroy them spiritually—a terrible and serious failure.

The normal attitude of a follower of Christ is to live constantly before God with a pure, unblemished conscience. Any lasting deviation that violates the conscience jeopardizes one's relationship with God and thus also one's salvation.

The love of Christ compels us to protect our brothers and sisters in faith and to keep ourselves on the path of salvation. A clear conscience leads to life, while a wounded conscience brings spiritual death. Therefore, it is essential for our salvation to shape our conscience and strengthen it through God's Word in order to live according to His will. In this way, we and our brothers and sisters remain in God's protection and presence.

*1 Tim 1:5 Meng*

*5 But the goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

*1 Tim 1:19 SlT*

*[Fight the good fight] 19 by keeping faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and have suffered shipwreck in their faith.*

*Rom 14:15+20 SlT*

*15 But if your brother is distressed because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died! ...*

*20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.*

Romans 14:15-23; 1 Corinthians 8:13; Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16; 1 John 3:20+21; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 1:8-9; 1 John 3:21; 1 Corinthians 4:4

*3.1.25 Those who live in sexual purity in God's eyes will enter heaven*

Those who live in sexual purity according to God's standards will attain the kingdom of heaven. God's Word makes it unmistakably clear that

fornicators, adulterers, and others who persist in sexual sin will not inherit the kingdom of God ( ). Believers should not deceive themselves about this.

God's grace is infinite and applies to all those who repent of their sins and no longer live in them. We can always repent of individual sins, and Jesus forgives us, as he himself teaches, 70 times 7 times and more. This great and faithful grace is our firm foundation.

But this grace must not be misunderstood: Jesus does not tolerate conscious, persistent sin in our lives, and this applies especially to sexual sins. Those who consciously tolerate sin without fighting against it place themselves outside of God's grace. Jesus' call is clear: repentance, purity, and a life that honors God.

*Mt 5:27-30 SlT*

*[Jesus says] 27 You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not commit adultery." 28 But I say to you, **whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** 29 **But if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.** 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

*Mt 19:4 SlT*

*4 But he answered and said to them, "Have you not read that the Creator made them male and female in the beginning?*

*1 Cor 6:9-10 SlT*

*9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Rev 22:14-15 Meng*

*7 He who overcomes shall inherit this (the new Jerusalem in heaven),*

*and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But ... the unclean ... the sexually immoral ... their part shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur: this is the second death.*

Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-22; Revelation 21:7-8; Revelation 22:14-15; 2 Peter 2:20; Matthew 18:22; Matthew 19:4

### *3.1.26 Your proper handling of money is an important prerequisite on the way to heaven*

Jesus clearly states that we cannot serve both God and money ("Mammon"). Only those who serve God alone and have a godly attitude toward their possessions will be saved. However, those who cling to their wealth cannot attain the kingdom of heaven.

Even those who start well with Christ but then give in to the temptations of wealth lose their spiritual fruit and jeopardize their salvation. A life determined by the pursuit of possessions leads away from God and into eternal separation. The path to eternal salvation requires us to put God above everything else—including our possessions.

Two things protect me from the dangers of wealth:

- Placing my trust not in money, but in God
- Sharing my wealth and giving generously

Those who treat their possessions in this way live according to God's will and will gain eternal life.

*Mt 6:24 Slt*

*You cannot serve God and mammon!*

*Mark 10:23+25 Slt*

*23 How hard it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! ... 5 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.*

*Mk 4:18-19 Slt*

*18 And those who were sown among thorns are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Mt 6:24; Mk 10:23-25; Mk 4:18-19; Mt 3:10; 1 Tim 6:17-19; Jas 5:3; Mt 4:10; 1 Jn 3:17; Phil 4:11-13

### *3.1.27 Those who serve as exemplary leaders will be saved*

Christian leaders should not exercise authority, but serve as examples for the flock. Their ultimate salvation—the attainment of the imperishable crown of glory—depends on their faithful, humble, and conscientious performance of their duties.

Only those who live their ministry in devotion to their brothers and sisters in faith will attain eternal life and be richly rewarded by God.

*Mark 10:44 Slt*

*44 And whoever among you wants to be first must be slave of all.*

*1 Peter 5:2-4 NIV*

*2 Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 and when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

*Mt 24:45-51 Meng*

*45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he returns. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48 But if that servant is wicked and says in his heart, 'My master is delayed,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, 51 and he will cut him in*

*pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mark 10:44; Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 3 John 1:9-11; Luke 12:42-45; Matthew 24:45-51

### *3.1.28 The diligent will inherit salvation*

Laziness leads to spiritual death, while diligence leads to abundance and life. Fill the emptiness within you with God's love and service to Him, instead of wasting it through laziness. In this way, you will preserve your spiritual life and gain eternal life.

Using your free time and energy for the glory of Christ and the good of others means following Christ.

Even as a follower and servant of Jesus, it is possible to be lost through omission, even if there are no obvious sins. It is enough to make nothing of one's life and not use the gifts that God has entrusted to one for Him. Those who bury their talents and do not use them for God's kingdom will be lost.

Free space in life that is not filled with Christ and for Christ is easily taken over by the devil. Those who use their gifts, time, and energy to live lazily and self-centeredly show that they are not following Christ, but the devil. True discipleship means actively putting one's life at the service of God.

*Matthew 25:23, 26*

*23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness! ...*

*26 'You wicked and lazy man,' his master replied. ... 28 Take his talent away from him and ... throw this **worthless slave** into the outer darkness. Then there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.*

*Jer 48:10 Meng*

***Cursed be he who does the work of the LORD carelessly.***



*Prov 12:24 SlT*

*24 The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy will be put to forced labor.*

Mt 25:23-30; Jer 48:10; Prov 12:24; 1 Tim 5:13-15; Heb 6:4-12; 2 Thess 3:10-12; Acts 9:36ff; Ezek 16:49-50; Deut 8:10-20

*3.1.29 Those who continue to do good until the end will inherit God's salvation*

What matters to God is our current state—how we are walking with Him at the moment of our death. This state determines whether God considers us righteous or not. In doing so, God pays more attention to our fundamental state than to individual deeds.

The life of a truly saved person is characterized by a ceaseless striving to do good. Nothing else corresponds to the life of a true follower of Jesus. Believers must learn to do good, to grow in it, and to make it a habit. But they must also remain vigilant, tirelessly doing good until the end. Only those who do not stop doing good will bear fruit for God—and only those who bear fruit will be saved.

God is faithful and does not forget our past good works, even when we experience periods of weakness or setbacks. But only those who remain faithful to the end in a life fundamentally filled with good works will inherit the promise of eternal life.

No matter how far someone was from God before conversion or on their journey, a spotless new beginning is possible at any time until our last breath. This repentance gives new life and opens the way to eternal salvation.

*Romans 2:6-8 Meng*

*6 who will repay each person according to their deeds: 7 eternal life to those who persevere in doing good, seeking glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and fury to those who are stubborn and disobey the truth, serving unrighteousness instead.*

*Matthew 24:45–51*

*45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46*

*Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he returns.*

*47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.*

*48 But if that **servant** is wicked and says in his heart, 'My master is delayed,' 49 and **begins to beat his fellow servants** and eat and drink with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he*

*does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, 51 and he **will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**"*

*Luke 15:32 Meng*

*32 We had to be merry and rejoice, for this your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.*

Romans 2:6-8; Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 15:32; Ezekiel 18:22-24; Ezekiel 33:13; Luke 15:32; Luke 8:14; Matthew 7:19; Hebrews 6:10-12; Rev 22:11; 1 Tim 6:17–20; Josh 24:20; Luke 6:27–38; Gal 6:9; 3 John 1:11; 1 Pet 2:12; Heb 10:24; Rev 2:23–27

### *3.1.30 Sanctification and purification along the way are the path to heaven*

Only those who sincerely strive for a sanctified life and purify their hearts and keep them pure will one day see God. Holiness and purity of heart are indispensable for fellowship with Him in eternity.

An active turning away and separation from the dark, godless world, as well as a life of purity, are required of God's children in order to experience the final acceptance by God in eternity in its full promise.

Those who do not make progress in purification and separation from the world will not see the fulfillment of God's greatest promises.

Only those who purify their hearts and keep them pure will see God in eternity. Sanctification and purity are the key to full communion with the Lord.

*1 Thessalonians 4:3 Meng*

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*

*Hebrews 12:14 Slt*

*14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord!*

*1 John 1:8 Meng*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*Num 19:20 Slt*

*But if anyone is unclean and does not want to be purified, he shall be cut off from the congregation, for he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water of purification has not been sprinkled on him, therefore he is unclean.*

*1 John 3:2-3 Meng*

*2 We shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

*Matthew 5:8 Slt*

*8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!*

Mt 5:8; 2 Cor 6:14-18 + 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 12:14; 1 John 1:8; Num 19:20; 1 John 3:2-3

### *3.1.31 Appropriate abstinence and struggle against your old nature, lusts, and desires save*

An essential characteristic of true believers is their struggle against the lusts that contend in the world and within themselves. They do not lead a dissolute life, but live with determination and abstinence.

God does not leave us in a vacuum: the fear of God, the struggle through the Spirit against the old nature, doing good, and waiting expectantly for Jesus are the best and most fulfilling substitutes for what we leave behind. In this way, we are strengthened to live a life that honors God.

Our struggle against our old earthly nature ("the flesh") is a normal part of our journey to heaven. We no longer live in the sinful patterns that displease God: sexual immorality, shamelessness, evil passions, greed—which is idolatry—and other unclean things that spring from our carnal nature. These things incur God's wrath.

At our conversion, we fundamentally renounced this way of life. But the struggle against these old desires remains, and we are called to "put them to death" and renounce them completely. This goal is an ongoing process. We are not yet perfect on this path, and it is not a sign of a lack of salvation that we struggle with these battles and also experience defeats—they are part of the daily cross of every saved follower of Jesus Christ.

Only through healthy exhortation and biblical teaching can we remain in a healthy faith. This faith leads us to put off the old ungodly life and to produce good works as fruit for God's praise, the good of others, and as a testimony to the world. A genuine faith in Jesus continually keeps us from following the desires of the old man and enables us to overcome these temptations.

Although we may fail along the way, Jesus is faithful and forgives us when we confess our sins and turn to him (1 John 1:8-9). The crucial thing is that our great lifeline is marked by a conscious denial of the desires and lusts of this world. Only if we remain on this path will we ultimately be saved forever.

*Romans 8:13 Slt*

*13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

*James 1:12-16 Meng*

*12 Blessed is the man who steadfastly endures temptation! For after he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

*1 John 5:4-5 Meng*

*4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

*5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Romans 8:13; James 1:12-16; 1 John 6:4-5; John 6:4-5; Eph 2:3; Gal 5:24; 2 Pet 1:3-5; Mt 5:29; Rom 8:13; Gal 6:7; 1 John 4:4; 2 Pet 2:9; Heb 2:17-18; 1 John 1:8-9

*3.1.32 Salvation is "in Christ" – and as long as I am "in Christ," I am in and have salvation.*

Salvation now is in Christ alone. Our mission as believers is to remain in Christ until the end.

Outside of Christ there is no life, neither now in this world nor in the world to come. All present and future salvation and glory is in Christ alone.

There are two stages of not remaining in Christ:

1. Temporarily: Then we will be ashamed at the return of Christ, but we will still be saved.
2. Fundamentally: If we permanently abandon our position **in Christ**, in whom alone is salvation, we will be lost.

We will be ashamed because we did not remain in Christ *at times*, because we did not take advantage of all the opportunities God placed in our lives, we did not exhaust the full potential of a life for God. But with our great lifeline, we have remained in Christ and we will be saved.

If we do not remain "in Christ" with our entire way of life, then we consciously separate ourselves from the vine. Everything that the vine has and constitutes, and everything that was given to us through our connection with the vine, is no longer ours because we have separated ourselves from Christ, and He, according to His word, no longer remains in

us. If we are such branches separated from Jesus the vine, we will be thrown away and wither. Then we will be thrown into the fire and burn.

Everything, yes everything in this life depends on our remaining "in Christ."

And where is the line between a "minor" failure to remain in Christ, which does not cost us our salvation, and a "serious" failure to remain in Christ, which robs us of our salvation?

Only our Lord himself knows that. For US, however, it is best to always and at all times strive to be in Christ, to remain in him, to become firm in him, and to let God preserve us in him. Then we are on the safe side with regard to our salvation AND we will not be ashamed at the coming of Christ.

*2 Cor 5:17 Meng*

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!*

*1 John 2:28 SlT*

*28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.*

*John 15:4-6 Meng*

*4 **Abide in me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches: **whoever remains in me and I in him bears much fruit**; but without me you can do nothing. 6 **Whoever does not remain in me** is thrown away like the branch and withers; then they are gathered and thrown into the fire, where they are burned.*

2 Cor 5:17; 1 John 2:28; John 15:4-6; Acts 4:12; John 1:4; John 14:6; Eph 1:10; Eph 2:7

*3.1.33 Salvation through the right attitude: humility and grace  
save from death*

Even the most devoted Christian ultimately only does what he or she owes to God. And recognizing this is salvation for the soul. It is not just a matter of avoiding works righteousness in our salvation.

It is also about rejecting a sense of entitlement as disciples of God based on our apparent "performance as followers." **God owes us nothing, not even the most devoted Christian.** But God gladly gives His grace and love and fulfills His promises to those who come to Him in humility.

*Matthew 18:23-28 Meng*

*26 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full. 27 The master took pity on that servant, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

*Luke 17:10 Meng*

*When you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.*

*1 Corinthians 4:7 SlT*

*7 For who gives you any advantage? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*

*1 Corinthians 15:10 Meng*

*10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain, but I have accomplished far more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

Luke 17:10; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Matthew 18:23-28; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Romans 11:5-6; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Matthew 18:23-28

*3.1.34 Those who live in such a way that they are deemed worthy of the future world will be saved*

The gospel is a calling to which one must first prove oneself worthy through devotion to Jesus, faithfulness, and good works done in God until the end in order to be finally saved.

Those who preserve their faith and good deeds until the end will be honored in the world to come and ultimately saved for eternity.

Our own prayers and the prayers of others for us are a strong support in helping us to remain on the path that makes us worthy of attaining the kingdom of God and eternal salvation.

*Mt 10:38 Slr*

**38 And whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

*Lk 21:36 Slr*

**Therefore, keep watch at all times and pray that you may be worthy to escape all that is about to happen and to stand before the Son of Man!**

*Rev 3:4+5 Slr*

**4 But you have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.**

Mt 10:38; Lk 21:36; Rev 3:4+5; Lk 3:8; Mt 22:8; 1 Thess 2:4; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 1:11

*3.1.35 Those who remain will be saved*

Christ saves us in his mercy—that is the cause of our salvation. Our task is to remain with him and to live our lives in a way that pleases him. The way to heaven is to remain in faith and love and to lead a holy life with prudence and devotion.



The practice of loving and honoring God carries with it the promise of present and future life. It is a constant attitude of remaining, a lifestyle that honors Jesus and corresponds to the Gospel. Those who hold fast to Jesus and this way of life until the end, whether until their death or until Jesus' return, will be saved eternally.

Through faith in Christ's mercy, we have been saved. By holding fast to this faith, we will be saved. God's Word calls us to keep ourselves in God's love—through practiced faith, prayer in the Holy Spirit, and constant expectation of God's mercy at Christ's coming.

*John 8:31 Meng*

*31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples.*

*1 Tim 2:14-15 Meng*

*They [women as a gender] 15 will be saved through childbearing, provided that they [women as individuals] continue in faith, love, and a sanctification with prudence.*

*1 Tim 4:8 SlT*

*8 For physical training is of little value, but godliness is of value in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

John 8:31; 1 Timothy 2:14-15; 1 Tim 4:8; John 15:5-6; 1 John 3:14-15; 1 Tim 4:8; Gal 6:8-9; 1 Cor 15:2; John 8:31; Matt 10:22; Heb 10:39; Jude 1:20-21

### *3.1.36 Those who persevere will reach heaven*

Hold fast to the gospel, hold fast to the word of life, hold fast to Jesus, hold fast to a discipleship that can stand in the eyes of Jesus—and you will gain eternal life.

*Hebrews 3:14 SlT*

*14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we **hold fast** the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.*

*1 John 2:24 Slt*

*24 So let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.*

*Phil 2:16 Meng*

*16 **Hold fast to the word of life**, so that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*

*Rev 2:25 Meng*

*25 Only hold fast what you have until I come! 26 And he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen vessels are broken in pieces, 28 even as I have received authority from my Father; and I will give him the morning star.*

Heb 3:7-14; 1 Jn 2:24; Phil 2:16; Phil 2:16; Rev 2:25; Heb 6:11-12; 1 Cor 15:1-2

*3:1:37 The patient will be blessed*

Patience in waiting for the Lord, combined with a lifestyle that is completely focused on him, is the key qualification for the final and blissful union with him at his return.

Steadfastness in suffering, perseverance to the end, patience, and clinging to God—that was the way to salvation in the Old Covenant, and it is still the way today in the New Covenant.

It is the compassion and grace of Christ that sustain us. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength, just as He was merciful to Job. If we cling to Him completely, He will carry us through everything and lead us to eternal salvation.

*James 5:7-11 Meng*

*7 Therefore, dear brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord! ... 11 Behold, we count those blessed who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and of the outcome the Lord gave him; know that the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

*Hebrews 6:11-15 Meng*

*11 But we earnestly desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 lest you become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises. ...15 **And in this way, he [Abraham] waited patiently and obtained what was promised.***

*Hebrews 10:35-39 Meng*

*35 So do not throw away your confident hope, **for** it brings a great reward. 36 **You need endurance [patience] , so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive what he has promised.** 37 For "just a little while longer, and he who is coming will come and will not delay.*

James 5:7-11; Hebrews 6:11-15; Hebrews 10:35-39

*3.1.38 Those who keep the faith and persevere will inherit salvation*

*Hypomeno [Greek]: to endure, to bear, and to remain*

This is the key term and key concept in the New Covenant for eternal salvation.

Patient perseverance in waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises is a basic requirement for obtaining them. And in this case, the promise is eternal life.

Those who remain faithful and steadfast in faith and persevere to the end will be eternally saved.

*Mt 24:13 Slt*

*13 **But he who endures to the end will be saved.***

*2 Tim 2:12 Slt*

*12 **If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us.***

*Lk 21:19 Slt*

*19 **By your endurance you will gain your souls.***

*Luke 8:15*

*15 But those in the good soil are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit **with steadfast endurance**.*

Mt 24:13; 2 Tim 2:12; Lk 21:19; Lk 8:15; Mt 10:22; Mark 13:13; Romans 12:12; James 5:11; Romans 2:7; Hebrews 10:36; Revelation 3:10; Revelation 13:10; Revelation 14:12

*3.1.39 Proving oneself comes through perseverance. And God preserves those who have proven themselves.*

The goal of our faith is our eternal salvation. We are already saved, but we are not yet finally saved. The path to our final salvation is a path of faith. It is the path of a faith that proves itself in trials. Faith that withstands trials is true faith. (Only) trials that are withstood show that our faith is genuine. Genuine faith is more precious than gold in the eyes of God. The path to our final salvation is also a path of faith marked by love for Jesus, even though we do not yet see him, and by unspeakable joy filled with glory in Jesus and in the hope he has in store for us. Faith and love for Jesus go hand in hand; they are one. And true faith knows unspeakable joy filled with glory.

**Preservation comes before proving.**

**Preserving and proving are one.**

**God preserves those who have proven themselves.**

**Confident waiting preserves.**

**Preserving the Word of God preserves.**

**Those who preserve the word of God in their daily lives are preserved by God.**

**Proven faith inherits eternity.**

*John 8:51 Meng*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.*

*Romans 5:3-5*

*3 Not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

*James 1:12 SlT*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

*Rev 3:10 Meng*

*Because you have kept my word of steadfast waiting for me, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.*

John 8:51; Romans 5:3-5; James 1:12; Revelation 3:10; Luke 11:28; John 8:51; 1 Timothy 3:9; John 17:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Cor 13:5; 1 Tim 6:14; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 4:7; James 1:3; James 1:12; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 1:21; Jude 1:24; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 14:12; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 22:7; Rev. 22:9; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; James 1:12

### *3.1.40 Watchful perseverance and instant obedience in times of greatest need save*

Vigilance in faith is a key characteristic of those who will be saved in the end. Without vigilance, Jesus himself would not have been able to bring his course to a victorious end.

Vigilance, separation from everything that does not fit with life with God, and internalization of the life of Christ are on the agenda of every true believer in Christ. Paul describes this whole process as "awakening

from sleep." It is an awakening from the sleep that a lost and godless world is sleeping in when Christ returns.

Being awake is connected with living in the light, with putting off the works of darkness, with putting on the armor of light, with putting on Jesus, and with guarding oneself against lusts.

Watching is associated with constant prayer, fundamentally for oneself and for others, and in terms of content, with resisting temptations and remaining faithful to God, with faithful attentiveness to what I have learned from God, with conscientious attentiveness to the enduring correct teaching with faith, with courage in faith, and with initial and lasting connection to heaven and Christ, with sobriety [= freedom from the godless intoxication of this world and adherence to the real heavenly truths], with the armor of faith and love and with the helmet of hope for salvation, with humility and submission to God and our brothers and sisters in faith, with NOT worrying through trust in God for our needs, and with mindfulness of the devil's attempts to attack us, with holding fast to what we have received and what we have heard, and living with perfect works toward God.

The opposite of watching is sleeping. And sleeping is (ultimately) deadly. What does it mean to sleep? It means to be without prayer, to be naked and no longer wearing the saving garment that makes entry into heaven possible in the first place. The saving garment is the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev. 19:8; Rev. 3:5; Rev 3:18). Sleeping means misunderstanding God's reality and not acting in accordance with it. Sleeping means doing works of darkness such as revelry and drunkenness, fornication and debauchery, strife and jealousy. Those whose works cannot stand in the eyes of God are spiritually dead. And sleeping and being dead are usually the same thing with Jesus.

*Matthew 25:10-12 Meng*

*10 While they went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and **the virgins who were ready went with him to the wedding feast**, and the door was shut. 11 Later, the other virgins also came and cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" 12 But he answered them, "**Truly I say to you, I do not know***

**you." 13 Therefore, be watchful, for you do not know the day or the hour.**

*Romans 13:11-14 Meng*

*11 And do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone, and the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

*1 Tim 4:16 SlT*

*6 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing so you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

Mt 25:10-13; Rom 13:11-14; 1 Tim 4:16; Mt 24:37-51; Rev 16:15; Rev 19:8; 1 Thess 5:6; Mt 26:41; Lk 21:36; Eph 6:18; Acts 20:31; Eph 5:14; 1 Thess 5:10; Rev 3:2; John 11:13

*3.1.41 Watching and praying are key to our eternal salvation*

**Watchful prayer is crucial for salvation.** Our best prevention against perishing like the world is our vigilance in prayer.

- **Constant prayer**
- **grateful prayer**
- **Prayer for protection from evil**
- **Prayer for boldness to proclaim the gospel for the salvation of others**

Save me, save us, and save others.

*Mk 14:38 Meng*

*38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

*Luke 21:36 Meng*

*36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*

*Col 4:2-4 Meng*

*2 Continue in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 Pray also for us, that God may grant us the opportunity to preach the word.*

Mk 14:38; Lk 21:36; Col 4:2-4; Mt 6:13; Eph 6:17-19; Col 4:2-4

*3.1.42 Those who do NOT allow themselves to be led astray by false Christs or a false gospel will be saved*

Faithfully following Jesus, unled astray by false earthly Jesuses and uncorrupted by a false gospel, leads to ultimate salvation and the crowning with the crown of life.

Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead (for our justification). And he will return visibly for all people at once. This is the saving message, the gospel. Any deviation from this saving message excludes one from salvation. We must hold fast to this gospel that saves us, undiluted, throughout our lives. We must not deviate from it in any way until the end.

**Seduction away from the true gospel and away from the true Jesus, who will light up the whole sky like lightning at his second coming, ranks among the number one enemies in the top list of robbers of eternal life.**

Blessed are those who do not allow themselves to be deceived by divisive false teachers with impressive speeches and flattery to their eternal detriment.

False apostles and wolves in sheep's clothing with a false gospel, disguised as angels of light, are like Satan in their desire to destroy the church through seduction, as they did with Eve. And they do so by turning them away from their simplicity toward Christ and claiming for themselves the loyalty that actually belongs to Christ.



However, it is not formal believers who will ultimately possess the eternal inheritance, but only those who overcome the temptations to which all humanity will be exposed through the powers of seduction.

False teachers and thus seducers can potentially destroy the faith of those who listen to them. And with a destroyed faith, no one can be saved and remain so. But we will be and remain saved by believing—healthily and correctly—in our Lord Jesus through the true gospel and until the end.

*1 Cor 15:1-2 Slt*

*1 But I remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, 2 through which you **are** also saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*Gal 1:9 Slt*

*9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed!*

*Mark 13:5-20 Meng*

*5 Then Jesus began to say to them, "Watch out that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and will lead many astray. [πλανάω – planao]. ... 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh [human being] would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened those days.*

1 Cor 15:1-4; Gal 1:9; Mk 13:5-20; Mt 7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Tim 4:14; Rom 16:17-19; Romans 16:18; 2 Corinthians 11:3-15; Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29; Mark 13:5-20; Matthew 18:11-14; Revelation 3:7-13; Hebrews 10:39; Hebrews 11:6

### *3.1.43 Those who remain with Jesus until the end will be saved*

The prerequisites and conditions for our salvation are: holding fast to the hope of eternal glory with complete confidence and pride until we reach our goal.

With Jesus, final salvation into his heavenly kingdom is never automatically guaranteed. We must always hold fast to him and to the gospel if we want to be saved eternally.

In the New Covenant, it is also an essential prerequisite for being a follower of Christ that our invisible spiritual home is more important to us than our earthly home (Matthew 6:19-34). And those who live this way will also hold fast to their hope until the end and will be saved eternally.

Enduring hardship, toil, deprivation, pain, suffering, and death for the sake of faith in Jesus only makes sense if there is something after this life (Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 15:12-34) that makes it worthwhile to follow God (in this way). The heroes of faith in the Old Covenant had and practiced such faith until the end. They did not abandon God until their death and are constant examples for us on our journey of faith with God (Hebrews 11). And united with them, we will share in the glorious eternity with God (v. 40).

*Hebrews 3:6 Meng*

*6 But Christ is faithful as a son over his own house, and we are his house, **provided we hold fast to our confidence and the hope we boast of until the end.***

*Mark 13:13 Meng*

*13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. **But he who endures to the end will be saved.***

*James 5:11 Slt*

*11 Behold, we count **those blessed who have persevered.** You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

Heb 3:6; Mk 13:13; Jas 5:11; Mk 13:13; Jas 5:11; 1 Cor 15:1-58; Heb 11:7; Heb 11:13-16; Heb 11:27-40

3.1.44 *Those who remain faithful to Jesus until death, even if it means martyrdom, will be saved.*

Those who die as martyrs because they hold fast to God's word and remain faithful to Jesus as witnesses will be saved eternally.

But whoever denies Jesus before men in order to spare his life, Jesus will also deny him before his Father in eternity, and he and she will be lost.

*Rev 12:11 Meng*

*11 These are the ones who have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and **they did not love their lives even unto death.***

*Acts 7:55-56 Meng*

*55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked steadfastly toward heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*

*56 And he cried out, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"*

*Matthew 10:33 Meng*

*33 But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my heavenly Father.*

*Rev 2:10-11 Meng*

*10 Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant that he will never see death.*

Rev. 12:11; Acts 7:55-56; Matt. 10:33; Rev. 2:10-11; Rev. 6:9-11; Rev. 20:4-6; Matt. 10:28-33; Matt. 16:25

3.1.45 *Those who overcome the beast and its image and the number of its name will arrive in heaven unharmed*

Salvation through Jesus enables us to act correctly—and it also demands it—for any wrong action would be disastrous for our own salvation. For:

**9** *If anyone ... worships the beast and his image ... 10 he too will drink the wine of God's wrath. ... and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his image have no rest day or night, and whoever receives the mark of his name. (Rev. 14:9-11 Slt).*

**If anyone.** There are no exceptions to this warning. Not even for followers of Jesus.

It could not be clearer that after conversion and rebirth, one is NOT automatically saved forever. Our salvation depends on our continued discipleship until the end.

The good news is that God has not destined us as followers of Christ for destruction, but that we may obtain salvation through Jesus Christ and live forever (1 Thess 5:9). We can be absolutely convinced of this and allow ourselves to be strengthened by God's promise and God's Spirit to remain faithful to him.

Yes, no one can guarantee in advance that they will remain faithful to Jesus until the end. If we rely on our own strength, we could end up like Peter, who denied his Lord. But our hope does not lie in our faith in ourselves, but in our faith and trust in Jesus, our Lord. We need and can already practice and develop a faith that looks to Jesus day by day, second by second, expecting everything from him and nothing from ourselves. Jesus and the Father are for us, the Holy Spirit contends in us, NOW. Who should be against us, NOW? To him be the glory, he can and will give me NOW what I need NOW and bring us through NOW and enable us to remain faithful to him. God is good and means well, and he is able to preserve the good of faith entrusted to us—until the end. We can know this and trust in it. And if we overcome through God's grace, then we will also experience it in the end.

Those who overcome the beast have three characteristics:

- they belong to God.  
*They were purchased only through the blood of Christ and belong to God. They have been written in the book of life since the foundation of the world.*
- they obey His commandments  
*truly redeemed people adhere to what God says*
- they trust in Jesus  
*Only through (their faith in) Jesus can they live as they do and overcome.*

*Rev. 14:9-13 Meng*

*9 Another angel, a third one, followed them, saying in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives the mark on their forehead or hand, 10 they too will drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured out undiluted into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." 12 Here is the perseverance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."*

*Rev 13:8 Meng*

*8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.*

*Rev 15:2-4 Meng*

*2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God in their hands. 3 They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*

Rev. 14:9-13; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 15:2-4; 1 Thess. 5:9; Matt. 26:35; John 21:15-17; 2 Tim. 1:12+14

*3.1.46 Those who remain vigilant and devoted to their Lord until he comes will be saved*

Only the elect will be saved when Jesus returns.

Who are among the elect who will be able to stand when Jesus returns?

- Those who do not allow themselves to be seduced by a false Christ
- Those who are vigilant and persevere to the end
- Those who value Christ more than earthly things
- Those who are willing to lose their lives in order to save them

*Matthew 24:4-44*

*4 Jesus answered them, "See to it that no one deceives you! ... 13 But he who endures to the end will be saved. ... unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." ... 17 Then let no one on the roof go down to take anything out of his house; 18 and let no one in the field return to get his cloak ... 42 "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*

*Luke 17:33 Meng*

*Whoever seeks to **preserve** his life will **lose** it, and whoever loses it will preserve it.*

*2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 Meng*

*1 Now we ask you, dear brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him: 2 Do not be easily shaken from your calmness or alarmed by anything... 3 **Let no one deceive you in any way.***

Matthew 24:4-44; Luke 17:33; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 Timothy 6:14

*3.1.47 Those who, at the moment of Christ's return, consider Christ more important than anything else will be with their Lord forever.*

Only those for whom Jesus is fundamentally more important than eating, drinking, marrying, buying and selling, planting and building will not be suddenly surprised and swept away by God's judgment. This applies to all people and to apparent followers of Jesus alike.

Those who are willing to lose their lives for Jesus' sake will gain eternal life on the day of Jesus' return. Where our hearts, yours and mine, truly lie will be revealed in an instant and reflexively on the day of Jesus' return.

Those who have practiced and become steadfast in finding complete satisfaction in Jesus alone in this life and wanting nothing else but Jesus alone will react correctly in the decisive moment, reflexively and without effort. He or she has already been freed from all worldly things—nothing can distract him or her from Jesus and from the heavenly home and heavenly joy. And that moment—the most critical moment in world history—will reveal what seeds we, as followers of Jesus, have sown in our hearts throughout our lifelong discipleship.

*LK 17:22-36 Meng*

*26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They did eat, they did drink, they did marry, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was in the days of Lot: they ate and drank, they bought and sold, they planted and built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— 30 so shall it be on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day, anyone on the roof with their belongings in the house should not go down to get them; and likewise, anyone in the field should not turn back. 32 **Remember Lot's wife! 33 Anyone who tries to preserve their life will lose it, and anyone who loses their life will preserve it.***

*James 5:7-8 Meng*

*7 Therefore, dear brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord. Consider the farmer who waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until it receives the early and late rains. 8 You also, be patient and strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.*

*2 Peter 3:3-15 Meng*

*9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, but he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and on that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 as you wait for and hasten the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved by fire and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to his promise, we await new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are awaiting these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.*

Luke 17:22-36; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:3-15; 1 John 3:2-3; 1 Peter 1:13; Hebrews 10:23-25

*3.1.48 The victor's crown is won by those who fight the good fight here according to the rules of combat and run the race of faith to heaven.*

All followers of Christ are promised the victor's crown and the crown of eternal life. The victor's crown represents the final attainment of eternal life in glory. It is awarded to those who love the Lord. The victor's crown is already waiting for us as we faithfully follow God. Those who faithfully follow Jesus NOW are assured of the crown of eternal life NOW. If they were to die now, they would come to God and receive the crown.



But the victor's crown of eternal life is also awarded only on the basis of a life lived in accordance with the rules **until the end**, not solely on the basis of a good start. Yes, the thief on the cross next to Jesus had a quick start-to-finish victory and was saved. But all those whose journey is longer must also **remain on the path to victory for the entire race**. And what does that mean?

It means

- running in such a way that I receive the prize of victory
- to run toward the goal
- to give up many things in order to receive the prize
- holding on to what I already have until the end
- to run according to the rules
- not preaching to others and proving myself unfit
- successfully resisting temptation
- not ruling in responsibility, but serving
- not allowing the victor's crown to be stolen by my own inconsistent actions or by someone else, e.g., through a false gospel
- Fight the good fight, that is, do God's will in principle, even in the face of opposition
- preserving faith in Jesus AND the true gospel intact
- rejoicing in the visible return of Jesus, that is, loving Jesus more than anything else in the world

It is important to lay aside everything that weighs us down and persevere to the end. **Jesus showed us how to do this**. Jesus also drew on his strength to persevere, overcoming the pain of the cross and the shame, **because he looked to the reward in heaven**. When we look to Jesus, our crowned example in heaven, we will not grow weary or lose heart in our race to heaven to finally receive the crown of victory of eternal life.

*1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Meng*

*24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. 27 No, I discipline my body and make it*

*my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

*Hebrews 12:1-3 Meng*

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

*James 1:12 Slt*

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

1 Cor 9:24-27; Heb 12:1-3; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:2-4; Rev 3:11; Rev 2:10

### *3.1.49 Summary: The path of the Spirit and following Christ to eternal salvation*

Faith in Jesus Christ is a long and challenging path that leads us to the crown of eternal life. This path requires not only a good start, but also perseverance and patience. Through the supernatural help of God, which the Holy Spirit gives us, we are enabled to overcome the challenges of faith and reach the goal.

### **The overwhelming love of God as motivation**

The love of God that we encounter in conversion is the foundation of our faith. It grants us forgiveness for our sins and motivates us to continue on the path of faith. Even when we stumble and fall, we know that we can come to God at any time to be cleansed. The immeasurable love and grace of God is our motivation to run the race faithfully to the end.

The Holy Spirit, whom we received at rebirth, is our daily source of strength. Through Him, we are enabled to remain faithful on the path of faith.

### **Diligence, perseverance, and patience: the path to the goal**

A life of faith requires patience, perseverance, and discipline. We are called to persevere and hold fast in difficult times, *James 1:12: Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* This perseverance helps us to complete the race to the finish line and receive the crown of victory.

### **The vicarious atoning death of Jesus and his resurrection**

Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection after three days are the foundation of the Christian faith. Through this vicarious atoning death, we are reconciled with God and receive forgiveness for our sins. Faith in Jesus, who died and rose again for us, is the foundation on which we build our lives.

### **Fruit for God: A measure of true salvation**

True salvation is evident in the fruit we bear for God. Jesus said in *John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* This fruit is the natural result of a redeemed life and is evident in good works and service to others.

### **Brotherly love and forgiveness: the foundation of life in community**

Another characteristic of a faithful Christian life is love for our brothers and sisters in faith. Jesus calls us to love one another as he loves us. In *John 13:34–35*, Jesus says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And in *Matthew 20:26–28*, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." This love is manifested in a willingness to forgive and encourage one another.

## **Humility and love for God: a prerequisite for discipleship**

Following Jesus requires humility. Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom of God are the humble. In *Luke 22:26-27*, he says *The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the leader like the servant*. This humility is shown in the willingness to serve God and others in love.

Love for God must be the greatest love in our lives. It is the foundation for our discipleship and our life in obedience to his commandments.

## **Dealing with money and sexual purity**

The handling of money requires that we love God more than money. In *Matthew 6:24*, Jesus says *No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and mammon!* We are called to handle money responsibly and use it as a tool that God has entrusted to us to build his kingdom.

Sexual purity is also a central part of Christian life. In *1 Corinthians 6:18-20*, we are told that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we should avoid sexual sin in order to preserve our purity.

## **Maintaining an unblemished conscience**

It is crucial that we maintain a clear conscience, as our conscience is an internal yardstick for our behavior. In *1 Timothy 1:19*, it says, *"By holding on to faith and a good conscience, some have suffered shipwreck in their faith."* A clear conscience helps us to live in truth and stand before God in obedience.

## **The importance of mission and evangelism**

A redeemed person has the task of proclaiming the gospel. In *Matthew 28:19-20*, Jesus gives us the Great Commission: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."* Every believer is called to spread the gospel and help others come to faith in Jesus as well.

## **Continuous purification through God's grace**

Even if we remain faithful in our belief, we will stumble again and again. But in all this, we can know that God's love and grace are always available to us. As *1 John 1:9* says

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ( ).* We can come to God again and again and be cleansed—not because we deserve it, but because God forgives us.

## 3.2 The way of the "flesh" away from salvation to judgment and destruction

The way of the flesh leads away from God and toward destruction and judgment. This path is characterized by selfish actions, unbridled passions, and a conscious or unconscious rejection of God's grace. The Bible warns that this path not only jeopardizes eternal salvation, but also brings painful consequences in the here and now.

The subchapters show how continued sinning without repentance, spiritual laziness, and persisting in worldly pleasures lead to a life that rejects God's truth. Particularly dangerous are unforgiveness and false teachings, which harden the heart and destroy the connection to God.

This path ends in divine judgment and eternal separation from God. But the warning also offers hope: those who repent and open themselves to God's grace can escape destruction and find the way to eternal salvation again.

### 3.2.1 *Those who receive God's grace in vain will die*

Our faith in and service to our Lord is not in vain.

Holding fast to the unadulterated gospel does not mean coming to faith in vain.

If we do not hold fast to our faith in and service to our Lord Jesus, we have come to faith in vain.

If we receive God's grace in vain, so that it bears no fruit for God, then from God's perspective, the grace of God we have received has been in vain for our salvation.

Not serving God with a pure heart does not mean standing in faith and does not mean being saved and becoming saved.

Being led astray from the true gospel or being seduced by sin hangs the sign "in vain" over God's grace in our lives—in time and in eternity.

*2 Cor 6:1 SlT*

*1 But as co-workers, we also urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.*

*1 Corinthians 15:1-2 SlT*

*1 But I remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you also received and in which you also stand, 2 by which you are also saved, **if you hold fast to the word** I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*Phil 2:14-16 Meng*

*4 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe. 16 Hold fast to the word of life, to my glory on the day of Christ, because then I will not have run in vain or labored in vain.*

*1 Thess 3:5 SlT*

*5 Therefore, when I could no longer bear it, I sent (a messenger) to you to find out about your faith, lest the tempter had tempted you and our work should be in vain.*

*2 Cor 6:1-10; Phil 2:14-16; Gal 4:5-11; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Jude 1:3-5; 1 Thess 3:2-6*

### *3.2.2 Continued sinning without repentance kills*

Those who consciously and fundamentally refuse to renounce their sin cannot expect forgiveness from Jesus. Rather, judgment awaits them.

Jesus cares whether we sin. We cannot excuse ourselves by saying that we cannot help but sin. Jesus will not allow it. And he trusts us to stop sinning. After all, we have encountered Jesus and been healed. There are no better conditions for no longer consciously clinging to our sins. Jesus is our forgiver of sins and our judge over our sins. And he does not allow persistent and unrepentant sinning. Those who do not repent of their sins and forsake them must expect the worst consequences, both in time and eternity. We don't like to hear this; we are not used to this

from Jesus. But it is part of his message and his gospel. Those who fundamentally repent of their sins and forsake them will be saved. Those who fall and sin out of weakness, failure, or need, or for whatever reason, can always come to Jesus and receive forgiveness. We learn this in many other places in God's Word. But those who consciously and fundamentally do not forsake their sin cannot expect forgiveness from Jesus. Rather, God's judgment will await them.

*Matthew 5:29 Meng*

*If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

*John 5:14 Meng*

*14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "You are now well; sin no more, lest something worse happen to you."*

*Rev 3:3 SlT*

*So remember how you received and heard, and keep it and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come upon you like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.*

*Mt 11:20 Meng*

*Then he began to rebuke the cities where most of his miracles had been done, because they did not repent.*

Mt 5:29; Jn 5:14; Rev 3:3; Mt 11:20; Tit 3:10-11; Jas 1:13-16; Rev 3:3; Prov 28:13; 1 Jn 3:6; Mt 6:12; Lk 5:8-9; Luke 7:48; 1 John 2:1-2; James 5:16; Acts 2:47-41; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1-2

### *3.2.3 Jesus spits out the lukewarm*

In the words and epistles of Jesus in Revelation, it becomes clear that only those who overcome, who know Jesus, follow him, are firmly united with him, and love him will be saved eternally.

It is possible to become lukewarm in following Jesus and thus lose one's salvation. But those who repent of their lukewarmness while there is



still time will not be spit out of Jesus' mouth and will regain Jesus as their Lord and thus their salvation.

*Rev. 3:14-22 Meng*

*16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

*1 Cor 16:22 Slt*

*22 If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Maranatha.*

*Matthew 25:8-10 Meng*

*8 But the foolish [virgins] said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." 9 The wise replied, "No, there will not be enough for us and for you; go to the merchants and buy some for yourselves." 10 While they went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and the virgins who were ready went with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.*

Rev 3:14-22; 1 Cor 16:22; Mt 25:8-10

### 3.2.4 *The lists of deadly sins in the New Testament show us the limits of Christ's grace*

This happened when we heard the gospel of Jesus Christ:

We were loved and called by Jesus Christ, we allowed ourselves to be called, we received God's grace and became his children. We were sanctified, that is, set apart for God and purified. We follow our calling and are on a path of purification, sanctification, and strengthening in faith and waiting for God.

In the course of our conversion, we turned away from our old life and turned to God. We turned away from being fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of boys, thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers, and the like. We were washed and sanctified and renewed through Christ.

Jesus loves us and encourages us to grow in purification and sanctification and to become more like him. He warns us not to allow sin back into our lives as a fundamental and, in particular, permanent lifestyle.

Jesus has clearly defined the things that determine whether Jesus will reject us in heaven instead of accepting us: it is our mortal sins that prevent us from spending eternity with Jesus. This does not refer to a single actual sin, for which we can repent, turn away, and experience forgiveness. Everyone can, should, and may turn to God again and again, as long as it is today. But mortal sins, from which we do not separate ourselves, separate us from God. This means that those who live permanently in these sins and do not repent in time will meet their Lord not as Savior, but as Judge.

**Those who empty words like "Lord" and "Lord" without the will to do God's will will be lost.**

For Jesus himself and the apostles never tire of admonishing that neither fornicators, adulterers, and child molesters, nor those who practice homosexuality, nor the unjust, nor the effeminate, nor cowards, nor unbelievers, nor those stained with abominations, nor murderers, nor sor-

cerers, nor idolaters, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers, nor lawless, nor violent, nor sinners, nor the unholy, nor murderers, nor idolaters, nor slanderers, nor liars, nor any other persistent sinners will be saved. They will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

All who live this way without repentance, before or after their conversion, have no salvation or lose their salvation.

But there are more mortal sins:

*Fruitlessness – The result of our choices and priorities*

Whoever hears the word of God and does not bear fruit after a reasonable time in God's eyes will be lost. And whoever hears God's word and begins to bear fruit but then stops bearing fruit will also be lost.

**Fruit killers**, and thus **life killers**, are also

- Superficiality in faith
- Everyday worries
- the temptations of wealth and
- other desires

**Unforgiveness** is a mortal **sin**.

Sins against the double commandment of love, to love God and our neighbor, and sins against the 10 commandments in thoughts, words, and deeds kill us spiritually.

Denying Jesus in words and deeds is my spiritual death.

I also come to death when I

- I allow myself to be dominated by the desire for evil
- I worship idols, i.e., if anything is more important to me than God—this includes the love of money
- have sex outside of marriage between a man and a woman
- I challenge God and try
- grumble

All of these are mortal sins if we persist in our unrepentant attitude. No one is safe from such temptations and sins on their own. Salvation can only be found in humbly looking up to God, who does not tempt us beyond our strength and who can help us to resist temptation and restore us after our fall when we repent.

### **Only officially in the service of God, but inwardly rebellious**

Woe to those who do not faithfully carry out their God-given office – and reward to those who go one step further in love, devotion, and self-sacrifice.

Those who, as servants of God, do not listen to God's word, neglect their God-given responsibility, and abuse their privileges will be killed by God—eternally. And this is regardless of whether they once started out well with God or not.

Other deadly sins are

- strife and jealousy
- Anger and quarreling
- Slander and malicious gossip
- Impurity
- a dissolute lifestyle

For those who do not know Christ, the following applies: they are already lost because of these very things and will be condemned if they do not repent.

But the followers of Jesus have fundamentally turned away from such a life and have been cleansed by God. No one who continues to live in these things has taken the right step toward salvation.

Yet every follower of Christ is in danger of falling back into these things throughout his life.

Those who cultivate a lifestyle that includes the deadly sins will be lost and damned.

Those who do not repent of their mortal sins within the limited time of Christ's grace have Christ as their enemy, who will cast them into the

lake of fire, the second death, and will not allow them to enter the heavenly Jerusalem.

The followers of Jesus who believe in Christ are constantly admonished by all the apostles not to do such things and to cleanse themselves of them, or to "kill" such behaviors. Only those who consistently and actively fight against these still existing expressions of the old man within themselves are true followers of Christ. Those who allow themselves to be permanently determined by such things and do not fight against them by means of the Spirit will not be saved.

Those who rebel against God and His commandments are children of death—and there is a time when it is too late for repentance. Therefore, let us seek God and listen to His Word while there is still time!

*Mark 10:21 Slt*

*21 Jesus looked at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you still lack: go, sell everything you have and give (the proceeds) to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come and follow me!"*

*1 John 4:19 Slt*

*19 We love him because he first loved us.*

*1 John 5:3 Slt*

*3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not burdensome.*

*1 John 3:14 Slt*

*14 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love his brother remains in death.*

*Matthew 19:17 Meng*

*But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.*

*Matthew 7:19 Meng*

*[Jesus says] Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

*Lk 6:46-49 Meng*

*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*

*Rev 22:11-15 Meng*

*11 Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong, and the one who is filthy continue to be filthy; but let the righteous continue to practice righteousness, and the holy continue to be holy. 12 "Behold, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay each one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

*Mark 10:21; 1 John 3:14; 1 John 1:9; Matthew 7:19; Matthew 18:34-35; Mark 11:25-26; Revelation 21:8; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10; Acts 15:28-29; Acts 16:4-5; 1 Cor 10:1-13; Mk 12:1-11; Lk 6:46-49; Luke 16:9-13; 1 Corinthians 9:14-18; Matthew 23:13-14; Matthew 11:21; Revelation 8:13; Revelation 9:12; Revelation 11:14; Revelation 12:12; Revelation 18:10-19; Gal 1:8-9; 2 Pet 2; Jude 1:11; Ezek 3:16-19; Heb 11:6; Rom 8:8-13; 1 Cor 10:1-13; Rom 8:11; Gen 3:6; 1 Tim 2:14; Rom 5:14; Mt 10:37-38; Gen 1:27-28; Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 10:8; 1 Cor 10:10; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Matthew 5:21-26; Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 12:14; James 3:14-16; James 4:1-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 1:9-11; Revelation 22:15;*

### *3.2.5 Your unforgiveness will surely rob you of your salvation*

Treating fellow believers with respect and seeking reconciliation in good time while still alive will protect you from God's judgment and condemnation.

Those who do not forgive others, especially their brothers and sisters in faith, exclude themselves from God's forgiveness and, as a result, from eternal salvation. Praying to God for protection is an important key to not falling into sin.

*Luke 11:4*

*And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us! And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!*

*Matthew 6:15 Slt*

*15 But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

*Matthew 18:32-35 Meng*

*32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? 34 And in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he paid all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from your heart.'*

Luke 11:4; Matthew 6:7-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 5:21-26; Mark 11:26; Luke 6:37

### *3.2.6 Those who live in sexual sin without repentance will have no place in the kingdom of God and Christ*

People and even fellow believers who live in sexual immorality, homosexuality, and continual adultery will have no place in the kingdom of God and in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Again and again, Scripture cites sexual sin as a reason for falling under God's judgment. Temporal judgment through church discipline for sexual and other sins, as in the letters to the Corinthians and in Revelation, still offers the possibility of salvation, especially if there is repentance in this life. But those who persistently sin in the sexual realm and do not repent and turn away from their sins will also be condemned by God in eternal judgment.

*1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Meng*

*9 Do you not know that no one who does wrong will inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Rev 21:7-8 Meng*

*7 He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and*

*he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

*Matthew 5:27-30*

*27 You have heard that it was commanded (to the ancients): 'You shall not commit adultery. 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away from you; for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

1 Cor 6:9-10; Rev 21:7-8; 1 Cor 5:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Rev 2:21; Rev 22:15; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 2:18-29; Heb 13:4; Mt 5:27-30

*3.2.7 Those who leave the space of God's grace and love are mercilessly abandoned by God*

God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, so that he could give us everything with him. Jesus left glory and was obedient to the Father, obedient even to death, so that we might have life.

On the other hand, God does not spare any created being that leaves its place assigned by God—nor any Christian who leaves the great and wide space of grace of God's love . But Jesus, in his love, wants us to find repentance and be saved. As long as we are still alive and Jesus has not yet returned, he gives us time of love and grace to live and remain on the path of life, or to return after a fall.

*Eph 1:10-11 Meng*

*[God] wanted to bring everything in heaven and on earth together **in Christ** as the head. 11 **In him** we have now also **become partakers of the (promised) salvation.***

*John 15:6 Meng*

*6 If anyone **does not remain in me**, he is thrown away like a branch and*



*withers; then they are gathered up and thrown into the fire, where they are burned.*

*2 Peter 3:9-15 Meng*

**9 The Lord** is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, but he is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** ... 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Eph 1:10-11; John 15:6; 2 Pet 3:9-15; 1 John 2:28; Moses 3; Ezek 28:11-19; 2 Chron 36:11-21; Luke 19:21-44; Jude 1:6; Jude 1:7; 1 Peter 3:20; Jude 1:5; Luke 12:45-46; 1 Corinthians 9:16; Matthew 25:25; Matthew 18:33-35; Romans 1:29-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:15; Luke 15:11-32

### *3.2.8 A false gospel kills*

The gospel is THE key revealed by God to our eternal salvation. There is no other key.

A false gospel spiritually kills those who believe it and hold fast to it.

The only true gospel is the message of the love of God, who wants all people to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ and not be lost. At its core, the gospel says:

- All people are sinners, lost and heading for damnation. No one can come to God and be reconciled with him by their own strength and merit. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross out of love for our sins and was physically raised from the dead (for our justification). Through our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which is a gift from God, he saves and justifies us without our own merit and restores our fellowship with God. Through faith in him, we are reconciled with God and loved by God. For all who obey Jesus from now on, he is the author of their eternal salvation.

This is the saving message, the gospel. Any deviation from this saving message excludes us from salvation. We must hold fast to this gospel, which saves us eternally, throughout our lives. We must not deviate from it in any way until the end.

The teaching

- of righteousness
- of abstinence
- future judgment.

A gospel that does not contain this is a false gospel. A gospel in which sinners do not also fear God because of their sins is not a gospel.

Where the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ and faith come together, there is salvation. And even saving faith is a gift from God.

An indispensable part of our salvation is

- believing in the right Jesus
- believing in the right gospel
- and, as a consequence of both, to receive the only saving Spirit of God

Only those who hold fast to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ until the end will be saved eternally.

*1 Corinthians 15:1-2*

*Now I remind you, brothers, of the **gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand firm, 2 **and by which you are saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.***

*John 3:16 Slt*

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that **everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.***

*Hebrews 5:9 Slt*

*9 And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

*Gal 1:6-9 Slr*

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him **be accursed!** 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be accursed!*

1 Cor 15:1-58; Gal 1:6-9; Heb 5:9; John 3:16; Matt 25:41; Rom 9:2; Eph 2:10; John 3:36; Acts 24:24-25; Rom 1-3; 1 Thess 1:10; Mt 9:11-13; Mk 14:22-2; Mt 4:17; Mt 5; Mt 6; Mt 7; Rom 6; Rom 8:13; Rev 4:8-10

### *3.2.9 Questioning and twisting what God says in His Word leads to perdition*

Those who do not do God's Word are lost. Those who distort God's Word beforehand do not do God's Word – like the serpent in paradise.

We do not believe and follow the Word of God by

- questioning the inspiration of God
- subjecting the Word to arbitrariness: *"The Bible is not, but only contains God's Word."*
- limiting God's Word to an earlier cultural era and only accepting what seems to fit into today's godless culture
- misinterpreting the Bible because we do not WANT to follow it
- interpreting the Bible so rigidly and literally that we miss what is really meant
- Doing nothing from the Bible because we seem to be able to do so little
- Dismiss our personal responsibility because of multiple possible interpretations
- Not doing God's Word, even though we know what we are supposed to do

- developing other arguments so that we don't have to believe and obey God's word

*Mt 7:24-27 Meng*

*24 Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*

*25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

*26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall."*

*Mark 7:6-7 Meng*

*6 This people honors me (only) with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7 but in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*

*Matthew 25:14-30 Meng*

*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness! ... You wicked and lazy servant! ... 28 Take his talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ... 30 But cast the useless servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*2 Peter 1:20-21 Meng*

*20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

*John 1:14 Meng*

*14 And the Word became flesh [human].*

*John 7:16-17 Slt*

*My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do*

*his will, he will know whether this teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.*

*2 Tim 3:14-17 Meng*

*14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*Gal 3:16 SlT*

*16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say, "and to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "and to your seed," who is Christ.*

*Mt 5:18 SlT*

*For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

*Lk 24:25 SlT*

*25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"*

*Ezra 7:10 SlT*

*10 For Ezra had set his heart to study and practice the law of the LORD, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.*

*John 17:17 SlT*

*17 Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth.*

*Genesis 3:1 Meng*

*1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said..."*

*1 Sam 15:23 Meng*

*For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee.*

*Jer 8:7-8 SlT*

*But my people do not know the law of the LORD! 8 How can you say, "We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us"? Indeed, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie.*

*Ps 33:4 Meng*

*4 For the word of the LORD is true, and all his works are faithful.*

*Ps 119:57 Meng*

*The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep your words.*

*Deut. 12:28 SlT*

*28 Keep and obey all these words that I command you, so that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, because you do what is right and pleasing in the eyes of the LORD your God.*

*1 Chr 16:15 Meng*

*He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.*

*Mt 24:35 SlT*

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

*Jer 23:29-31 Meng*

*29 "Is not my word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? 30 Therefore, beware... I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who use their tongues to prophesy falsely in my name.*

*Mal 2:7 SlT*

*7 For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*

*Mt 23:23 SlT*

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and neglect the more important matters of the law, namely justice, mercy, and faith! These should be done, and those should not be neglected.*

*Jn 5:39 Slt*

*39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me.*

*Ps 119:18 Meng*

*Open my eyes, that I may see the wonders of your law.*

*Ps 119:130 Slt*

*130 The unfolding of your words gives light and understanding to the simple.*

*Rev 22:6-7 Slt*

*6 And he said to me, "These words are certain and true, and the Lord, the God of the holy prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. 7 Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book!"*

*Rev 22:18-21 Meng*

*8 I (John) testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book; 19 and if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon!" "Amen, come, Lord Jesus!" 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.*

John 7:17; Matthew 7:24-27; Mark 7:6-7; Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Peter 1:20-21; John 1:14; John 7:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Galatians 3:16; Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:25; Ezra 7:10; John 17:17; Genesis 3:1; 1 Samuel 15:23; Jeremiah 8:7-8; Psalm 33:4; Psalm 119:57; Deuteronomy 12:28; 1 Chr 16:15; Mt 24:35; Jer 23:29-31; Mal 2:7; Mt 23:23; Jn 5:39; Ps 119:18; Ps 119:130; Rev 22:6; Rev 22:18-21

### *3.2.10 False teachers and teachers of trivial matters destroy spiritual life*

Our salvation is both the work of God and bound to our faith. It is not only faith at the beginning of our life of faith that saves us, but a steadfast, pure faith that carries us through to the end and leads us to God. This requires faithfully following Jesus and believing in the true biblical gospel—in the true Jesus and not in false teachings or distorted ideas.

Genuine faith is manifested in love for God and for people, which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. However, those who allow themselves to be led astray by false gospels, false prophets, or spectacular but deceptive signs and wonders will be lost. The same applies to false teachers, teachers of trivial matters, church dividers, and seducers who lead others away from the truth. Remaining steadfast in faith and love is crucial for our ultimate salvation.

*John 3:36 SlT*

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.*

*1 Cor 15:1-2 SlT*

*But I remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you also received and in which you also stand firm, 2 by which you are also saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*1 Tim 1:5 SlT*

*5 But the end goal of the commandment is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.*

*Mt 24:4-27 Meng*

*4 Jesus answered them, "Watch out that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the (returning) Christ,' and will lead many astray. ... 11 And many false prophets will arise and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

*2 John 1:5-13 Meng*

*5 And now I am writing to you—that we should love one another. 6 And*



*this is love (toward God), that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. 7 For many false teachers have gone out into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ as the Messiah who appeared in the flesh: this is how the false teacher and the antichrist are revealed. 8 Keep watch over yourselves, so that you do not lose what you have already achieved through your labor, but receive a full reward. 9 Anyone who goes beyond this and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever remains in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.*

*Tit 3:9-11 Meng*

*9 But have nothing to do with foolish questions and genealogies, with disputes and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and fruitless. 10 After a first or second warning, reject anyone who causes divisions. 11 You know that such a person has strayed from the faith and is a sinner, condemned by his own conscience.*

John 3:36; Luke 10:25-27; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:3-11; Matthew 24:3-27; 2 John 1:5-13; Titus 1:5-16; Titus 3:9-11; Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 7:12-13

### *3.2.11 [Seduction into] Carnality is deadly*

God has made us new, beloved creatures, recreated in the true image of God. But our "flesh," the part of our old nature that is still alive, remains full of desires that are contrary to God's law. It resists God's will, works against His law, and is under His condemnation.

Through Christ, however, we have been freed from the power of the flesh. We no longer have to follow the flesh, but can overcome its desires through the Spirit of God. However, those who allow themselves to be dominated by their former desires will not bear fruit for God and will ultimately be lost.

*1 Peter 4:1-2 SlT*

*1 Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffered in the flesh has ceased from*

*sin, 2 in order not to live the rest of the time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.*

*Mark 4:19 Slt*

*19 But the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

*Gal 5:19-21 Meng*

*19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I have told you before, and I repeat now, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Romans 8:12-13 Meng*

*12 Therefore, brothers, we have no obligation to the flesh to live according to the flesh; 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

1 Peter 4:1-2; Mark 4:19; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 8:5-13; Gal 5:19-21; Gal 6:7-8; Jas 1:13-16; Mk 4:10-20; Rom 8:12-17; Phil 3:17-21; Jude 1:3-4

### *3.2.12 Seduction away from Christ through human teaching robs you of life*

Only the gospel revealed by God from heaven through Jesus leads to life. Human teachings and commandments about our relationship with God do not lead to life, but to death.

In order not to lose the prize of the heavenly calling, eternal life, no follower of Christ on the path to eternity should • be deceived • be ensnared by philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elements of the world, or by supernatural visions that do not correspond to Christ and the gospel, • be judged by others because of outward appearances, forms, and human rules of formality that are only seemingly wisdom. These things are human self-will and unbelief in the true gospel and do not lead to life, but to death.

*Mt 15:7-9 Meng*

*7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, saying: 8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." ...*

*Gal 1:8 Slt*

*8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be accursed!*

*Col 2:4-23 Meng*

*4 But I say this so that no one may deceive you through persuasive arguments. ... 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him: 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ... 18 Let no one judge you by his humble demeanor and worship of angels, boasting of visions, puffed up without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its joints and ligaments, grows with God-given growth. ... 23 who indeed have a reputation for special wisdom because of their self-imposed piety and humility and harsh treatment of the body, but are of no value, serving only to satisfy the flesh.*

*Mt 15:7-20; Gal 1:6-12; Col 2:4-23; 1 Tim 4:1-7*

### *3.2.13 Tolerated leaven and lack of church discipline lead to death*

A church that tolerates false teachers who lead its members into sin (e.g., through sexual immorality or eating meat sacrificed to idols) is under God's threat of judgment. Jesus gives the church a period of grace to repent, but without repentance, He will act swiftly. It is never good to have Jesus against you instead of for you. He will fight against these

false teachers with the sword of His mouth—the same image used for His battle against the Antichrist and his followers.

However, those who protect themselves from false teachers through the Word of God or make a clear separation from them through repentance and church discipline will be rewarded by Jesus with eternal manna, a new name, and power over the nations. These promises are a sign of the normal salvation of all believers in eternity and are not a special distinction.

That is why Paul, like the other apostles, strongly advocated church discipline and purification, both among the Corinthians and in all his churches.

*1 Cor. 5:6-13 Meng*

*Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Get rid of the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, since you are free from leaven. ... 13 ... **Remove the wicked person from among you.***

*Rev 2:14-16*

**14 Yet I have a few things against you: you have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam.** ... 16 Repent, or else I will come to you soon and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

*Rev. 2:18-29 Meng*

**20 But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and seduces my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols . ... 23 And I will strike her children dead. and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the mind and heart, and I will give to each one of you according to your works. 24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, as many as do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, I say to you, I will not impose any further burden on you; 25 only hold fast to what you have until I come! 26 And to him who overcomes and remains faithful to my works until the end, I will give authority over the nations.**

1 Cor 5:1-13; Rev 2:12-17; Rev 2:18-29; Tit 3:9-11; 3 John 1:9-11

### 3.2.14 Pursuing one's own pleasure kills

There is a faith that was given to us once and for all and saves all who hold fast to it. At the center of this faith is Jesus Christ, our only ruler and Lord. However, this saving faith is incompatible with a dissolute life focused on one's own pleasure, which abuses God's grace, lives without reverence for Him, and ultimately leads to God's condemning judgment.

Living for one's own pleasure is in direct contrast to living for God. Those who live for God show self-control and love for God and others. A former believer who begins to live lavishly and self-centeredly is spiritually dead in God's eyes—similar to the prodigal son before his repentance, or a church that bears no fruit for God and no longer lives in the works of Christ.

Only those who wake up in time and turn away from this spiritual death sleep will find new life in the arms of the Father who runs to meet them. If they remain in this repentance, no disaster will be able to surprise or overwhelm them.

*Acts 24:25 Meng*

*But as Paul spoke about righteousness, self-control, and the future judgment ( ), Felix became uneasy and said, "For now, you may go! When I have time (later), I will send for you again."*

*Jude 1:4 Slt*

*4 For certain people have secretly slipped in who have long been designated for this judgment, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only ruler and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

*1 Tim 5:5-6*

*5 But a widow who is truly alone and destitute has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she who is self-indulgent is dead while she lives.*

Acts 24:25; 1 Tim 5:6; Jude 1:3-4; 2 Pet 1:3-11; Luke 10:27; Luke 15:32; Mark 4:19; Revelation 3:1-3; Luke 5:23-24; Ephesians 2:5; Luke 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

*3.2.15 Whoever denies Jesus or denies faith in him through his actions, Jesus will not know at the gates of heaven*

Jesus gives his disciples a serious warning to fear the one who can deliver both soul and body to destruction in hell. These words apply explicitly to Jesus' followers. Those who profess their faith in Jesus with words and deeds—even unto death—will be saved eternally. But those who deny Jesus before men with words or deeds will be lost.

*Matthew 10:28-33 Meng*

*28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ... 32 Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge before my heavenly Father; 33 but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my heavenly Father.*

*2 Tim 2:12 SlT*

*12 If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us.*

*1 Tim 5:8 SlT*

*8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Mt 10:28-33; 2 Tim 2:12; 1 Tim 5:8; 1 Jn 4:2-3; 1 Jn 4:15;  
Rev 12:11

*3.2.16 Those who close themselves off to God's words close themselves off to God's grace and the doors to eternity.*

This is the way to turn away from God and lose eternal salvation: **to close oneself off to God's words**, to rebel against God, to give room to unbelief, challenge God, sin and provoke God's wrath, test God's patience even though one constantly sees His miracles, be led astray by one's own will, fail to understand the ways in which God wants to guide us, turn away from the living God, refuse to obey God, fall for the deception of sin, and become hardened. We should guard ourselves against this path and together take care not to walk it, giving room to

unbelief through inner rebellion and turning away from the living God. We do this by exhorting one another every day, as long as it is still "today" in this life and not yet "eternity" in heaven. For we truly belong to the Messiah and share in all that is his—provided we hold fast to the confidence we had at the beginning with all determination until we reach heaven.

*Hebrews 3:7-14*

*7 Therefore, the word of the Holy Spirit applies to us: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts, as (once) in the bitterness of the day of temptation in the desert, 9 where your fathers tested me with a trial; and yet they saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts. ' But they did not know my ways, 11 so I swore in my wrath, 'They shall never enter my rest. '" 12 Take heed, beloved, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

*Luke 13:27 Slt*

*27 And he will answer, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!'*

*1 Sam 15:23 Slt*

*23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and stubbornness is like idolatry and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you.*

Heb 3:7-14; Lk 13:27; 1 Sam 15:23; Acts 7:51; Jn 5:39-40

*3.2.17 Unfaithful people, adulterers, double-minded people, and friends of the world are enemies of God and will burn in eternal fire*

Unfaithful, spiritual adulterers against God, friends of the world and thus **enemies of God** can be found among the listeners of a letter in the church, but they can also affect the church itself if it develops in this di-

rection. Those who live in such unrepentant ways can no longer be addressed as brothers or sisters, but are identified by the title of their sin. This reveals the **lostness** of such persons if they **do not repent**.

Unfaithful, spiritual adulterers, friends of the world, and double-minded people must repent in order to come back to God, from whom they have strayed to the point of mortal danger. Whether someone who already knew God has strayed from Him or has never truly repented, the path to life remains the same:

- **humbly recognize one's condition**, mourn and weep, and confess it before God.
- **Submit to God.**
- **Resist the devil.**
- **Draw near to God.**
- **Cleanse yourself as a sinner (wash your hands).**
- **Purify your hearts of double-mindedness.**

Those who follow this path will experience how God draws near to them and exalts them.

*James 4:1-4*

*1 Where do the fights and quarrels among you come from? Surely they come from your desires, which wage war within your members. 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You pray and do not receive, because you pray with wrong motives, that you may spend what you ask for on your pleasures. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

*James 4:5-10*

*5 Or do you think that the Scripture is saying in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched*



*and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

*1 John 2:15-17 Meng*

***15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.***

*2 Tim 4:10 SlT*

*10 For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

James 4:1-4; James 4:5-10; 1 John 2:17; Romans 5:10; Luke 19:27; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Timothy 4:10; Matthew 18:7; 2 Peter 2:20

### *3.2.18 Those who become merciless lose God*

The Word of God addresses harsh words to believers in Christ and the pious:

God will judge those who have received mercy through the gospel but have themselves been unmerciful to others, and thus condemn them eternally. But those who show mercy, just as they themselves have received mercy from God, are unassailable in the judgment concerning their salvation.

*James 2:12-13 Meng*

***12 Speak and act as people who are going to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***

*Matthew 25:34-35 Meng*

***Come, you who are blessed by my Father! Receive the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food; ...***

*"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat... 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

*Mt 18:32-35 Meng*

*Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me to; 33 should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? 34 And in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he paid all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.'*

James 2:12-13; Matthew 25:34-35; Matthew 18:32-35; Matthew 23:23; Luke 10:36-37

### *3.2.19 Love this world and die!*

Those who cling to this world with their hearts and not to Christ are not saved, regardless of whether they were saved before or have never been saved.

Jesus explicitly requires his disciples to separate themselves from the world and to be different from the world. This is the mark of true disciples. Those who live in conformity with the world cannot be true disciples of Jesus and therefore cannot be saved.

John contrasts the will of God and love for God with love for the world. And John is speaking to those who already believe in Christ. Only those who love God and do what God wants will remain and live forever. Everything that belongs to the world and is one with the world will disappear. John lovingly but firmly warns his readers not to stray onto a path where they grow fond of the world – with the consequence of not remaining and living in eternity.

Furthermore, it is the half-hearted followers of Jesus who allow the worries of their everyday lives or the temptations of a beautiful and comfortable life in this world to gain the upper hand, so that in the end

nothing positive for God comes out of their lives. They live in such a way that they bear no fruit for God and will therefore be lost – with the emphasis on "go."

*John 15:18-19 Meng*

*18 "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

*1 John 2:15-17 Meng*

*5 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—does not come from the Father but comes from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, along with its desires; but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

*2 Tim 4:10 SlT*

*10 For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*

Mt 13:18-23; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 2 Tim 4:10; 1 Jn 5:4-5; Mt 13:22; Jn 17:16

*3.2.20 Those who fall asleep spiritually and do not watch will wake up outside of heaven when it is too late*

Those who, over time, no longer live out the message of the Gospel and no longer follow Jesus with works that are worthy of their calling and that honor Jesus, as they did at the beginning of their life of faith, but who slacken in their deeds and defile themselves with the activities of this world and do not purify themselves again, are, in the eyes of Jesus, sleeping a dangerous sleep of death; indeed, they are dead in the eyes of Jesus. And those who are dead no longer have eternal life. Jesus confirms this through his warning and his call to repentance with promise. The warning that he will come upon the church like a thief always refers in Scripture to those who will be lost forever at the return of Jesus. And

the promise after repentance from the sleep of death is that the names of the repentant will NOT be blotted out of the book of life – what grace. But those who do not repent of their death sleep as – former – followers of Christ will one day no longer be in the book of life when they stand before God. But to those who prove themselves worthy of eternal life through their lives, Jesus promises eternal life.

*1 Thessalonians 5:2-11 Meng*

*2 You yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, dear brothers, do not live in darkness, so that the day (of the Lord) may surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we have nothing to do with night and darkness. 6 So let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober! 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

*Rev. 3:1-6 Meng*

*1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: Thus says he who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you received and heard (the message of salvation, or: salvation), and keep it, and repent. But if you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will certainly not know at what hour I will come upon you. 4 Nevertheless, you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white, and I will never blot out his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and*

*before his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

*Matthew 24:37-51 Meng*

*40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left. 42 Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

1 Thess 5:2-11; Rev 3:1-6; Mt 24:37-51; Eph 5:11; Mt 24:37-51; Mt 24:43-51; Lk 21:29-36; Eph 5:11; 1 Pet 5:8

### *3.2.21 Spiritual laziness is a brother of destruction and inevitably leads to death*

Laziness is a brother of destruction, and those who are lazy are considered evil in God's eyes and will be condemned. The opposite of laziness is diligence, and all spiritual progress depends on faithfully and actively using the gifts entrusted to us by God. Those who are diligent on the path to heaven will be preserved and arrive safely.

However, those who do not work diligently for the Lord are blind, short-sighted, and have forgotten the cleansing of their past sins. But diligence in serving the Lord cannot be taken for granted. We are all in danger of becoming weary and slackening in our devotion. The great danger lies in sloth, which distances us from a living faith and service. Those who become slothful and lazy set themselves on a path that puts a question mark over their entrance into eternal life.

*Matthew 25:14-30 Meng*

*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness! ... You wicked and lazy servant! ... 28 Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ... 30 But cast*

*the useless servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*2 Peter 1:10 Slt*

*10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you will never fall.*

*Hebrews 4:11 Slt*

*11 Let us therefore strive [**Strong G4704 – σπουδάζω – spudazo Greek – apply diligence; apply diligence**] to enter that rest, lest anyone fall by the same example of disbelief.*

Mt 25:14-30; 2 Pet 1:5-10; Mt 25:22-30; Rom 12:11; 2 Pet 3:14; Heb 4:9-11; Heb 6:11-12; Lk 8:15 Mk 4:18-19; Mt 3:10; Mt 7:19; Rev 3:19

### *3.2.22 The path to losing salvation is insidious: preliminary stages and final stage using the example of sins of the tongue*

All sins of the tongue originate in the heart. Sins of the tongue grieve the Holy Spirit—and we are called to be vigilant that this does not give rise to an attitude within us that is contrary to the gospel and our standing in Christ and that robs us of salvation in the long run.

Loving our brothers and sisters is Jesus' new and highest commandment, along with loving Jesus Himself. And that is not compatible with derogatory thoughts or disrespectful remarks about our brothers and sisters.

Even complaining about our brothers and sisters brings God's judgment upon us in this life. Complaining about our brothers and sisters may not cause us to lose our salvation immediately, but we are taking the first dangerous step on this deadly path.

Jesus knows three degrees of false and arrogant verbal judgment against fellow believers. Only the last degree is eternally fatal—but the preliminary stages lead to it and belong before a spiritual earthly court. In James, we learn that Jesus himself will soon exercise this earthly judgment if we do not stop our bad behavior toward our brothers and sisters and repent. So let us not sigh over our brothers and sisters, but

bless them. May we be wise, otherwise our Lord will judge us in this life, and in eternity we will lose the reward that was intended for us for our love for our brothers and sisters.

*Eph 4:20-32 Meng*

*29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

*Mt 5:22 Slt*

*22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to judgment. But whoever says to his brother, "Raca," shall be liable to the council. But whoever says, "You fool," shall be liable to the hell of fire.*

*James 5:9 Slt*

*9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door!*

Eph 4:20-32; Mt 5:22-25; 1 Jn 3:15; Jas 5:9-12; Mt 12:34; Jn 13:34; 1 Pet 1:22; James 3:1-12; Jas 4:11-12

### *3.2.23 Doubt: The battle for your soul has begun*

Eternal fire is already greedily reaching out for those **who doubt their faith**. And not just those who doubt a minor truth of faith, but those who doubt the fundamental truth of their salvation through the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for their salvation. They deserve our deepest sympathy and mercy. We ourselves are and remain saved only by grace and not by our own deeds. We too could suffer the same fate as them. Therefore, we should, must, and may also treat all those whose salvation is endangered by doubt with love and merciful care—in order to rescue them from the fire if possible and not fall ourselves in the process.

The antidote to doubt is faith to the end, like our great example Jesus, like our father Abraham, like the examples of faith in Hebrews 11, and like Paul, God's example of faith for all people.

According to Scripture, the greatest challenge to (our) faith is suffering. Believing that a loving and gracious God may allow suffering. That God may allow suffering to Jesus himself, to me, to others. It is a great challenge for us followers of Jesus when we lose sight of the fact that God, as Creator, not only allows suffering, but as Savior and Redeemer, will always allow suffering in the lives of His children out of love and for their best interests—and that the righteous must suffer greatly, while many ungodly people prosper.

Only those who are willing and able to suffer are capable of faith and able to overcome their doubts. And only those who believe—through the certainty that God loves them to the end—will see God in eternity. That is why Jesus sets such high standards for discipleship in terms of the ability to suffer: only those who take up their cross daily and do not love their (own) life unto death are worthy to be disciples of Jesus, and only they have the promise of eternal life.

On the way, we can and will probably all stumble. The greatest man born of women and the greatest prophet, John the Baptist, knew doubt when he was suffering. In suffering, we may lose faith in Jesus. But it is precisely in the midst of our suffering that Jesus wants to and will seek us out and find us, and bless us with an encounter with him and with words of life. Indeed, an encounter with God himself and/or God's word – also through the encouragement of our brothers and sisters in faith – is the only and best remedy that can heal our doubts and keep us from straying from God.

For (only) those who overcome their doubts and do not lose faith in Jesus and his actions toward us in the long term will be blessed and become blessed.

This is how Jesus encourages his greatest servant, John the Baptist, in prison. And he trusts him to find (back) to a faith that is and will be blessed, based on what he knows and hears about Jesus and finds confirmed in God's word.



Jesus himself, if not literally doubt, then at least the agonizing question "Why, Father?" when he was in his deepest suffering.

And the Father allowed him to experience this – and brought Jesus through the dark valley to the light at the end.

Experiences of suffering and doubt are great opportunities for us to grow in faith. Suffering is even promised to us by God. But God's goal behind it is always that we mature and become steadfast in faith through painful experiences – through all the struggles and doubts of faith.

In the end, we become stronger, more glorious, and more beautiful when we are tested by faith, suffering, and doubt.

*Matthew 11:2-11 Meng*

*2 But when John heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent a message to him through his disciples 3 asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we wait for another?"*

*4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: .... 6 and blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me!"*

*11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist;*

*Jude 1:22-23 Meng*

*22 And have compassion on those who are in doubt: 23 snatch them out of the fire and save them!*

*1 Peter 1:7 Slt*

*7 so that the testing of your faith (which is much more precious than perishable gold, which is tested by fire) may result in praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 11:2-11; Matthew 28:17; Jude 1:22-23; Romans 4:20-25; Luke 24:36-49; Psalm 73; Luke 9:23-24; Romans 8:28; Romans 8:31-39; Hebrews 10:38-39; John 15:20-27; John 16:1; 1 Peter 1:7; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; John 20:27; Job 34:7-12; Job 42:1-6; Hebrews 11; 1 Timothy 1:16; Matthew 8:10-12; Ephesians 2:8; Mark 16:16

3.2.24 *Anyone who defiles himself without cleansing himself will be cut off from God's people*

To be unclean before God means to be dead.

To be cleansed by God means to come to life.

To defile oneself again in this world and NOT to cleanse oneself means to be even more dead than before one's conversion.

A follower of Christ who does not walk on a constant path of purification is walking on the wrong path and will not arrive in heaven without repentance and purification.

*Rev. 3:1-6 Meng*

*You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ... 4 **Nevertheless, you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.** 5 **He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments,** and I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

*1 John 1:9 Meng*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

*1 John 3:2-3 Meng*

*2 For we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

*Numbers 19:20*

*But if anyone becomes unclean and does **not** purify himself, that person shall be cut off **from** the congregation, for he has **defiled** the sanctuary of the LORD and has **not** been sprinkled with the water of purification; he is unclean.*

*2 Peter 2:20-22 Meng*

*20 For if, after they have escaped the **defilements of the world** through*

*the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome by them, their last condition has become worse than the first.*

Rev 3:1-6; 1 John 1:9; Jude 1:22-23; 1 John 3:3; Acts 15:9; Eph 5:26; Eph 5:26; John 13:10; Hebrews 9:22; 1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 3:1-6; Numbers 19:20; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Revelation 22:10-15; Numbers 19:20

### *3.2.25 Apostasy means voluntarily throwing away salvation*

**Apostasy from God or apostasy from faith** as a word has no pleasant connotations: the same word is used throughout Scripture to describe people who were with God but strayed from him, so that in the end only death and damnation—eternal damnation—await them.

*Isaiah 66:23-24 Meng*

*23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the LORD. 24 "They will also go out (from the city) and look at the corpses of the people who have fallen away from me; for their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and they will be an abomination to all flesh."*

*Hebrews 3:12-19 Meng*

*12 Take care, **brothers, that none of you may have an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.** 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For **we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.***

*Gal 1:6-9 Meng*

*I am astonished that **you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.** ... 8 But even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, **let him be accursed!** 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: "If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, **let him be accursed!**"*

*2 Thessalonians 2:3 Meng*

*3 Let no one deceive you in any way, for first the apostasy must come and the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, must be revealed.*

Isa 66:24; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Thess 2:3; Heb 3:12-19; 2 Chron 29:3-11; Isa 1:28; Isa 31:6; Jer 2:29; Jer 5:23; Ezek 2:3; Ezek 6:9; Ezek 20:38; Hos 1:2; Hos 6:7; Hos 7:13; Hos 9:1; Zeph 1:1-6

### *3.2.26 Sin against the Holy Spirit and sin unto death—those who fear it have not committed it*

Yes, faithful followers of Jesus can sin in such a way that they come to spiritual and thus eternal death.

But from God's side, the door is always open for the repentance of anyone who has gone astray. The Good Shepherd shows us this very emphatically.

No, the *"impossibility"* of conversion for those who have turned away from the faith in Hebrews 6:6 is not based on God. Anyone who **wants to** turn to God can always do so, and he or she will find open doors with God and cause a celebration of joy in heaven.

The *"impossible"* refers to other people. Their inner being is such that they can no longer be touched, changed, and brought onto the right path by spiritual grace and power. They remain cold and unreceptive to the Word of God and the powers of heaven.

The good news is that if we have even the slightest fear of belonging to this group of people, then our return to the path of salvation is not *"impossible."* Those who care about their good relationship with God prove that they are receptive to the Word of God. And the Good Shepherd will save everyone who turns to him sincerely, weakly, and helplessly, again and again. He will not cast out those who come to Jesus.

After James has already encouraged us to bring back to the Lord those brothers and sisters who have strayed from the faith in order to save their souls from death, and after Jude has implored us to snatch those brothers and sisters who doubt the faith from the fire with merciful

love, John encourages us here to do the same service through our prayers. And he will give life to those brothers and sisters who do not sin unto death. And those who sin unto death, we will (have to) recognize (by) their being deaf to all requests, pleas, admonitions, and loving pursuit. Let us believe that God will guide us well according to His Word—for we do not know (yet) who sins unto death. And let us pray for every erring and erring brother and every erring sister until God truly shows that there is a sin unto death here. The overall testimony of Scripture tells us that we can and should always have hope for every person until God shows us otherwise through the circumstances or through the obvious hardening of the heart of the person concerned to the work of the Holy Spirit.

*Luke 15:7+10 Meng*

*Rejoice with me! For I have found my sheep that was lost. 7 I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents*

*James 5:19-20 Meng*

*19 My brothers, if anyone among you has strayed from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his error will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

*1 John 5:16-18 Meng*

*16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray for him and help him to live, that is, those who do not sin to the death. There is also a sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for such a sin.*

*Luke 12:10 Meng*

*10 "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.*

*Heb 6:6 SlT*

*[For it is impossible ...] and then [nevertheless] have fallen away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify the Son of God for themselves again and make a mockery of him!*

Luke 12:10; Hebrews 6:4-6; 1 John 5:16-18; Luke 15:11-32; Luke 15:7+10; John 6:37; James 5:19-20; Jude 1:22-23; Hebrews 6:4-12

*3.2.27 If others lose their salvation through me, I am in danger of losing my own salvation*

My personal testimony is also crucial in helping people become open to faith, accept Jesus as their Savior, and remain with Jesus so that they may be saved forever. A life that honors God and does not lead anyone into sin helps to strengthen others in their faith.

However, Jesus makes it unmistakably clear that we believers can also become so guilty toward others, especially toward fellow believers, that we ourselves fall under God's judgment of condemnation. This is especially the case when we lead others to act against their conscience, to sin, or to fall away from the faith. Our way of life therefore places us in a position of great responsibility before God and toward others.

*Mt 18:6 SlT*

*6 But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

*1 Cor 3:17 SlT*

*God will destroy anyone who destroys the temple of God, for God's temple is holy, and you are that temple!*

*1 Corinthians 10:31-33 Meng*

*31 So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.*

*John 13:35 SlT*

*35 By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

1 Cor 10:31-33; Mt 18:1-17; Jn 13:35

### *3.2.28 Cursed is anyone who does not love the Lord!*

Whoever does not love the Lord in principle and/or after his own salvation is or will be under the curse of perdition.

For to love the Lord means to obey His commandments. Whoever follows the words of Jesus loves Jesus. Whoever does not follow the words of Jesus does not love the Lord.

But isn't love something that cannot be forced or bought, and aren't we free to love whomever we want?

Not when it comes to God. Through the grace of God and the Holy Spirit, all people who are truly born again can love God. And they have every reason to do so: redeemed from their guilt and sins through Jesus, who gave his life for them; able to recognize and experience the love of the Father; getting to know God as the Creator, the giver of all good gifts, and the giver of a living hope, who allows ALL things in our lives to work together for good and who, through Jesus, has given us everything he could give and has given us the greatest and most precious promises. Should we not love this wonderful Lord and God with all our hearts? Anyone who does not love this glorious God of love abuses his love and grace and will perish.

Yes, loving the Lord is not difficult:

For God is

- your Creator—without him, you would not exist
- the giver of all good gifts, whether you deserve them or not
- the one who loves you
- the Lord who loves you so much that he took the worst death upon himself for you
- the one who guides everything in your life for the best, so that you may have a wonderful eternity

Not to love the Lord would be like disregarding and despising my savior, who rescued me from the burning Twin Towers on 9/11 and died in the process. That would be like spitting in the face of the blood donor who

made it possible for me to live by giving blood and then punching him in the face.

Therefore, Scripture says that anyone who does not love the Lord who loved him SO much is cursed.

*1 Cor 16:22 Meng*

*22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha!*

*James 1:12 Meng*

*12 Blessed is the man who steadfastly endures temptation! For after he has been proven, he will receive the life of victory promised to those who love him.*

*John 14:23-24 Meng*

*"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.*

*1 John 3:14 Meng*

*Whoever does not love remains in death.*

*Rev 2:4-7 Meng*

*4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ... 7 He who overcomes, I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

1 Cor 16:22; John 14:23-24; 1 John 3:14; Rev 2:4-7; James 1:12; John 14:23-24

*3.2.29 Summary: In what ways can we fall away from God, stray, and lose our salvation?*

**Here is a non-exhaustive list of some words/ways in which we can fall away from God and consequently lose our salvation:**

- *falling away from the faith 1 Tim 4:1*



- *having a good conscience stumbling and suffering shipwreck in the faith 1 Tim 1:19*
- *listening to the teachings of deceitful spirits and demons 1 Tim 4:1*
- *Retreating to destruction Heb 10:39*
- *Stray from the truth James 5:19*
- *sinning unto death 1 John 5:16*
- *becoming a hater and murderer of brothers and sisters 1 John 3:15*
- *sin against the Holy Spirit Mark 3:29*
- *not doing what Jesus says Luke 6:46-49*
- *causing one of these little ones who believe in Jesus to sin Mt 18:6*
- *Let your eye, hand, or foot lead you into sin. Matthew 18:7-9*
- *have come to faith in vain 1 Cor 15:2; Gal 3:4; Phil 2:16*
- *be blotted out from the book of life Rev. 3:5*
- *lose Christ 1 Cor. 15:18*
- *fall from grace Galatians 5:4*
- *drive past the goal Heb 2:1*
- *be deprived of the crown of victory Col 2:18*
- *not remaining in Jesus John 15:6*
- *Not holding fast to the word of life Phil 2:16*
- *returning to weak and poor elements [of the world] to serve them Gal 4:9*
- *allowing Satan to fill one's heart and lying to the Holy Spirit Acts 5:3*
- *becoming a blasphemer 1 Thess 4:8*
- *not having eternal life abiding in oneself John 5:38*
- *Allowing oneself to be deprived of the prize Col 2:18*
- *Take offense at Jesus / become confused about Jesus Luke 7:23*
- *No longer walking with Jesus, no longer following Jesus John 6:66*

### *3.2.30 Summary: The way of the "flesh" away from salvation to judgment and destruction*

#### **The grace of God—a gift that must not be disregarded**

God has called us in His immeasurable love and saved us through Jesus Christ by pure grace. But this grace is not a license to remain in a life of the flesh. Those who indulge in sin, love the world, or water down the gospel not only disregard God's love, but abuse it and jeopardize their own salvation. True disciples of Jesus remain in his grace, hold fast to him, and allow themselves to be transformed by his Spirit.

#### **The deadly danger of forgetting God's grace**

Our faith and our service for Christ are not in vain—as long as we hold fast to them. But those who turn away from the true gospel or lead a life without repentance receive God's grace in vain. Scripture warns urgently against forgetting God's love and grace and falling back into the works of the flesh. Faith without continual purification and sanctification is dead.

Those who consciously indulge in sin and do not repent show that they do not value God's grace. Jesus saved us, but He expects us to remain in Him. Those who do not allow themselves to be led by the Spirit of God, but choose the way of the flesh, ultimately reject the love that once saved them.

#### **The serious warning: lukewarmness and conscious sin separate us from God**

It is possible to start with Jesus but not reach the goal. Those who become lukewarm and do not repent will be spit out by Jesus. Discipleship requires vigilance and steadfastness, especially in times of trial. Those who turn to the world, follow it, and ignore God's commandments disregard the love through which they were saved and risk their salvation.

Conscious, persistent sin is particularly deadly. Those who are not willing to break with their old life, who push God and his commandments into the background, will one day find that they have distanced them-

selves from God's grace . The love that once saved them has been disregarded and ultimately abused. Jesus has no fellowship with those who live in conscious rebellion against him.

### **The true reward: a life for God and not for oneself**

God rewards those who live for His love and remain in His will. Those who use their talents for the Lord, remain steadfast in suffering, and serve selflessly will receive a great reward in heaven. But those who act only for their own recognition or do not use their God-given abilities will not only receive no reward, but will lose their eternal life.

True disciples of Jesus understand that their lives do not belong to themselves, but to God. Those who become entangled in the desires of the world again not only act against God's commandments, but show that they no longer honor God's love. A life for oneself is a life against God.

### **Destruction through the fleshly life**

God has renewed us in Christ, but the flesh remains an enemy that wants to pull us back. Those who give in to the flesh, who put their desires above God, will die spiritually. The Bible makes it clear that those who live according to the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. So those who consciously decide against God's Spirit not only reject His guidance, but also mock the grace that once saved them.

Jesus expects us to take up our cross daily, deny ourselves, and follow Him. Those who instead choose a life of the flesh forget the immeasurable love that once saved them and ultimately abuse it by using it for their own purposes.

### **The danger of seduction and false gospel**

A false gospel kills. Only the pure, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ leads to life. Those who allow themselves to be seduced by false teachings or worldly philosophies will fall away from God. It is particularly dangerous to water down the gospel and ignore God's holiness. A gospel without repentance, without sanctification, and without obedience

to Christ is not a gospel. Those who cling to something else disregard the truth and are lost.

### **Love for the world leads to destruction**

"No one can serve two masters." Those who love the world lose eternal life. Scripture warns urgently against allowing oneself to be taken in by the desires of this world. Greed, fame, comfort, and self-fulfillment are deceptive traps that distract us from God. Those who place these things above Jesus disregard the love that once saved them and will perish with the world.

Many begin with Christ, but the cares of this world stifle their faith. The temptations of life, the pursuit of possessions, and the desire for recognition cause many to lose sight of the true treasure. But in the end, only one thing matters: those who remain faithful to the end will be saved.

### **Conclusion: Remain vigilant and honor God's love**

Our life is a gift from God, purchased with the blood of Jesus. We must not disregard His love by indulging in sin or choosing the way of the flesh. Those who decide against God abuse the grace that once saved them and put their eternal future at risk.

Therefore, let us remain vigilant, hold fast to Christ, and love God more than anything else. Only those who remain faithful to the end will receive the crown of life. For God's love is faithful—but it requires us to remain faithful to it.

### *3.3 The sure course of Christ's followers toward life and crown*

*Phil 3:13-14 Slt*

*I forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead, and press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

### **Running with a goal—and with certainty**

Following Jesus is described in the New Testament as a race or a struggle. But this path is not marked by fear, but by certainty: those who have begun with Jesus through genuine repentance and rebirth already

*have* eternal life – as long as they stay on track and do not allow themselves to be dissuaded.

Jesus himself says: Whoever believes has eternal life and has passed from death to life (*John 5:24*). John confirms: Believers *know* that they *have* eternal life (*1 John 5:13*).

The race is not an attempt to earn salvation, but an expression of a living relationship with Christ. The fruit of sanctification and perseverance is a sign of genuine salvation – as Paul writes in Romans: The goal is eternal life (*Romans 6:22*).

### **An imperishable crown of victory**

The followers do not run for a perishable prize, but for the victor's crown of eternal life. They consciously renounce, fight with discipline, and stay on course—not because they have to, but because they love.

*1 Cor. 9:24–25 SlT*

*Run in such a way that you may win it! ... But we [run] for an imperishable [crown].*

Those who run according to the rules will be crowned (*2 Tim 2:5*), those who remain faithful to the end will receive the crown of life (*Rev 2:10*).

### **Why we run: out of love**

Followers do not run to prove themselves—they run because of the one who loved them first. Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who himself has run the entire race before us (*Hebrews 12:1-2*).

His call to eternal glory draws us, his love drives us, his Spirit encourages and corrects us. Jesus is the coach who ensures that each of us *can run* our own personal race. No path is too difficult, no trial too great—he always provides a way out (*1 Cor 10:13*).

### **The finish line comes unexpectedly—stay ready**

No one knows when the race will end—whether through death or Jesus' return. But those who persevere will be saved (*Matthew 24:13*). And at

the end of his life, Paul was able to say that the crown of righteousness awaited him—as it does all who love Jesus' return (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

### **The glory of the overcomers**

*Rev. 21:7 Slr*

*He who overcomes will inherit all things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

This glory is not a reward for performance, but a gift for faithfulness.

Revelation lists many promises for overcomers:

- Access to the tree of life (Rev. 2:7)
- Freedom from the second death (Rev. 2:11)
- A white stone with a new name (Rev. 2:17)
- Authority with Christ (Rev. 2:26)
- Name not blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5)
- A place in God's temple (Rev. 3:12)
- With Christ on his throne (Rev. 3:21)

### **Conclusion: Out of love, with certainty, until the crown**

Followers of Jesus do not run in fear, but in deep certainty and with great longing. They have life now – and carry it to the finish line through faithfulness. They run because they are loved, because they love Jesus, and because his closeness is their greatest reward.

*1 Cor 9:24 Slr*

***Run—so that you may receive it!***

## 4 Reward & Rank in Heaven

Reward in heaven is reserved exclusively for those who have been saved by grace through Jesus Christ. The unsaved are not only lost, but their sins also cause them to accumulate wrath for eternity. The intensity of their wrongdoing determines the extent of their negative reward in eternity.

For those who are saved by grace and live with and for Christ, eternal life is the reward for those who love God and show this love through their lives and service to Him. Our inner motives are decisive in this regard. Everything we do out of love and for God's glory will be rewarded by Him.

There is a great reward in eternal life for believers who use their talents generously and faithfully for God, for suffering for Christ's sake or for the sake of righteousness, and for loving their enemies. However, actions that are done primarily for one's own recognition and not for the Lord will not bring any reward.

Those who do nothing with the God-given opportunities for the Lord will not only receive no reward, but will also lose eternal life and suffer the same fate as unbelievers. Even those who, although in the service of God, serve themselves more than God, are not or will not be saved.

*Romans 2:4-8 Meng*

*4 Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not realizing that God's goodness leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each one according to his works: 7 eternal life to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and fury to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness.*

*2 Corinthians 9:6 Meng*

*6 Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

*1 Corinthians 3:14-15*

*14 If anyone's work that he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward; 15 but if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

*1 Corinthians 4:5 Meng*

*5 Therefore, do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the thoughts of the heart; and then each one will receive his due praise from God.*

*Matthew 6:1 Meng*

*1 Take care that you do not practice your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

*Col 3:23-25 Meng*

*23 Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But whoever does wrong will be repaid for what he has done wrong; there is no favoritism.*

*Luke 6:22-23 + 35 Meng*

*Love your enemies, do good, and lend without expecting anything in return. Then your reward will be great.*

*Luke 19:16-19 Meng*

*16 The first one came and said, "Master, your pound has earned ten more pounds." 17 The master replied, "Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a small matter, you shall have authority over ten cities."*

*Matthew 25:25-30 Meng*

*25 ... I ... hid your talent in the ground: here you have your money back! 26 His master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! ... 28 Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ... 30 But cast the useless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*



*Mt 7:21-23 Meng*

*21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!*

Rom 2:4-7; Lk 19:16-19; Mt 25:25-30; 2 Cor 9:6; Mt 6:1; Mt 20:20-28; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 22:11-12; Luke 6:22-23 + 35; Col 3:23-25; 1 Cor 3:11-15; Matt 7:21-23

## 5 My preservation on the path to eternal salvation

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are saved—through trust in him alone. But the path to salvation is not a one-time event; rather, it is a lifelong journey of love for Jesus and following him, which requires perseverance, devotion, and vigilance.

How can we ensure that we remain on this path? The following chapters introduce us to biblical truths that help us understand and live out preservation on the path to eternal salvation.

Discover how you can remain steadfast in faith, overcome challenges, and be strengthened by God's love and truth—for a life that will be perfected with Him in eternity.

### 5.1 Preservation by God

The following chapters clearly show how central God's preserving power is on our path to salvation. He is the faithful anchor who strengthens us in times of temptation, carries us through crises, and keeps us in his love. But God's preservation goes hand in hand with our devotion and vigilance. These chapters invite us to discover the depth of his faithfulness and to understand how he constantly preserves us on the path to eternity.

#### *5.1.1 God preserves us—we are in His hand*

Our Lord has the power to preserve us and lead us safely to heaven. His interest in our salvation is even greater than our own. He ensures that we stay on the path and reach our goal.

God keeps us safe on the path to glory and leads us on the right road. His protection is often closely linked to prayer, because through prayer we experience his closeness and guidance. At the same time, he gives us time to repent and align our lives with him before it is too late.

*Jude 1:24 Slt*

*24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.*

*Ps 16:1 Meng*

***Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.***

*Ps 56:14 Meng*

***14 For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.***

*2 Pet 3:9 Slt*

*9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Jude 1:24; Psalm 16:1; Psalm 56:14; 2 Peter 3:9

### *5.1.2 God's grace carries us—not our own strength*

God is gracious to his redeemed people and establishes his reign on grace. Our ability to live for him springs solely from his grace. Even behind all the suffering that God allows in our lives stands the gracious God who fits everything into his eternal plan. He will carry us, his people, every single one whom he has redeemed, in his grace into eternity. We owe our salvation and continued salvation solely to his grace. God loves to be gracious!

*Acts 15:11 Slt*

*11 On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the same way as them.*

*Rom 5:21 Slt*

*21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*1 Peter 5:10 Meng*

***10 But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in***

*Christ, will, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

Acts 15:11; Rom. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:10; Heb. 13:9; 2 Pet. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:16-18

### *5.1.3 Our High Priest Jesus intercedes for us!*

The offices that Christ exercises in heaven show us the fullness of his grace and faithfulness:

- He atones for the sins of his people.
- He intercedes for us before the Father.
- He helps those who fall into temptation.

This is a wonderful message. It shows that God does not expect us to be sinless and perfect. When we sin, even though we basically follow and obey Him, Christ atones for our sins and restores our relationship with God. His high priestly ministry secures our status as those saved by God.

At the same time, Jesus assures us that we do not inevitably have to succumb to every temptation. He himself was tempted in every way, but he overcame without sin. Because he overcame, he can help us to withstand our own temptations and come through unscathed.

Jesus is able to save completely all who come to God through him, for he lives forever to intercede for them.

*Hebrews 7:25 Meng*

*25 Therefore, he [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them.*

*John 17:8-26 Meng*

*9 I pray for them... 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ... 17 Sanctify them in your truth: your word is truth. ... 20 But I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.*

*Hebrews 4:14-18 Meng*

*14 Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do*

*not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. ... 18 Because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Hebrews 7:25; John 17:8-26; Hebrews 4:14-18; 1 John 2:1

#### *5.1.4 God preserves his chosen ones through his faithfulness*

Jesus teaches us that our eternal salvation is guaranteed by God's faithfulness. Even though we sometimes think we are being tempted beyond our ability to bear, God assures us in his faithfulness that this will not happen. He directs all circumstances so that we can endure temptation—and indeed are able to do so.

Even when we fall and sin, God remains faithful: when we confess our sins, he forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. God has committed himself to preserve us on all levels:

- **Personally:** In our individual relationship with him, he ensures that we are carried through our temptations.
- **Collectively:** At the level of the church, he works to preserve and strengthen his people.
- **World history:** He intervenes in world history to ensure that his chosen ones attain eternal glory in Christ.

God is faithful, and in that faithfulness, he does everything to bring us safely to our destination—in the present, in our struggles, and ultimately in eternity.

*2 Thessalonians 3:3 Meng*

*But **the Lord is faithful, who** will strengthen you and guard you from evil.*

*1 John 1:9 Slt*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*2 Corinthians 1:18 Slt*

*18 But God is faithful, so that our word to you has not been yes and no!*

*1 Corinthians 10:13 Slt*

*13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

2 Thess 3:3; 1 John 1:9; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 5:10-11; 1 Tim 1:15-16; Matt 24:22

### *5.1.5 God's discipline serves to preserve us*

God works in the lives of those who know Him—what an encouraging truth! His discipline may sometimes be painful, but it springs from His love and care. It sets us on the right path and confirms that we are His children. Even when God allows us to go through difficult times, it is for a good purpose: He is working on us for our own good and leading us step by step toward eternal salvation. God's work is always motivated by love and grace.

*Romans 8:28 Slt*

*28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

*Hebrews 12:7-8 Slt*

*7 If you endure discipline, God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

*2 Corinthians 7:10 Meng*

*10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, without regret, but worldly sorrow produces death.*

Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:6-8; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Revelation 2:22; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32

#### *5.1.6 God makes us steadfast and brings us to our destination*

God wants to strengthen his children in faith so that they develop such steadfastness on their journey to eternity that they arrive safely. In his faithfulness, he strengthens us through

- **his grace**, which strengthens us undeservedly and carries us in all circumstances,
- **his Word**, which guides us, builds us up, and serves as a firm foundation,
- **his discipline**, which shapes us, corrects us, and brings us closer to him.

God's work shows that he works tirelessly to lead us safely to our destination.

*2 Cor 1:21 Slt*

*1 But God, who has established us with you in Christ and anointed us.*

*Acts 20:32 Meng*

*32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which has the power to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.*

*Hebrews 13:9 Meng*

*9 ... For it is good that the heart be established by grace.*

Heb 12:11; Heb 13:9; 1 Cor 1:7-9; 2 Cor 1:21; Acts 20:32

## **5.2 Our preservation through the Word of God**

The Word of God is THE means of grace on our way to heaven. It is alive and effective and shows us our true motivation. Through the Word of

God, God shows us the right way so that we remain on the path to God's eternal Sabbath rest.

*Matthew 4:4 Meng*

*4 But he answered [Satan], "It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*

*2 Tim 3:16 SlT*

*16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*Acts 20:32 Meng*

*32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which has the power to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

Acts 20:32; Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:9; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 22:29; Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Luke 8:21; Psalm 119:9; John 10:35; Psalm 130:5; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:3; Romans 7:1; 1 Corinthians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 9:13; James 4:4; 1 Peter 1:18; 2 Peter 3:17; Jude 1:5;

### *5.2.1 Those who hold fast to God's word will be preserved*

Those who heed, preserve, and obey God's word protect themselves from evil and remain on the path to life.

*John 8:51 Meng*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone **keeps my word**, he will never see death.*

*Psalm 119:11 SlT*

*11 I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

*1 Tim 4:16 Meng*

*16 Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers.*



*Psalm 19:8-12 Meng*

*8 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 9 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 10 the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true, they are righteous altogether. 11 They are more precious than gold, than much fine gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 12 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

*2 Tim 3:15-17 Meng*

*15 And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*John 8:51 Meng*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone **keeps my word**, he will never see death.*

John 8:51; Psalm 119:11; 1 Tim. 4:16; Psalm 19:8-12; 2 Tim. 3:15-17

*5.2.2 Those who listen to the voice of the good shepherd are safe*

Whoever hears the good news of Jesus as one called by God and believes in the one who sent Jesus has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Those who love Jesus, listen to his voice, and follow Jesus will receive eternal life from Jesus. They will never perish. No one can snatch a true follower out of Jesus' hands. For the Father of Jesus Christ, who gave them to him, is greater than anything that exists. Yes, nothing in all creation can separate us, as God's chosen and called ones, from the love of God that is guaranteed to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

*John 5:24 SlT*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and **believes** him who **sent** me **has eternal life** and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to **life**.*

*John 10:27-29 Meng*

*27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

*Romans 8:28, 39 SlT*

*28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... [nothing in all creation can separate us] 39 ...from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*John 10:27-29; John 5:24; Romans 8:28-39; 1 John 5:13*

### *5.2.3 Preserved by God's Word through salutary correction – Do not be deceived!*

Even as faithful followers of Jesus, we can err in fundamental matters of salvation. That is why God has built healing corrections into His Word for all who are called and chosen. Again and again in the New Testament we encounter warnings such as: "*Do not be deceived*," "*Do not be mistaken*," or "*Do you not know?*" It is possible to believe that we are accepted by God and yet live in a crucial error. The reason for this is always a life that persists in sin, puts our own will above God's will, and does not remain vigilant in Jesus' presence. But God wants to and can protect us from this through his Word and lead us back to the right path.

*1 Cor 6:9-10 SlT*

*9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor*

*the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

*1 Corinthians 9:24 Meng*

*24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.*

*James 4:4 Slt*

*4 You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God!*

*Gal 6:7-8 Meng*

*7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

*1 Cor 6:9; 1 Cor 9:24; James 4:4; Mark 12:24; Gal 6:7-8; James 1:13-16; Jude 1:5*

#### *5.2.4 Prepared for anything – hope that sustains!*

God promises us eternal life with Jesus in the glory of eternity. This promise motivates us to live with Him now, to remain on the path of discipleship, and to hope and wait patiently for the fulfillment of His promise. Those who are filled with hope for eternity live rightly in the here and now, remain on the right path, and are preserved by God. They receive the strength necessary to persevere and reach their goal.

*John 11:25 Slt*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the **life**. Whoever believes in me will **live, even though they die**.*

*Luke 21:28 Slt*

*28 But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*

*Col 1:27 Slt*

*Christ in you, the **hope of glory**.*

*Rom 8:25 Meng*

*But if we **hope** for what we do not yet see, we wait for it with **patience**.*

*Rev 3:12 SlT*

*To the one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God and the name of **the city** of my God, the new **Jerusalem**, which comes down from my God out of **heaven**, and my new name.*

John 11:25; Luke 21:28; Col 1:27; Rom 8:25; Rev 3:12; Rev 2:10

### *5.2.5 Jesus warns us—so that we can remain steadfast*

Our faith in Jesus is the key to our salvation. In his faithfulness, Jesus ensures that his disciples remain steadfast in their faith and are thus saved. He does this by telling them in advance what lies ahead. This allows them to prepare themselves, maintain their firm hold on Jesus, and persevere in faith, which ultimately ensures their salvation.

*John 14:29 SlT*

*29 And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.*

*Matthew 24:23-24 NIV*

*23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

*2 Peter 3:17-18 NIV*

***7 Since you know this ahead of time, beloved, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own steadfastness. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

John 13:19; John 14:29; 2 Peter 3:17+18; Matthew 24:23-27; John 16:1-

4

### 5.3 Preservation through your complete devotion to Christ NOW

The path to eternal fellowship with God is not only a matter of faith, but also of consistent devotion to Christ in the here and now. The subchapters of this section show how complete devotion shapes our lives, strengthens our faith, and preserves us in discipleship—on the way to heaven. This devotion is not a burden, but a source of strength and joy that helps us resist temptations, overcome setbacks, and remain faithful on the narrow path.

#### *5.3.1 God protects those who belong to him and serve him*

God marks, protects, warns, and preserves in a special way those who belong to him and serve him.

*Rev 7:3 SlT*

*3 And he said, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

*Rev 18:4*

*4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, and so that you will not receive any of her plagues."*

*Jude 1:24-25 Meng*

*24 But to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.*

Rev. 7:3; Rev. 18:4; Jude 1:24-25

#### *5.3.2 God especially preserves those who have faithfully followed him until now*

God preserves especially those who have faithfully followed him until now.

*Rev. 3:10*

*10 Because you have kept my word of steadfast endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

*Heb 6:9-10 Meng*

*9 But we are confident of better things concerning you, beloved, even though we speak in this manner, things that are more closely related to salvation. 10 **For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love** you have shown for his name in **serving the saints**, as you **still do**.*

*2 Peter 2:9 Slt*

*9 The Lord knows how to rescue godly people from temptation, but he will keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.*

Rev. 3:10; Heb. 6:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:9

### *5.3.3 Your devotion TODAY will experience God's faithfulness TOMORROW*

Where there is genuine discipleship NOW, where there is love for Christ NOW, where there are fruits of true conversion NOW, there is every reason to be confident that the faithful God will preserve and bring His children through to the end NOW.

A God-fearing person is one who fears God NOW and lives according to his fear of God. The Lord has promised to deliver such people from (eternally) life-threatening temptations and bring them through to eternal life.

What a comfort: for all our failures as disciples of Christ, there is forgiveness from our loving Lord Jesus Christ. BUT:

### **God does care how we live NOW**

How we live with Christ NOW has a direct impact on whether God will be with us when times get tough, when the hour of temptation comes. Whether we invest our talents NOW and fill our lamps with oil will be a decisive factor in whether we can persevere in the future and until the

return of Jesus. And that we faithfully give everything to Jesus our Lord at all times and even preserve our first love is rather the normal state of affairs in the eyes of Jesus. **That is the positive way of putting it.**

**Put negatively, this whole truth means** that no one who is permanently negligent in their relationship with Jesus and flirts with self-love and worldly love and/or even lets them in can expect Jesus to be there immediately when great temptations come and they are dependent on Christ's help. On the contrary, Christ will even deliberately let him or her down because of his or her sin if he or she does not repent in time and wake up from his or her sinful slumber. You only need not fear falling short in your life before God if you give Jesus everything you can give NOW—you don't need anything more!

Those who, as disciples of Jesus, seek God NOW with all their hearts before the great crises come, are much more likely to come through unscathed when the crises come. For they are more firmly connected to Jesus within themselves and can count on God's help. It is not formal believers who will possess the eternal inheritance, but only those who overcome the temptations to which all humanity will be exposed through the powers of seduction. For those who sleep and oversleep in their service to Jesus, to serve their great Lord and Master, Jesus will come back like a thief—and thus bring disaster instead of salvation.

**Our eternal salvation is based on two factors:**

1. the faithfulness of God
2. on our genuine devotion NOW and our continued service to God

and 1. God's unchanging faithfulness is linked to 2. our devotion:

**Those who are faithful to God can count on God's faithfulness.**

*Luke 12:34-35 NIV*

**34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 35 Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning.**

*Phil. 1:20-21 Meng*

*20 For I am confident of this very thing, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

*John 6:67-69 Meng*

*7 Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; 69 and we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

*2 Chr 6:14 Slt*

*14 ... O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth, who keeps his covenant and shows steadfast love to his servants who walk before him with all their heart.*

*Matthew 25:3-4 Meng*

*The foolish [virgins] took their **lamps**, but did not take any **oil** with them; the wise, on the other hand, took **oil** in their vessels as well as their **lamps**.*

Phil 1:20-21; Jn 6:67-69; 2 Chr 6:14; Phil 1:3-6; Rev 3:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Heb 6:7-10; Rev 2:2-5; Rev 3:1-3; Matt 13:44-46; Ps 145:20; Matt 10:37-39; Luke 12:34-35; Matt 25:3-4

#### *5.3.4 We are preserved because we keep and do God's word*

Those who, as disciples of Jesus, seek God and His will with all their hearts before the great crises come, are much more likely to come through unscathed when the crises come. For they are more firmly connected to Jesus within themselves and can count on God's help. It is not formal believers who will possess the eternal inheritance, but only those who overcome the temptations to which all humanity will be exposed through the powers of seduction. But for those who already follow Jesus flawlessly, like the church in Philadelphia, the crown of victory of eternal life is practically already waiting for them.



Those who devote themselves to Jesus in this way and for whom Jesus is so important that they keep His word—and keep the word of Jesus in such a way that Jesus does not have to rebuke them—will be specially preserved by Jesus. Thus, our complete devotion to Jesus, His will, and His word is the best preservation we can imagine.

*Rev. 3:8, 10, 11 Slt*

*8 ...You ... have kept my word... **10 Because you have kept my word of steadfast endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ...***  
*11 ... Hold fast what you have, so that no one may take your crown!*

*Mt 7:24-27 Meng*

*24 Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.*

*26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.*

*Prov. 19:16 Slt*

*6 Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his soul, but whoever disregards his ways will die.*

*Rev 3:7-13; Mt 7:24-27; Prov 19:16; Prov 3:21-26; Ps 145:20; Prov 4:5-6*

### *5.3.5 Preservation through the fear of God*

*Phil 2:12-13 Meng*

*12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not only as in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure.*

The Philippians were THE obedient followers of Christ, as Paul emphasizes in Philippians chapter 2 verse 12. And they had been so ever since

their conversion. We hear of no abuses of sin in the Philippians letter, as in Corinth, or of any danger of falling prey to false teachings, as in Galatia. The Philippians were faithful to the Bible, faithful to the apostles, and blameless according to Paul's testimony.

And **yet**, they have not yet secured their final salvation; they must work out their salvation "**with fear and trembling**." This is where our prevailing image of God is severely shaken. Should we fear God and be afraid of him? Even if we are his beloved children and obedient in all things, what is there to tremble and fear?

Let's take a closer look at the word "fear" used here:

φόβος phobos (Strong G5401)

- fear
- terror
- apprehension
- (death) fear

We should *work out our salvation* **with fear** [φόβος phobos] **and trembling**, says God in His Word.

The word trembling alone is quite clear. It does not fit with mere "reverence," as the New Evangelical Translation translates it. Those who are truly afraid tremble. But is such fear and dread really meant here?

The same word used here for fear, φόβος phobos, is also used, for example, in

- *Mt 14:26 Meng* The disciples ... *cried out in fear* [φόβος phobos] because they thought it was a ghost.
- *Mt 28:4 Meng* Out of *fear* [φόβος phobos] of him [the angel], the guards trembled and became like dead men.
- *Hebrews 2:15 Meng* [Jesus] to set free all those who throughout their lives were held in slavery by their fear [φόβος phobos] of death

The biblical use of φόβος phobos clearly shows us that, even if we don't like to hear it, we should also have fear and reverence for God, and we

should have a **reverent seriousness** in view of the greatness of salvation and the holiness of God, in order to bring about, create, or complete our final salvation.

And this is not only the case in these Bible passages. Jesus and the apostles are in remarkable agreement on this (see the following example verses):

But we are not left alone with this challenge. We can rely on God's love, care, and help, and that he will give us the necessary motivation and strength.

*Phil 2:12-13 SlT*

*12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation **with fear** [φοβέω, phobeō ] and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure.*

*Luke 12:5 SlT*

*[Jesus says to his disciples] But I will show you **whom you should fear: Fear** [φοβέω, phobeō ] **him who, after he has killed, also has power to cast into hell!** Yes, I tell you, **fear him!***

*Romans 11:20-21 Meng*

*20 Quite right! Because of their unbelief they were broken off, and you stand in their place because of your faith. Do not be arrogant, but be on your guard! 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.*

*Jude 1:5 Meng*

*5 But I want to remind you—though you already know all this—that the Lord (first) saved the people of Israel from the land of Egypt, but the second time he destroyed those who did not believe.*

*Rev 3:3-5 Meng*

*3 Remember, therefore, how you received and heard the word, and hold fast and **apply yourself to it. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.** 4 Yet you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments,*

*they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white, and I will never blot out his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

Phil 2:12-13; Lk 12:5; Rom 11:20-21; Jude 1:5; Rev 3:3-5

### *5.3.6 Preservation through proactive love*

God's forgiveness on the one hand and the necessary divine consequences of our sins as followers of Christ on the other are two very different things. God judges sin in his people. **Where there is an imbalance between what we know about God—that we should love our neighbor as ourselves—and what we put into practice in our lives, God's judgment begins.** This is testified to us in all the exhortations in Jesus' epistles to his churches.

The Lord is holy. Excuses *such as "I didn't know that explicitly"* will not stand up to his holy gaze. We do not need to know all the subparagraphs of his Holy Commandments in the New Testament in advance or by heart. It is enough that we know the basics: ***love God and your neighbor as yourself***. If we take this to heart and proactively apply it in our lives, we are on the right path. Passivity, expecting everything from our preachers alone, that they will present God's will to us on a silver platter, how we should live, is not enough. Jesus seeks and wants mature followers.

### *5.3.7 Preservation through diligence*

Laziness is a brother of destruction. Those who are lazy are evil in the eyes of God—and will be condemned.

The opposite of sloth is diligence. All spiritual progress is based on the diligent use of the gifts entrusted to us by God.

Those who are diligent on the path to heaven will be preserved and will arrive in heaven.

Those who do not work diligently for the Lord are blind, short-sighted, and have forgotten the cleansing of their past sins.

Working diligently for the Lord is not a given on the path to heaven. We are all in danger of becoming weary and slackening in our diligence. The great danger is becoming SLUGGISH. Those who become sluggish and lazy in their faith and service to Jesus are setting themselves on a path that ends with a question mark before the entrance to eternal life.

*Mt 25:14-30 Meng*

*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness! ... **You wicked and lazy servant!** ... 28 Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ... 30 But cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*2 Peter 1:10 SlT*

*10 Therefore, brothers, **be all the more diligent** [Strong G4704 – σπουδάζω – spudazo Greek – to apply diligence; to apply diligence] **to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you will never stumble.***

*Hebrews 4:9-11 Meng*

*11 Let us therefore be diligent [Strong G4704 – σπουδάζω – spudazo Greek – apply diligence; apply diligence] to enter into that rest, lest any one fall through disobedience.*

Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Peter 1:5-10; Matthew 25:22-30; Romans 12:11; 2 Peter 3:14; Hebrews 4:9-11; Heb 6:11-12; Lk 8:15 Mk 4:18-19; Mt 3:10; Mt 7:19; Rev 3:19

### 5.3.8 Preservation through "teamwork" with God

Our eternal salvation comes through teamwork with our Lord. It is an interplay between divine grace and responsibility on our part. The divine side is stronger and prevails—without God's grace through Jesus, no one would be saved. It is like a small child "helping" mommy or daddy. God, as our Father, does the actual work. But He takes our contribution so seriously and considers it so important that He accepts our "help" as genuine proof of love and honors it with the wonderful result of our eternal salvation. Yes, God has made the attainment of eternal salvation such that we, as the redeemed, are so involved that our part is also indispensable. Thus, divine grace and human responsibility complement each other to form a wonderful whole—just as the groom's concern for the bride, together with the bride's joy and willingness, ultimately lead to the happy union of the two in marriage.

The path to the fulfillment of the eternal and indestructible hope of the elect is a team effort between God and us: • God gives us rebirth • thus equipped, we can trust God • because of our faith in God, God gives us strength • through the strength God has given us, our faith is proven in trials and tribulations • through our proven faith, God gives us overflowing joy • through our joy in God, our hope of finally reaching eternity is strengthened and nourished • and the greater our hope for eternity becomes, the more we are strengthened, equipped, and motivated to continue on the path to eternity and to remain on it • all of this happens reciprocally until the fulfillment of our hope, the salvation of our souls.

*1 Peter 1:3-9 Meng*

*3 Blessed **be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who according to His abundant mercy **has begotten us again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 5 **who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation**, .... 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials; 7 **so that the genuineness of your faith may be proven** and found to be more precious than gold, which is perishable but tested by fire, and may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 You love him, though you have not seen him; you*

*believe in him, though you do not see him now, and you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 **because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***

1 Peter 1:3-9; Revelation 7:13-14; James 1:21-22; 2 Peter 3:9-15

*5.3.9 Prayer is our connection to God. Those who seek Him today will be able to withstand trials tomorrow*

Jesus exhorts us to pray in good time so that God will save us in times of need and tribulation. Those who do so will experience His salvation.

And Jesus himself did so: He prayed for God's help BEFORE the temptation. And IN the temptation, he received the help he needed to overcome it.

Thus, Jesus can now save us in his faithfulness from the throne of grace and keep us on the path of salvation.

*Mt 26:41 Slr*

*41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

*Luke 21:36 Meng*

*6 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*

*Heb 5:7 Meng*

*7 During the days of his flesh, he [Jesus] offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard (and was freed) from his fear.*

*Hebrews 4:11-16 Meng*

*11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall by the same example of disobedience. ... 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Matthew 26:41; Luke 21:36; Hebrews 5:7; Hebrews 4:11-16; Luke 22:43-44; Psalm 30:7-12

## **5.4 Preservation through the use of spiritual means of grace**

On our path to salvation, God has given us spiritual means of grace—powerful tools that strengthen, guide, and preserve us. The subchapters in this section show how we can consciously use these tools to remain strong in faith and walk faithfully on the path to eternity.

### *5.4.1 Remaining pure—cleansing—renewing ourselves daily*

**Jesus gives the radiant garments of eternal salvation to those who can be cleansed in this life, who keep themselves pure, and who cleanse themselves again when they become defiled.**

Those who, over time, no longer live out the message of the Gospel and no longer follow Jesus with works that are worthy of his calling and honor Jesus, as they did at the beginning of their life of faith, but who slacken in their actions and become defiled by the activities of this world and do not cleanse themselves again, their faith and spiritual life are dead in the eyes of Jesus.

Those who do not give God everything they can automatically give what they withhold from God to the world and thus defile themselves. The opposite positive example are those who do not "defile themselves," that is, who keep themselves pure. They are alive in Jesus' eyes and do not need to repent. They continue to do the first works. Jesus assumes that they will remain and promises them white robes and eternal life in heaven. In his eyes, they are worthy of eternal life.

But anyone who becomes defiled on their journey with Jesus can purify themselves at any time and thus renew and maintain their fellowship with Jesus. And those who keep the hope of eternal life with their Lord alive in their hearts will do just that consistently.



*1 Peter 1:22 Meng*

*22 Since you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another deeply from the heart.*

*Rev. 3:4 Meng*

*4 Nevertheless, you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

*1 John 1:9 Meng*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*1 John 3:2-3 Meng*

*We shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

1 Peter 1:22; Revelation 3:4; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 3:2-3; Titus 3:5; Numbers 19:13; Leviticus 7:19-21; Matthew 23:27; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:2-3; Revelation 22:12-14

#### *5.4.2 God protects us through a life of prayer*

**Prayer is the crucial key to being and remaining faithful to God in the decisive hours of our lives.**

Prayer connects us with the Lord, and prayer in and through the Spirit of God within us keeps us in the presence of Christ.

Pursuing a life of debauchery and/or worldly cares is spiritually deadly—being vigilant and praying, on the other hand, saves us from the trap that suddenly snaps shut and gives us the freedom to stand before Jesus.

In his most critical hour, Jesus impressively points out to his disciples the God-given means of spiritual survival: (watching and) praying in order to resist temptation. Jesus endured the battle of his life through prayer – and that is also our path on the way to eternal glory.

Praying for one another for protection from evil is one of the key elements in successfully achieving Christ's salvation together.

*2 Cor 13:7 Meng*

*7 But we pray to God that you may do no evil.*

*Matthew 6:13 Meng*

*13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

*Luke 21:34-36*

*36 Watch and pray at all times, that you may be able to escape all these things that are going to happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

*Lk 22:40-41 Meng*

*40 Pray that you may not enter into temptation. 41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed.*

*2 Cor 13:7, Mt 6:13, Lk 21:34-36, Lk 22:40-41, Jude 1:20-21*

#### *5.4.3 Faith—the key to preservation*

Through faith in the mercy of Christ, we have been saved. By holding fast to our faith in the mercy of Christ, we will be saved. Yes, the place of grace and protection of God's love exists. And through Christ, I may live in it by faith until eternal life.

*1 Peter 1:5-9 Meng*

*5 who **are kept** by the power of God **through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved **by various trials**, 7 so **that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

*Jude 1:20-21 Meng*

*20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; 21 and keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

*Hebrews 10:39 SlT*

*39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

1 Pet. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:39; Jude 1:20-21; John 5:11-13; John 3:36

#### 5.4.4 *Persevering and waiting for Jesus – the art of remaining steadfast*

The speeches of Jesus and the New Testament are full of the idea that "waiting for Christ" is one of the main tasks and virtues of a follower of Christ. **Those who actively wait for their Lord preserve their future salvation for Jesus and strengthen their inner powers on the path to eternity.**

Waiting steadfastly for Jesus, our hope, brings us into the right state that is pleasing to God. And consciously waiting for Jesus opens the door to the throne of grace and gifts of grace.

Our waiting for Jesus should by no means be passive. We should do EVERYTHING we can to be pure, blameless, and inwardly at peace before Jesus when He comes.

And even as we wait for Jesus, we can know that in the end, it is Jesus' mercy that will open the doors to eternity for us.

*Hebrews 9:28 Meng*

***28 Likewise, Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are waiting for him, for their salvation.***

*Luke 12:35-46 Meng*

***35 "Let your hips be girded and your lamps burning! 36 For you shall be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, so that when he comes and knocks, they may immediately open to him. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he returns! Truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt, have them sit down at the table, and come and serve them. 38 Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night and finds them so, blessed are they! ... 44 Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and then begins to beat the servants and maids, to feast and drink, and to get***

*drunk with the unfaithful: 46 the master of such a servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him his place with the unfaithful [or "unbelievers"].*

Luke 12:35-48; Hebrews 9:28; Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:13-15; Jude 1:21

#### *5.4.5 Spiritual warfare—preservation through resistance to evil*

Let us put on the armor of God so that we may prevail in our spiritual warfare, in which we are engaged until we attain glory:

- Assurance of salvation: I am saved, God is faithful and will save me completely; this is the helmet of salvation (Eph 6:7).
- Assurance of forgiveness: I am forgiven, and God is faithful and forgives my sins when I confess them (1 John 1:9).
- God did not destine me for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:9).
- God is for me—who can be against me (Rom. 8:31)!
- If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2:13).
- I have loved you with an everlasting love and inscribed you on my hands (Jer. 31:3).
- Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

And then, by God's grace, we fight God's battle to the victorious end: abstaining and persevering, overcoming evil with good.

*1 Cor 9:25 Stt*

*25 But everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.*

*Ephesians 6:10-19 Meng*

*10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ... 13 **Therefore put on the full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

*Romans 12:21 Meng*

*21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

*Rev 3:21 SlT*

*21 To the one who conquers, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

Eph 6:7; 1 John 1:9; Eph 6:16; 1 Thess 5:9; Rom 8:31; 2 Tim 2:13; Jer 31:3; 1 Cor 9:25; Ephesians 6:10-19; Rom 12:21; Rev 3:21

#### *5.4.6 Trial and testing – Being strengthened through trials*

The fact that someone truly has the right faith in Jesus Christ and that Jesus truly dwells in a person is evident in their proving themselves in faith. This can be seen from the outside, but I myself can also see it as someone who is affected. That is why prayer that we may do no evil and that we may be perfected is so important, because it promotes our proving ourselves in faith. True faith is demonstrated through proving oneself. And proving oneself preserves the proven.

*2 Corinthians 13:5 SlT*

*5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?*

*Rev 3:10 Meng*

*Because you have kept my word of steadfast waiting for me, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.*

*1 Tim 3:13 SlT*

*13 For if they do well, they will gain for themselves a good standing and much boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

*Phil 1:27-28 Meng*

*27 ... I want you to stand firm in one spirit, fighting as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 and in no way intimidated by your opponents; this is a sign to them of their destruction, but to you of your salvation, and that from God.*

Rev 3:10; 2 Cor 13:5-9; Phil 1:27-28; Lk 8:15; 1 Pet 1:7; Tit 1:16; Rom 5:4; Lk 11:28; John 8:51; John 17:6; 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 3:8; 1 John 5:18; Rev 2:26; Rev 3:8; Rev 3:10; Rev 22:7

## **5.5 Preservation through repentance and timely conversion**

**The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the need for timely repentance in order to remain in God's salvation.** In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus calls on his followers to seek reconciliation with others before worshipping God: *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go first and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."* This call for reconciliation shows the urgency of acting quickly and resolving conflicts before coming before God. This is an example of the need to pay attention to repentance in daily life and not to wait, as the time for reconciliation and repentance may be limited.

**In his grace, God gives us time to repent because he longs for the salvation of all people.** However, this time is not unlimited, and we should not lightly overlook the fact that God grants us this opportunity to convert and remain in his grace.

**But just as God gives room for repentance, the New Testament warns of the danger of delay.** In Revelation 2-3, Jesus speaks to the seven churches and repeatedly calls them to repentance. Revelation 2:5 says: *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works! If you do not repent, I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place!"* The churches that do not decide to

repent are threatened with the loss of salvation, since the time for repentance is limited. This shows how crucial it is to act in time in order to remain in communion with God.

Another warning image is provided by the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, who did not keep their lamps burning because they were not vigilant. Only the five wise virgins who prepared themselves and bought oil in time went with the bridegroom. **The others, who missed their chance to prepare, could no longer enter when it was too late.** Jesus says clearly: *Therefore, stay awake! For you know neither the day nor the hour.* The story **illustrates how important it is not to be late and not to treat the time for repentance lightly.**

In Hebrews 12:15, believers are warned *not to miss God's grace* and that "*a bitter root*" and "*fornication*" should not grow up, which could endanger their faith. The writer refers here to the example of Esau, who missed the time for repentance and as a result "*did not find the opportunity for repentance, even though he sought it with tears*" (Hebrews 12:17 Slt). **Esau showed that delayed repentance or a careless attitude toward repentance can lead to a loss of salvation.**

**The clear message of the New Testament is that we should not lightly rely on the grace given to us for repentance.** If we do not use our opportunity for repentance and remain vigilant and ready, we risk being separated from God for eternity. **There is no later time for repentance if we miss the moment. The spiritual responsibility that God gives us is great: those who live in faith will remain in grace, but those who turn away from repentance will have to bear the consequences.** The warnings from the Gospels and the Epistles are clear—we must listen to the call to repentance today, in the present, because no one knows when the end of their time on this earth or the return of Christ will come.

When we look back in eternity, we may wish we had responded to the call to repentance that we missed. But then it will be too late, and the state we find ourselves in will be finalized—whether it be eternal salvation through constant repentance and faith or eternal separation from God if we have not used the opportunity for repentance and have neglected spiritual vigilance.

The most effective source of grace and, at the same time, the only sure attitude that preserves us as followers in salvation is a constant readiness to repent and timely repentance for our transgressions.

Here are the corrected Bible passages with correctly placed, clickable links and Bible text in the desired format:

*Mt 5:23-24 Slt*

*If you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go first and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

*2 Peter 3:9 Slt*

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

*Rev 2:5 Slt*

*Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

*Mt 25:1-13 Slt*

*Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

*Heb 12:15 Slt*

*See to it that no one fails to receive the grace of God, that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

*Heb 12:17 Slt*

*For you know that even though he desired it, he was rejected, because he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears.*

## **5.6 Preservation through the Church of Christ**

The path to salvation is not a lonely one, but a path that God allows us to walk in community. The church of Christ is more than a place of gathering—it encourages, corrects, and strengthens us in our faith. Here we



share joys and burdens, hear God's Word, and are carried when we are weak. These chapters show how the church, as a divine instrument, helps us to remain faithful to God on our pilgrimage to eternity and to preserve and strengthen one another.

#### *5.6.1 Preservation through encouragement and exhortation*

Through external circumstances and internal trials, followers of Christ can indeed be tempted by the tempter and fall, rendering the work of the Apostles futile. And the work was only futile if the believers did not (or no longer) live in faith and were not saved. But this can be prevented. Encouragement from other brothers and sisters contributes significantly to this. We learn how important encouragement is from the missionary journeys of the apostles, who, , visited the churches a second or third time after initially establishing them in order to encourage and exhort them to remain steadfast with their Lord, to strengthen them in their salvation and faith.

**The right balance between admonition and encouragement is crucial. Jesus shows us how to do this. In one breath, He admonishes us—in the next, He encourages us so that we can bear the admonition.** If God's Word both admonishes and encourages us, how much more do we need both gifts of grace in a balanced proportion from our current teachers in the faith.

Our own faithfulness to the Lord also encourages—without words—other brothers and sisters in faith to be faithful in their faith.

Our eternal salvation ultimately depends on whether we admonish and encourage one another (and allow ourselves to be admonished and encouraged).

*Matthew 10:28-33 Meng*

*28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. – ... 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not be afraid; You are worth more than many sparrows. – ... 33 But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my heavenly Father.*

*1 Thessalonians 3:2-5 Meng*

*Timothy ... **should strengthen you** and encourage you in your faith, 3 **so that no one would be shaken by the present afflictions; you yourselves know that we are destined for this.** ... 5 Therefore I sent ... (a messenger) to you to find out about your faith, lest the tempter had tempted you and our work should be in vain. Timothy ... **should strengthen you** and encourage you in your faith.*

*Acts 15:32 Meng*

*32 Judas and Silas, who were prophets, **also encouraged the brothers with many words and strengthened them** (in their faith).*

Matthew 10:28-33; 1 Thessalonians 3:2-5; Acts 15:32; Acts 14:21-22; 1 Thessalonians 3:7-8; Acts 23:11

#### *5.6.2 Preservation through comfort and encouragement in difficult times*

Yes, the Lord disciplines us, and yes, through difficult circumstances. But His motive is always love. And we must be reminded of this again and again by our brothers and sisters in faith through their example and their words of encouragement and admonition, and we must hold fast to it in order to remain on the path to heaven.

**Thus, encouragement and admonition from our brothers and sisters in faith are a key factor in our ultimate salvation in eternity.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:11 Meng*

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

*Acts 14:22 Slt*

*22 And with all boldness they continued to speak and teach the word of God.*

*2 Cor 1:4 Meng*

*[God] comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

*Hebrews 3:13 Meng*

*But exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

1 Thess 5:11; Acts 15:32; 2 Cor 1:4; Heb 3:13; 1 Thess 4:18; 2 Thess 2:17; Col 4:8; 2 Cor 1:6; Acts 20:2

### *5.6.3 Your obedience in faith is salvation for others*

My testimony plays an important role in helping people become open to faith, accept Jesus as their Savior, and remain saved. It should honor God, invite others to Him, not lead anyone into sin, and strive for the salvation of others.

*1 Corinthians 10:31-33 Meng*

*31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved.*

*1 Tim 4:16 Meng*

***16 Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things,** for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

*Jude 1:22-23 Meng*

*22 And **have compassion on those who are in doubt:** 23 snatch them out of the fire and save them!*

1 Cor 10:31-33; 1 Tim 4:16, Jude 1:22-23; Mt 18:15; 1 Cor 4:16; Jude 1:22-23; 1 John 5:16; 1 Thess 3:7

### *5.6.4 Preservation through church discipline – protection from straying*

Jesus calls us to radically separate ourselves from every sinful member of the body in order to preserve our spiritual integrity and be ready for heaven. All the more so will he himself remove permanently sinful members from his body, since he embodies perfect integrity. While he

wants to heal a sick member, he will remove it if healing is not possible and the sin spreads like cancer, in order to protect the whole body. Just as leaven must be completely removed to preserve purity, church discipline also serves this purpose. Jesus does not tolerate members of his body who consciously refuse healing and restoration by the Good Shepherd. Church discipline—both ours and Jesus'—not only has a healing effect locally, but also serves as a warning to other believers, preventing them from committing similar transgressions.

*Matthew 18:15-18*

*15 If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother; 16 but if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

*1 Tim 5:20 Meng*

*20 Those who sin are to be rebuked before all (elders), so that the rest may also fear.*

*1 Cor 5:6-7 Meng*

*6 Your boasting is not good! Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Get rid of the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, since you are free from leaven. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

Mt 18:15-18; 1 Tim 5:20; 1 Cor 5:6-7; 1 Cor 12:27; 1 Cor 6:15; Mk 9:43-47; Mt 18:15-18; 1 Cor 1:2; Rev 2:16; Rev 2:18-27

### *5.6.5 Preservation through mutual vigilance*

As brothers and sisters in faith, we are called to watch over one another, treat one another with love, and strengthen one another. This mindful fellowship helps us to avoid drifting into sin and to remain on the path with Jesus. By caring for, looking after, and encouraging one

another, we help to ensure that no one is left behind, but that we all reach the goal of eternity together.

*John 13:34-35 Meng*

*34 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

*Jude 1:22-23 Meng*

*22 And have compassion on those who are in doubt: 23 snatch them out of the fire and save them!*

*Heb 3:12-13 Slr*

*12 Take care, brothers, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

John 13:34-35; Jude 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:12-13; Jude 1:22-23; Hebrews 4:1; Matthew 18:15

#### *5.6.6 Submission to spiritually minded leadership*

We are called not only to obey God, but also to obey those who bear spiritual responsibility for us. In God's final judgment, both will be addressed and will be significant.

Those who submit themselves in life to the leaders appointed by God who watch over their souls and listen to them are acting wisely and doing themselves a favor—not only for the here and now, but for all eternity.

If even those who resist worldly authorities receive their judgment from God, how much more so those who resist the spiritual leaders appointed by God.

Submission has its natural limits when spiritual leaders do evil or want to act contrary to God's will. In such cases, we remain free to do God's

will and are called upon to convict the leaders with the support of at least two witnesses and to publicly address their misconduct.

*Hebrews 13:17 Slt*

*17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

*1 Corinthians 16:16 Meng*

*16 Submit yourselves also to such people, and indeed to everyone who works hard and labors.*

*1 Peter 5:5 Meng*

*5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

*1 Tim 5:19-20 Meng*

*19 Do not accept an accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are guilty of wrongdoing should be rebuked in the presence of all (elders), so that the rest (elders) may also be afraid.*

Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Peter 5:5; Romans 13:2; 3 John 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 5:19-20

#### *5.6.7 Preservation through sound doctrine and teachers according to God's Word*

The training of spiritually minded leaders who love God's Word, understand it, live by it, and teach God's people is one of the most important means of preserving and protecting the church on its way to eternity.

Living in holy reverence for God after conversion is not a sure thing. It requires good teaching and exhortation from spiritually minded teachers who know and live God's Word in order for this life to unfold. The good news is that God gives us time, His Word, and preachers to lead us back to the right path again and again.

*1 Tim 4:16 SlT*

*16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

*Titus 1:7-9 SlT*

*7 For an overseer must be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not greedy for dishonest gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, holy, self-controlled; 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has learned, that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it.*

*Dan 12:3 SlT*

*3 And those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

Dan 12:3; 1 Tim 4:16; Tit 1:5-16; Mt 5:19; Rom 16:17-18

### *5.6.8 Preservation through good role models*

Every follower of Christ needs role models. Blessed are those who have good role models in faith! This will help them/us to imitate the role model and reach their goal.

Those who do not have a good human role model in their midst still have THE role model par excellence: Jesus himself. We can, should, and are allowed to identify with Jesus on our journey of faith. When we do so, our longing for our heavenly home in his presence will become so great that we will run well on the path—on our race track—to our heavenly home and remain there.

*John 13:15 SlT*

*15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*

*Hebrews 12:1 SlT*

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,*

*let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

*Hebrews 13:7*

*7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*

*Phil 3:17-19 SlT*

*17 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. 18 For many walk, as I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their stomach, and they boast in their shame, being set on earthly things.*

John 13:15; Hebrews 12:1; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:16

## **5.7 The Preservation of the Church of Christ**

The Church of Christ—Its Preservation and the Dangers that Threaten It

### **1. The calling and completion of the church as the bride of Christ**

The church of Christ is the bride of Jesus Christ, called by God, whom he has prepared for himself, pure and blameless.

*Eph 5:25-27 Meng*

*25 Just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*

The church as a whole, as the body of Christ on earth, will NEVER perish, but will ultimately arrive with Christ in heaven, inherit the kingdom with him, and reign for eternity.

*Mt 16:18 SlT*

*But I also say to you: You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*



*Rev 19:7-8 Meng*

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 And she has been given fine linen to wear, bright and clean. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

## **2. The local church of Jesus – discipleship at a crossroads**

But what about each individual local church? Its eternal existence and spiritual life are by no means guaranteed.

Jesus demands sanctification and church discipline at the local church level, that is, the separation of anyone who remains unrepentant in sin (Mt 18:17; Lk 9:60), because otherwise sin will permeate the entire church (1 Cor 5:6-7). Furthermore, Jesus makes it unmistakably clear what the consequences are when a local church abandons its first love, does not preserve pure doctrine, and renounces church discipline: spiritual death threatens, the lampstand of the church will be removed, and the church will ultimately be spewed out of his mouth (Rev. 2:4-5; Rev. 3:16).

*Rev. 3:1-2 Meng*

*1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: Thus says he who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found your works perfect before God. .*

*Rev. 2:4-5, 7 Meng*

*4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ... 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

*Rev. 3:16 SlT*

*So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

### 3. Preserving the local church on the path to salvation

#### a) Preservation from seduction by a false gospel

Even the first churches had to contend with temptations. Paul warns that a false gospel that does not proclaim true salvation through Jesus Christ can corrupt the church.

*Gal 1:6-9 Meng*

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be accursed!*

**Preservation:** Elders and leaders must watch over the saving doctrine, teach it without distortion, and live it out in an exemplary manner. (Titus 1:9)

#### b) Preservation from spiritual slumber and lukewarmness

Spiritual lukewarmness is a serious danger.

*Rev 3:16 Slt*

*So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

**Preservation:** The church must be vigilant and preserve its first love. (Rev. 2:4-5)

#### c) Preservation from sin and lack of church discipline

Sin in the lives of individuals can defile the entire church and separate it from God.

*1 Cor 5:6-7 Slt*

*Your boasting is not good! Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.*

**Preservation:** Living holiness and church discipline are necessary (2 Tim 4:2).

d) Preservation through spiritual leadership

Weak leadership is often the beginning of apostasy.

*Acts 20:28 Slt*

*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

**Preservation:** Leaders must love the Word and live exemplary lives. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:16)

## **Conclusion**

The church as a whole, those who have overcome and remained faithful to Christ, will exist for eternity. But every local church is engaged in a spiritual battle for life and death. Continued love for Jesus, vigilance, sound doctrine, church discipline, and spiritual leadership are the keys for the local church to remain on the path of salvation into eternity.

## **5.8 Victory over trials – Remaining steadfast on the narrow path**

On the path to salvation, we encounter challenges and trials that test our faithfulness to God. But God provides us with the necessary means to remain steadfast. His Word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit are our weapons to overcome temptations, doubts, and resistance.

These chapters show how we can overcome every trial through God's power and promises. They encourage us to see trials as opportunities to grow in faith and remain steadfast on the path to eternity.

### *5.8.1 God's love is our shield*

#### **God's love is our protection**

God's love for us is the central truth of the Bible, offering us comfort, security, and protection. It is not just a fleeting feeling, but an integral part of His nature, evident in our salvation and in our hope for the future.

In Revelation 1:4-6, we learn that God's love is the source of our salvation and has made us a kingdom and priests. This love is not only crucial to our salvation, but also to our identity as God's children.

*"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love"* (John 15:9) shows us how much Jesus loves us and calls us to remain in that love. If we remain in that love, it will protect us and strengthen us in difficult times.

Ephesians 2:4-5 also describes God's love as the source of our salvation. It has made us alive, even though we were dead in our sins, and freed us from the power of sin.

In 1 John 3:1, we see that God's love has made us his children, which gives us a special sense of security and safety.

But God's love also demands a response from us. In Revelation 3:19, we are told that God's love calls us to repentance and sanctification, which protects and strengthens us.

Finally, 2 Thessalonians 3:5 emphasizes that God's love aligns our hearts and protects us from the attacks of the enemy.

In summary: God's love protects us from sin, from the uncertainty of the world, and from the attacks of the enemy. It is the secure foundation on which we stand and the power that moves us forward.

*John 15:9 Slt*

***9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.***

*2 Thessalonians 3:5 Slt*

***5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ!***

*Rev 3:19 Slt*

**19 All those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. So be earnest and repent!**

Rev. 1:4-6; John 15:9; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 3:1; 2 Thess. 3:5; Rev. 3:19

### *5.8.2 The joy of the Lord is our strength*

#### **The joy of the Lord is our strength**

The joy of the Lord is one of the greatest spiritual sources of our strength. When God is our joy, our lives are firmly rooted in him and we experience the best spiritual protection. This joy does not depend on external circumstances, but on the unshakeable love and faithfulness of God.

In the Old Testament, we read in Neh 8:10 that *"the joy of the Lord is your strength."* These words show us that true joy can only be found in God and that this joy gives us the strength we need to overcome challenges.

In the New Testament, John 15:11 confirms this truth when Jesus says, *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* This joy of Jesus himself in us makes us strong and complete.

In Philippians 4:4, we are also told: *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* This joy in the Lord is a constant state that gives us the strength to remain steadfast in all circumstances of life.

Joy in the Lord is our best protection because it not only keeps us close to God, but also gives us the strength to remain steadfast in the midst of challenges and difficulties. It protects us from the storms of life and preserves us in all situations.

*Neh 8:10 Meng*

*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*

*Phil 4:4 Slt*

*4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!*

*John 15:11 Slt*

*11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.*

Neh 8:10; Jn 15:11; Phil 4:4; Rom 14:17; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Heb 12:2

5.8.3 *Do not be afraid: we cannot do it on our own, but through him!*

Jesus says that no one would be saved if the last terrible time were not shortened. This shows that I cannot do it on my own. I am completely dependent on God's love and protection—on him arranging my circumstances so that I can remain with him. And that is exactly what God has promised. He is faithful and will not test us beyond our ability.

But God's faithfulness does not mean that he lulls us into complacency. He calls us to resist sin to the point of shedding our blood. His protection comes in the midst of the fiery furnace of the battle against sin and apostasy. All glory belongs to him alone!

*Mark 13:20 Slt*

*20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.*

*1 Corinthians 10:13 Meng*

*13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And **God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.** But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

*Hebrews 12:3-6 Meng*

*... 4 **For you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your struggle against sin ...***

*Jude 1:24-25 Slt*

*24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior*

*be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.*

Mark 13:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 12:3-6; 2 Corinthians 1:1-11; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Peter 3:9

#### *5.8.4 Protection from false pride and condemnation*

Pride in our own achievements before God and man is the hallmark of the lost. No work we do can save us or bring us into a healed relationship with God—only the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for us, can do that.

The works of those who have been saved by grace spring from love, because we ourselves have been infinitely loved and pardoned by God. But without a response to His love, without love in return for our Savior, we will not be saved eternally.

As children of God, we are in danger of becoming proud of our own achievements, comparing ourselves to others, judging them, and losing sight of God's grace. Such behavior must be corrected again and again, because pride separates us from God, while humility brings us closer to Him.

The goal and the only healthy path are love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.

*1 John 4:19 Slt*

*19 We love him because he first loved us.*

*James 4:6 Slt*

*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

*1 Corinthians 4:7 Meng*

*For who gives you any advantage? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*

*Luke 17:10*

*10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'*

1 John 4:19; James 4:6; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Luke 17:10; Luke 18:14; Romans 1-3; 1 Timothy 1:5

#### *5.8.5 Victory over the adversary – Standing firm against the enemy*

Our adversary, the devil, is a real threat. He attacks our faith openly or covertly, with the aim of weakening us spiritually or even killing us, in order to lead us astray from the path to eternity. But through the fear of God and humility, the knowledge and preservation of God's Word, the clear rebuke of evil in the power of this Word, and our active faith, we can see through his plans and resist him victoriously.

*Matthew 4:3-4 NIV*

*3 Then the tempter came to him ... 4 But he answered him, "It is written ...*

Matthew 4:3-4; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14; James 4:7; Ephesians 6:16; John 10:10; Genesis 3:1-13; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Genesis 3:1-13; 1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:9-11; Zech 3:1+2; Mt 4:1-11; 1 Pet 5:8+9; 1 Thess 3:5; Mk 8:33; 1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:10-11; 1 Tim 5:14-15; 2 Cor 11:13-14; Eph 4:25-27; James 4:7; Luke 10:17-20; Luke 22:31; Col 2:13-15

### **5.9 Summary: My preservation on the path to eternal salvation**

The church as a whole, those who have overcome and remained faithful to Christ, will exist for eternity. But every local church is engaged in a spiritual battle for life and death. Persistent love for Jesus, vigilance, sound doctrine, church discipline, and spiritual leadership are the keys for the local church to remain on the path of salvation into eternity.



God preserves us as members of Christ on our path to eternity through His unwavering faithfulness and grace. Our salvation is not based on our own achievements, but on Jesus' love and sacrifice. He does not expect perfection, but a heart that remains obedient to Him and lives close to Him. His grace gives us the opportunity to repent and strengthens us to remain steadfast even in difficult times.

God uses His Word, prayer, His teaching, and spiritual leaders to keep us on the right path. Those who take His Word seriously and act upon it protect themselves from evil. But preservation does not happen automatically—it requires our active devotion. Spiritual vigilance, good teaching, and admonition are crucial. Sloth and negligence endanger our salvation, while a life of holy reverence leads us safely to our destination.

A Christian's greatest strength lies in humility and in a heart that allows itself to be continually renewed by Jesus. Those who trust in God can know that He will carry us through, even when we stumble. True love for Jesus is shown by entrusting our lives to him and acting according to his will—not out of fear, but out of joy in him. Sin may be a challenge, but with God's help we are not powerless. He gives us the strength to resist it and leads us into freedom. Those who rely completely on him remain secure in his grace—today and for eternity.

We are called to care for one another, to love and strengthen one another, so that together we may attain eternal glory. Crucial to the preservation of the church is the training of spiritual leaders who love, preserve, and teach God's Word. The elders and leaders have the responsible task of watching over the saving teaching of the one true gospel, teaching it, and living it in an exemplary manner. A church that strays from the core of the one true gospel and turns to a false gospel in word and practice falls from God's grace—as the Galatians nearly did—and loses its salvation. Thus, there will be churches that outwardly still appear to be the church of Jesus, but in reality are dead and will be spewed out of Jesus' mouth.

The church discipline commanded by Jesus serves our healing and warning. A church that implements it carefully and faithfully protects itself from the judgment of its Lord and helps those who have been rebuked to remain on the path to eternity. However, the decisive protection against such developments or restoration after an apostasy that has already occurred lies in repentance and conversion to the true gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ. This includes an attitude of fear of God that avoids sin, arrogance, and the pursuit of one's own lofty goals. Instead, it is important to rediscover one's first love for Jesus and to orient one's life toward devotion to him. Sinful leaders and fellow believers must be led to repentance in love, through admonition and clear communication, so that the church as the body of Christ may be preserved in truth, purity, and faithfulness.

God's faithfulness is our security. He does not allow us to be tested beyond our strength and gives us the opportunity to repent. At the same time, He calls us to be vigilant, to pray, and to actively await His return. Those who remain close to Him experience His preserving grace in a special way.

The spiritual battle is real. The enemy tries to undermine our faith and thus bring us to spiritual death. But through God's Word, prayer, and humility, we can resist his attacks. The armor of God protects us, while prayer keeps us close to Christ.

Ultimately, God's protection and our devotion go hand in hand. Our salvation is based on His love and faithfulness, but it is up to us to remain in Him, allow ourselves to be purified, and keep His Word. Those who remain in Jesus, follow Him, and listen to His voice will surely reach their destination—the glory of eternity.

## 6 The limits of salvation

The limits of the path to salvation raise difficult questions: What happens when people turn away from faith? Can salvation actually be lost? How do God's mercy and individual responsibility relate to each other?

The subchapters shed light on biblical foundations for topics such as apostasy, restoration, and the certainty of salvation. They help us to better understand God's love, justice, and faithfulness, even in difficult questions of faith. This introduction invites us to find guidance in the Bible and to see challenging aspects of salvation more clearly.

## **6.1 There is no such thing as "cheap" grace; true grace costs life itself**

God loves us and freely gives us His grace, accepting us as His children. The normal response is that, loved so much by God, we bear fruit for God. His grace produces fruit in our lives, which is expressed in our doing God's will. But with God, there is no cheap grace. With our baptism, we receive salvation freely—but at the price of our own will and a new willingness to do God's will in all things. Those who follow this path will be saved eternally. Those in whom God's grace does not bear fruit in their lives will fall from grace and will not be saved.

*Luke 14:26-27 Meng*

*26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

*Romans 6:15-16 Meng*

*15 What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Never! 16 You know that when you offer yourselves to someone as slaves to obey him, you are slaves to the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness.*

*2 Cor 6:1 SlT*

*1 But as co-workers, we also urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.*

*Luke 13:6-9 Meng*

*6 Then he told them this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. 7 So he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I've been coming to*

*look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it take up space?' 8 But he replied, 'Sir, leave it alone for one more year, and I will dig around it and fertilize it. 9 Perhaps it will bear fruit in the future; if not, then cut it down.'*

Rom 6:15-16; Rom 5:17; Lk 7:41-43; 2 Cor 6:1; c Jud 1:4; Heb 6:7-8

## **6.2 God's love and immeasurable grace**

There is a great space of God's grace in which we are safe, even if we sin and fall at times. And yet this space of grace also has limits, as Scripture testifies to us in many places. For example, in relation to our conscience, our faith in grace, our unjust thoughts and actions, and our abiding in Jesus. In detail:

In Scripture, there are several stages of decline for a brother or sister in faith, moving further and further toward the edge of the space of grace, until they possibly leave it altogether.

**Here are a few examples** (the boundary of the space of grace is underlined in each case):

**My speech and interaction with brothers and sisters in faith according to Jesus** (Matthew 5:22)

- *Whoever is angry with his brother belongs before the court.*
- *But whoever says to his brother, 'You fool,' will be brought before the High Council.*
- *And whoever says to him, 'You idiot!', belongs in the fire of hell.*

**Damaging the conscience of fellow believers through careless actions and tempting them to commit an act/imitation that is deadly for them** (Mt 18:6; Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 3:17; Rom 14:15).

These are the stages of decline:

- becoming saddened/bringing inner distress
- Taking offense/being annoyed/falling

- being led into sin and thus coming under God's judgment
- being corrupted
- be destroyed

**Or there is the example of doing wrong to brothers and sisters, as in the case of the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:1-11).**

The Corinthians have legal disputes among themselves. In God's eyes, this has various stages of escalation:

1. Behaving in a manner unworthy of saints.
2. Not receiving future reward because of a lack of love
3. Losing salvation by actively doing wrong

Anyone who actively wrongs other brothers and sisters in faith is unrighteous. And the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, meaning they will not be saved.

**The dangerously wavering faith of the Galatians (Gal 1-3).**

The Galatians are only (once again) fully born spiritual children of the Father Jesus Christ when they believe completely in His grace. If they abandon their faith in God's grace and rely on keeping the law for their acceptance by God, then they have fallen from grace and Christ is of no use to them anymore. Only when they are (once again) firmly rooted in faith in God's grace, only then has Christ taken shape in them again, can Christ be recognized in them. While they are still torn between trusting in His grace and trying to earn His grace, they find themselves in a dangerous limbo that leaves both possibilities open and over which hangs the warning sign "*Please do not try in vain!*"

**There are two ways of not remaining in Jesus.**

**Occasionally not remaining in Jesus** still preserves us in God's salvation, even if we are ashamed when Jesus returns.

However, **permanently not remaining in Jesus** takes us beyond the boundaries of Jesus' grace and ends in spiritual death.

And there are many more examples, all of which have already been discussed in this book, such as initially getting off to a good start but later falling back in love with the world, no longer bearing fruit for God, being led astray from the one true and saving gospel, falling into sin and not repenting, remaining in unforgiveness and unforgivingness, and many more.

*Mt 5:22 SlT*

*22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to judgment. But whoever says to his brother, "Raka," shall be liable to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, "You fool," shall be liable to the fire of hell.*

*Romans 14:15-20 Meng*

*15 For if your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. **Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the one** for whom Christ died. ... 19 Therefore let us pursue the things that make for peace and the things that build one another up. 20 **Do not destroy the work of God** for the sake of food. Everything is clean, but it is **wrong** for a person to eat anything that causes others to stumble.*

*1 Cor 6:1-11 Meng*

*1 When one of you has a dispute with another, does he dare to take it before the unrighteous for judgment instead of before the saints? ... Is there no one among you wise enough to judge between brothers? 6 But instead, brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now it is already a defeat for you that you have lawsuits among yourselves. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 **But you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and that against your brothers!** 9 Or do you not know that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?** **Do not be deceived:** neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Gal 4:19 Meng*

*19 My dear children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.*

*1 John 2:28 Meng*

*And now, children, **remain in him**, so that when he appears we **may** have confidence and **not be ashamed** before **him** at his coming.*

*John 15:6 Meng*

*6 If anyone **does not remain in me**, he is thrown away like a branch and **withers**; then they are gathered and **thrown into the fire, where they are burned**.*

Matthew 5:22; John 15:6; 1 John 2:28; Romans 14:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; Galatians 4:19; John 15:6;

### **6.3 Living to the sorrow of the Holy Spirit or to the loss of salvation**

According to Scripture, there are different degrees of severity of sins of the tongue. These can range from contemptuous to angry speech about/to fellow believers or loose, disrespectful speech about sacred things such as sexuality and others. The lightest sins of the tongue grieve the Holy Spirit in us, but we remain in God's salvation. The most serious level of sins of the tongue means certain loss of salvation—if there is no prompt repentance for our words and, even more so, for the attitude behind our words. All sins, including sins of the tongue, can be forgiven. Our willingness to reconcile with those we have hurt through our sins of speech is the prerequisite for receiving forgiveness from God ourselves. Scripture makes our repentance very, very urgent so as not to jeopardize our salvation.

*2 Tim 2:11-13 Meng*

*11 This saying is trustworthy: "If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; 13 if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself."*

1 John 1:8

8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Ephesians 4:20-32

26 Be angry, but do not sin; **do not let the sun go down on your anger.**

27 Do not give the devil a foothold. ... 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

Matthew 5:21-26 Meng

21 "You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'You shall not murder; whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever says to his brother, 'You fool!' will be liable to the council; **And whoever says to him, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.** 23 So if you bring your gift to the altar **and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar; go and be reconciled to your brother first.** Then come back and offer your gift.

Mt 5:25-26 Meng

25 Settle matters quickly with your adversary while you are still on the way to court with him, lest your adversary hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.

1 John 3:15 Meng

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and **you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

Eph 5:3-11 Meng

3 But fornication and all impurity or covetousness, **even so be it named, is not even to be mentioned** among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 nor filthy communication, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: **but rather giving of thanks.** 5 For you know and understand



*well that **no fornicator or immoral person, no covetous person—which is the same as an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** 6 **Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things the wrath of God comes upon the disobedient.** 7 **Therefore do not be partners with them.***

*Mt 5:29-30 Meng*

*If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you; **for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.***

2 Tim 2:11-14; 1 John 1:8; Eph 4:20-32; Mt 5:21-26; Mt 5:25+26; 1 John 3:15; Eph 5:3-11; Mt 5:29-30

## **6.4 What is "sufficient" for eternal salvation if faith (and works) is (are) necessary for it?**

Our salvation depends on the right foundation in our lives. First, we must be redeemed in this life through Jesus Christ without any contribution of our own works. And after our redemption, we must fundamentally do God's will in order to arrive in heaven. If we fall along the way, we can always turn back to God, and He will forgive us, judge us, and lift us up again. But only those whose life path is fundamentally and vigilantly focused on doing God's will, staying with it, and allowing themselves to be restored again and again will be saved in the end. Our reward in heaven ultimately depends on the motivation with which we have done God's will: God's glory or our own self-exaltation.

Those who, as unredeemed, want to stand before God through their own efforts will not be saved at all and will not enter into a saving relationship with God.

And those who, whether redeemed or unredeemed, do not fundamentally do God's will will not be saved.

Christ makes it clear in his Sermon on the Mount that those whose life is built on a false foundation will not be saved. Their fall will be great, and Christ will not know them in the final judgment. Who, then, is the one who has built his **or her life on the right foundation** according to Christ? It is the one who DOES what Christ says in the Sermon on the Mount. **Only those who fundamentally DO God's will will be saved.**

**This includes**

- the humility to recognize oneself as a sinner who can only be saved by grace and not by one's own efforts
- taking God's word seriously, even in seemingly small things
- having the power of salt, that is, resistance to sin in thoughts, words, and deeds
- brotherly love – even in thoughts and words
- Willingness to forgive siblings and other people
- Serving and trusting God and not being ruled by money.
- Love your neighbor so much that you do to them what you would want them to do to you
- bear good fruit, which consists in doing the will of the Father of Jesus Christ.

Particularly **rewarding for heaven**, that is, gold, silver, and precious stones in the eyes of God, are

- experiencing and enduring persecution and lies against oneself for Jesus' sake, while remaining faithful to Jesus
- Carefully doing and teaching God's Word ourselves and not breaking even the smallest of the commandments
- Loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us for Jesus' sake

**Doing the right thing with wrong**, self-aggrandizing **motives** is wood, hay, and straw in the eyes of Jesus—and will burn up on that day, **destroying our reward**. This includes in particular

- Giving in order to be seen
- Praying to be seen
- Fasting to be seen

- Consequently, all pious actions done to receive applause from people and not from God alone

But also

- Not taking God's word seriously in small things

Basically, everything with which we exalt ourselves through our "pious deeds" and/or do not give glory to God will be burned.

**The royal road to heaven is to be redeemed by Jesus from one's sins and from one's own futile deeds, and then to live out of love for the Redeemer and do His will with pure motives alone for the glory of God until the end.**

- Exalting oneself before God through one's own works prevents salvation.
- Being redeemed from not doing God's will and henceforth doing God's will preserves salvation.
- Not doing God's will (anymore) destroys salvation.
- Doing God's will, but for the wrong motives, destroys reward.

*Mt 5:20 Slr*

*20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!*

*Mt 7:21 Slr*

*21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

*Mt 6:1 Meng*

*1 Take care that you do not practice your righteousness ["charity"] before others in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

*Col 3:23-24 Meng*

*23 Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly, as if it were for the Lord and not for people; 24 for you know that you will receive the (heavenly) inheritance from the Lord as your reward: you are serving the Lord Christ as servants.*

*Luke 9:24 Meng*

*For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will save it.*

*1 Cor 3:11-15 Meng*

*11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 But if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If anyone's work that he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 But if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

Mt 7:21; Mt 6:1-4; 1 Cor 3:11-15; Mt 5:20; Col 3:23-24; Lk 9:24

## **6.5 Assurance of Salvation – Certainty of Salvation**

Those who are born again are sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment on our inheritance and as a guarantee of our complete salvation, that we now belong to Him.

What we can know for certain is that from the moment of our conversion and as long as we follow Jesus, our names are already written in heaven. We do not have to earn heaven. We can know whether we are saved and on the right path. God's Spirit confirms this within us.

Those who are truly saved

- hear the voice of Jesus
- are known by Jesus
- follow Jesus
- receive eternal life from Jesus
- will never be lost
- will not be snatched out of Jesus' hands by anyone
- will not be snatched out of the Father's hands by anyone, for no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hands.

Yes, all who fight for the spread of the good news and live accordingly are written in the book of life. Their current lives confirm that they are among the truly saved.

*Eph 1:2-14 Meng*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ! 4 For in him he chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him, 5 and in love he predestined us through Jesus Christ to be his sons.*

*John 10:26-30 Meng*

*27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

*1 John 4:13 Meng*

*13 But we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

Eph 1:2-14; Luke 10:20; Eph 1:13; John 11:23-27; Rom 8:29-39; 1 John 4:13; Phil 4:1-4; John 10:26-30

## **6.6 Losing and regaining salvation: The prodigal son – the prodigal daughter**

Anyone who turns away from God and does not repent in time is spiritually dead in God's eyes and is lost. But the good news is that God seeks everyone! Every person has the opportunity to return to their heavenly Father at any time and find new life. The Father in heaven welcomes every repentant returnee with open arms and great joy!

And what joy there is in heaven when he or she changes their attitude in this life, repents, and comes back to new life!

*James 4:4-10 Meng*

*4 You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6*

*But the grace he gives is even greater. That is why it says: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

*Luke 15:6-7 Meng*

*"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep [son & daughter] that was lost." 7 I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.*

*James 5:19-20 Meng*

*19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

Luke 15:6-7; Luke 15:6-7; James 5:19-20; Luke 15:7+9-10, 31-32; 1 John 5:16-18

## **6.7 Signs of true salvation**

The distinguishing mark of truly saved followers of Jesus is love for God, expressed in keeping His commandments, love for fellow believers, and love for all people. Anyone who does not have one of these is not (any longer) a follower of Jesus. And love for God can even be defined precisely: whoever loves God keeps (in principle) his commandments and loves his brothers and sisters in faith. This is the sign of those who are born again. Through faith in Jesus and rebirth, the follower of Jesus receives the power to overcome the world and sin.

*John 15:9-11 Meng*

*9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: abide in my love! 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have told*

*you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

*1 John 4:20-21 1 John 5:1-5 Meng*

*4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God must also love his brother. ... 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves his father loves his children. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

*1 Tim 5:24-25 Meng*

*24 The sins of some people are obvious, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. 25 Likewise, good deeds are obvious, and those that are not cannot remain hidden.*

John 15:9-11; 1 John 4:20-21; 1 John 5:1-5; 1 Tim 5:24-25; 1 John 5:18; Rev 13:8-10; Rev 19:4-5; Rev 21:27

## **6.8 Sin against the Holy Spirit**

The Bible speaks in several places about the serious topic of sin against the Holy Spirit. It becomes clear that this is a specific attitude of the heart toward God's work that leads to final apostasy and is no longer open to repentance. This sin cannot be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come.

### **1. Gospels**

*Matthew 12:31-32*

*31 "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people,*

*but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Even if someone speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven them; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*

*Mk 3:28-30 Meng*

*28 Truly I tell you, All sins will be forgiven the children of men, even blasphemies, however many they may utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — 30 (Jesus said this) because they claimed that he was possessed by an unclean spirit.*

*Luke 12:10 SlT*

*And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.*

Jesus warns urgently against blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This does not happen out of ignorance, but against better judgment: The Pharisees saw Jesus' miracles through the Spirit of God, but attributed them to the devil. This attitude reveals a hardened heart that permanently resists the work of the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness is no longer possible here because there is no longer any willingness to repent. But those who humbly open themselves to God's work and recognize their own sin have hope for forgiveness.

## **2. Letter to the Hebrews**

*Hebrews 6:4-6 Meng*

*4 For it is impossible to renew those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, 6 and then have fallen away— since they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

*Hebrews 10:26-29 Meng*

*26 For if we deliberately sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but only a fearful*



*expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire that will consume the rebellious.*

The Letter to the Hebrews describes people who have had genuine experiences with God—enlightened, partakers of the Holy Spirit, having tasted the good word of God—and yet fall away. Hebrews 6:6 states that renewal to repentance is "*impossible*." Not because God did not want to forgive, but because those affected had become unreceptive to repentance. Hebrews 10 confirms this view and makes it clear: Those who deliberately continue to live in sin after recognizing the truth disregard Christ's sacrifice and the "spirit of grace." They trample on the blood of the covenant.

### **3. 1 John**

*1 John 5:16*

*If anyone sees his brother sinning, a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and he will give life to those who do not sin to the death. There is a sin leading to death; for that I do not say that he should ask.*

John distinguishes between sin that leads to death and sin for which one should pray. In the case of sin leading to death, he advises against prayer. This distinction suggests that there are sins that express such a deep hardening against God that even the prayers of others are no longer effective.

**Conclusion:** Sin against the Holy Spirit is not a one-time slip-up, but a conscious, persistent rejection of God's truth despite clear knowledge. Anyone who places themselves above God's work, distorts it, or blasphemes against it makes repentance impossible—not because God no longer wants to forgive, but because the person in question no longer feels remorse. And an unrepentant person cannot and will not be forgiven by God. There is hope for all who still fear crossing this line—for God's grace is always effective where there is room for genuine repentance. The New Testament therefore calls for constant vigilance, humility, and early repentance so that the heart does not become hardened by sin.

## 6.9 Summary: Boundaries of salvation

### 1. God's unchanging love and the limits of salvation

Salvation is a gift from God that is based on his love. He does not want anyone to be lost (2 Peter 3:9), but for all to find repentance and eternal life. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of each individual to remain on the narrow path of life.

- **Sins of the tongue and their consequences:** Even though careless words can grieve the Holy Spirit, God remains faithful and ready to forgive (1 John 1:9).
- **Loss of salvation through deliberate apostasy:** Those who remain permanently hardened risk their salvation—but God's hand remains outstretched as long as someone is willing to repent.
- **He remains faithful:** Even when we are unfaithful, he remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13). His grace is greater than our weaknesses, and he fights for us so that we will not be lost.

### 2. God's space of grace and its wide boundaries

God gives his children room for repentance and patience on the path of faith. He knows our struggles and will not abandon us as long as we do not consciously reject him.

- **The escalating stages of decline:** Even when believers stumble, God's grace holds them fast. He lifts them up as long as they remain willing to repent.
- **Examples from the Bible:**
  - The Galatians wavered in their faith, but Paul struggled for them because God did not want to give up on them.
  - The Corinthians lived in disorder, but God worked through Paul to restore them.
- **Remaining in Christ:** God strengthens us so that we remain in Christ. But those who consciously and definitively separate

themselves from him step out of his saving grace—yet until their last breath, his call to return remains.

### **3. Assurance of salvation and responsibility – God's interest in our salvation**

God's greatest concern is our salvation. Those who trust in him can be sure that he not only saves once, but also preserves (John 10:28-29).

- **Doing God's will:** Not as a burden, but out of love for him (Matthew 7:21).
- **Fruits necessary for salvation:** love for fellow believers, humility, forgiveness, and faithfulness.
- **What sustains us:** Not our achievements, but God's faithfulness. Even when we fall, He lifts us up—as long as we do not consciously reject His saving work.

### **4. The Prodigal Son – God's open arms for those who return**

Even when someone turns away from God, His fatherly heart remains full of love.

- **God does not give up on anyone prematurely:** those who stray are spiritually dead – but God seeks them out.
- **The heavenly joy over everyone who returns:** "Rejoice with me! For I have found my sheep that was lost" (Luke 15:6-7).
- **Grace without end:** No abyss is too deep for God's mercy.

### **5. Assurance of salvation – God's indissoluble faithfulness**

Our salvation is not fragile. Those who live with God can know that they are held.

- **God protects his children:** no one can snatch them out of his hand (John 10:28).
- **The seal of the Holy Spirit:** Our salvation is assured in Christ (Eph. 1:13).

- **God himself works in us:** He gives us the strength to stay on the path of life (Phil 2:13).

## **6. The distinguishing mark of those who are truly saved—love as the foundation**

The true sign of the redeemed is not perfection, but love.

- **Love for God is expressed in obedience:** those who love God keep His commandments.
- **Brotherly love is indispensable:** those who love God also love their brothers and sisters in faith.
- **God's power overcomes the world:** our faith is the key to remaining in His grace.

## 7 Summary, Outlook

### 7.1 Lost, seemingly or truly saved?

All people live by nature in separation from God and fail to fulfill their true purpose: to love, serve, and worship God, their Creator. In this state, they are lost and headed for eternal destruction—not only because of their separation from God, but also because of the sins they have actually committed. Salvation comes solely through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into this world as true God and true man, lived for us, died on the cross, and rose from the dead on the third day. He now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Only through him can we find forgiveness and enter into a healed, reconciled relationship with God.

A genuine conversion to Jesus Christ is the decisive turning point in a person's life. It is more than merely saying a prayer or outwardly belonging to a church. It is about the inner reorientation of the whole heart to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Without this reorientation, which the Bible describes as being born again, a person—even if he calls himself a Christian—remains spiritually dead and eternally lost. The New Testament clearly shows that not everyone who says "*Lord, Lord*" will enter the kingdom of God, but only those who do the will of the Father. Even people who consider themselves pious and may be actively involved in church circles may find themselves standing before Jesus at the end and hearing his shocking words: "*I never knew you. Depart from me!*"

The difference between genuine life in Jesus and spiritually dead nominal Christianity lies in whether someone has truly been touched by God's love, recognized their sinfulness, and surrendered their life to Jesus. Those who experience this true conversion receive forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and a new heart. They are transformed from within. This is evident in a growing love for God and people, in a desire for sanctification, and in following Jesus even when it requires sacrifice. This new orientation in life is the distinguishing mark of genuine salvation. It does not remain invisible, but becomes visible through fruit in one's life—not as perfection, but as a recognizable striving for God's will.

A dead faith, on the other hand, is often more difficult to recognize because it can look similar on the outside: church attendance, Christian traditions, perhaps even a moral life. But the crucial thing is missing: a living relationship with Jesus, which is manifested in love, obedience, and trust. Those who rely solely on religious achievements or a one-time confession or initial experience with Christ are living in self-deception. The core of salvation is always grace—but this grace transforms. Those who have truly received grace do not remain in sin and indifference, but experience the power of God to change.

True salvation therefore encompasses not only a one-time acceptance of Jesus, but a life that remains in communion with him. This communion is nourished by prayer, Bible reading, and life in the church, where one experiences encouragement and also correction. For to follow Jesus means to remain on his narrow path. It is not an easy path—there are trials, setbacks, and doubts. But those who remain on this path experience God's preserving grace. This grace carries us through all our weaknesses, but also calls us again and again to repentance when we stray.

It is especially dangerous when someone lulls themselves into a false sense of security by clinging to outward appearances: *"I am baptized," "I go to church," "I do good deeds."* But if the heart is not filled with genuine love and devotion to Jesus, these things remain worthless. The Bible emphatically shows that one can perform miracles in Jesus' name and still be lost in the end if one lacks a relationship with him.

So the crucial question is not how often you pray, how much you donate, or what titles you hold in the church—but rather: Do I know Jesus? Do I live out of his love? Am I obedient to God, even if it costs me something? Do I love Jesus? These questions are not meant to unsettle us, but to help us examine our hearts honestly. For Jesus himself says, *"Abide in me, and I in you."* Those who live in this connection can be certain that God's grace will bring them to their destination.

True salvation in Jesus means accepting him as Lord—not just theoretically, but practically. It means turning away from sin and following him. It means listening to his word and putting it into practice in everyday life. Those who live this way experience the security of grace. But those

who rely on their own actions or on church tradition live in danger. The New Testament makes it clear: the faith that saves is an active, obedient faith. It is nourished by grace, but it is manifested in the practice of life.

## **7.2 Salvation happens NOW through faith without works, and eternal salvation happens through faith that is made visible through works.**

In the New Testament, the Greek keywords for salvation (G4991 – σωτηρία – soteria) and saved (G4982 – σώζω – sozo) and their derivatives are used equally frequently both for the salvation already accomplished by Christ at our conversion and for future salvation. This future salvation will occur when Jesus returns and we enter from this earthly life, marked by temptation, into perfect resurrection fellowship with him, in which we will neither sin nor die. This future salvation is referred to in this book as "eternal salvation."

After our first salvation, we are now on the way to this second, eternal salvation. Christ has redeemed us—and he will redeem us. He has saved us—and he will save us. As a down payment on this final redemption, he gave us his Spirit at our first salvation, the pledge of our future, perfect salvation.

An examination of all 545 salvation-related Bible passages in Chapter 2 shows that the approximately 250 passages dealing with the first salvation ( ) are always connected with God's love, grace, and acceptance. The approximately 250 Bible passages concerning the second, eternal salvation, on the other hand, are always connected with our continuing faith, visible in works of faith and in our actions.

Grace—yes, yes, and yes again! But also human responsibility to use this grace to live a life that honors God—yes, yes, and yes again!

The Gospel is not only the good news of God's love that saves us. It is also God's call to obey him from now on, because Jesus is Lord. Those who accept God's love and let Jesus into their lives as Lord in faith love

Jesus. And those who love Jesus do something for him. For the language of God's love is action.

Those who experience God's love and remain cold and indifferent to it—or later become numb to it again—embark on the path of abusing grace. But God does not allow his grace to be abused.

The final judgment, which decides whether we will receive eternal life, is always based on works—but on the basis of undeserved grace.

Does this invalidate the gospel? After all, Paul proves in his Epistle to the Romans, especially in chapters 1-3, that all people are sinners and no one is saved by their own works. Yes, it is futile to try to earn salvation through our own efforts. This applies to our initial salvation, our entry into a reconciled relationship with God.

But when it comes to final, eternal salvation, Paul also says in Romans:

*Romans 2:6-8 Meng*

*[God] 6 who will repay each person according to their deeds, 7 namely eternal life (he will give) to those who, persevering in good works, seek glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and fury to those who are stubborn and do not obey the truth, but serve unrighteousness.*

How does this fit together? Will we ultimately be saved by our works? Isn't eternal life only given to those who believe in Jesus Christ?

Yes, it fits together: those who believe in Jesus Christ are those who obey the faith (Romans 1:5). Their lives are characterized by one decisive trait: they persistently do good and strive for God's glory, honor, and immortality.

This is the description of those who have heard God's call in the gospel, have been made righteous and saved by his grace, and remain on the path to eternity. God will give them eternal life according to their works. But these works are not the cause of their salvation. Their salvation is based solely on Jesus Christ and their faith in the gospel. But they have changed their minds, repented, and follow God in obedience to the faith. Their works of faith are the result of their saving faith and at



the same time a condition for reaching their goal. It is not the good beginning alone that saves, but the faithful walk to the end.

Jesus himself makes this clear: Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life. The gate alone is not enough—the way always belongs to it.

James confirms this: faith without works is dead. Such faith cannot save. True faith only becomes alive and complete through works.

Works of faith do not save us causally. But truly saving faith is manifested in works of faith – which in turn confirm our salvation.

According to these two passages, the grace of God in Jesus Christ has four effects and purposes for us believers—and all are part of God's plan to give us eternal life. This path begins with our conversion, and **God's grace trains us**

- to serve the living and true God,
- to deny ungodliness and worldly desires,
- to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world,
- to look forward to the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Is this waiting for the Lord really necessary for salvation? Yes, it is a God-ordained part of our salvation.

Whoever hears and believes the word of Christ immediately receives eternal life. He or she does not have to show any works in order to be accepted. The person is immediately in the right relationship with God and is with God when he or she dies.

But those who do not want to hear the voice of the Son of God will have lived their lives in evil and will ultimately hear the judgment of condemnation.

Here it becomes clear: hearing in the biblical sense is not merely listening, but always hearing in order to obey. Those who believe obey—and

those who do not obey do not believe. That is why the New Testament often speaks of "obedience of faith."

True faith in Jesus encompasses the whole personality and has clear implications: it manifests itself in our listening to God and doing good. Doing good—out of love for God and people—is the divine standard for saving faith. Those who live in this attitude prove the authenticity of their faith and, because they truly believe, will remain saved. But those who do evil do not believe in Jesus—and are lost. These people have never heard Jesus' call or have turned away from it.

*John 5:24 SlT*

*[Jesus Christ says] 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life** and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

*John 5:28-29 Meng*

*28 Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 **and come out—those who have done good will rise to live**, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

*Isaiah 50:4-5 Meng*

*4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, he awakens my ear to listen like a disciple. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn back.*

*Mark 12:28-31 F*

***Hear, O Israel:** The Lord our God, the Lord alone. And you shall **love the Lord your God** with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength—and your neighbor as yourself.*

*3 John 1:11 Meng*

*Beloved, do **not** imitate evil, but imitate good: whoever **does** good is from **God**; whoever **does evil** has **not** seen **God**.*

*James 2:17*

*17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*Hebrews 9:28 Meng*

**28 So also Christ**, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are eagerly waiting for him, for their salvation.**

*Romans 3:28 Slt*

**28 So we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.**

*Romans 2:6-8 Meng*

**[God] 6 who will repay each person according to their deeds, 7 namely eternal life to those who persevere in good works, seeking glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and fury to those who are stubborn and do not obey the truth, but serve unrighteousness.**

*Rom 8:13 Slt*

**13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

Rom 2:6-11; Rom 3:28; Rom 5:1; Rom 8:13; Rom 6:20-23; Acts 5:32; Rom 1:5; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17; Mk 16:16; Rom 2:8; Gal 5:7; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 4:17; Mt 7:14; Jas 2:14-26; Isa 50:4-5; Mk 12:28-31; Jn 5:24; Heb 5:9; Heb 11:8; Heb 13:17; Rom 1:5; Acts 6:7; Jas 2:17; 3 Jn 1:11

### **7.3 Eternal salvation also comes only through God's grace, faithfulness, and mercy**

It is God's grace and faithfulness and the works of faith brought about by them through me after my salvation that preserve me in salvation, which was once given to me entirely by grace and will be given to me completely.

Why else should we **hope** for the grace of Christ on that day (of eternity) if we can be certain of it (1 Peter 1:13)? And why must Onesiphorus, whom Paul truly considers to be born again (Philemon 1:10) and who serves Christ impeccably to the best of his knowledge and belief, still find "mercy" on the part of the Lord on "that day"? The answer is: *In the end, only the grace and mercy of Christ himself saves gold-proven*

*faith at the transition to eternity.* No one ultimately enters heaven through their own efforts; it is still undeserved grace that is the foundation. But God has woven our part—faith (works)—so closely with his part—the preserving power of God and his grace—that it becomes an indissoluble whole that is only effective and reaches its goal in its entirety.

Eternal salvation is for those who do not abuse the grace freely given to them, but prove themselves worthy of it and make something of this grace for the glory of God. And our merciful but also holy Lord decides on this.

*1 Peter 1:13 Slt*

*13 Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **set your hope fully upon the grace** that shall be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*2 Tim 1:16-18 Meng*

*16 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he searched hard for me and found me. 18 May the Lord (Jesus) grant him mercy from (God) the Lord on that day! You yourself know best how many important services he has rendered (us) in Ephesus.*

*Romans 5:21*

*21 So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 Peter 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; Romans 5:21; Philemon 1:10

## **7.4 The reward of discipleship**

### **Grace and responsibility**

The Bible teaches that eternal life is both an undeserved gift of God's grace and a reward for a faithful, obedient life in following Jesus. These two aspects are inseparably linked: grace and responsibility.

### **Genuine faith is visible**

Those who truly believe love Christ and serve him. These works confirm faith and prove it to be genuine. Saving faith always manifests itself in deeds.

### **Gift and promise of reward**

Eternal life is thus a gift for all who sincerely entrust themselves to Jesus, and at the same time it is connected with the promise of a reward. The faithfulness and devotion of the believer on earth determine the measure of reward in heaven. Some will be richly rewarded because they have served God faithfully in love and obedience. Others will be saved, but without special reward, because their works had no lasting value. But there is also a serious warning that those who leave the opportunities entrusted to them by God unused and remain spiritually sluggish may ultimately be rejected and lost.

### **The parable of the talents**

Jesus illustrates this in the parable of the talents, among other places. Those who increase what has been entrusted to them will be rewarded and given greater responsibility in eternity. However, those who do nothing with what they have received will be cast out into outer darkness with the unbelievers.

### **Testing and reward according to Paul**

Paul speaks of the work of a Christian being tested by fire in the end. Those who faithfully build on Christ will have their work remain and receive a reward. However, those who live with false motives or indifference will have their work burned up. They can be saved, but only as through fire—without any special reward.

### **The attitude of the heart is decisive**

Not every deed for God is automatically rewarded. The attitude of the heart is decisive, Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount. Those who serve out of love for Christ and not to please people will be richly rewarded by God. However, those who seek the applause of people

have already received their reward here and will come away empty-handed in eternity.

### **True greatness through service**

True greatness in the kingdom of God lies in serving. Those who humble themselves and serve others in love will be exalted in eternity and richly rewarded.

### **The path to greatness in the kingdom of heaven**

Yes, we may want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, but the way to do so is to SERVE, to do what we say and teach, and to suffer for Christ's sake. And yet we can be completely relaxed and do not need to get involved in any apparent power struggles. In the end, the hierarchy in heaven will be as the Father in heaven has intended it to be.

### **Summary: Faith that brings reward**

In summary, the New Testament makes it clear: eternal life is a gift of grace for all who entrust themselves to Jesus in faith. But this saving faith always manifests itself in a life of love, service, and faithfulness. Those who live this way will not only inherit eternal life, but also receive rich rewards in eternity. However, those who abuse the grace they have received through indifference or selfishness run the risk of ending up empty-handed in eternity or even losing their salvation.

## **7.5 This is a harsh message. Who can hear it? About God's pedagogy and the balance of our current preaching**

Do you disagree or strongly disagree with the conclusion and message of this book? In the Gospel of John, Jesus was also accused of this by many of his followers in relation to his speech. The question is rather whether the "harsh words" are right or wrong.

I have some homework for you before you continue reading. It will take some time, effort, and care, but it only makes sense for you to continue reading here if you do it:

1. **Write down or mark all the promises of God** and Jesus and all **the encouraging verses** from the **Gospel of Matthew** alone.

***How many sermons have you heard about this?***

2. In the next step, **write down or mark** all of Jesus' **open warnings or threats** in the **Gospel of Matthew**.

***Then compare:*** *How many sermons, devotions, or Bible studies have you heard on this subject?*

Does what you hear from others about God's Word reflect what Jesus said in a balanced way? If not, then you have been taught a one-sided view of Jesus and you have a distorted picture of who Jesus is.

### **Encouragement and demands – a balanced gospel?**

I examined the Gospel of Matthew myself in more detail as an example. To do this, I divided all the text passages into four areas, marked them with colors, and evaluated them at the end (for more details, see the "Overview" section on the website). The result is as follows:

Using the Gospel of Matthew as an example, we see a remarkable balance between God's encouragement and demands.

About 15% of the text contains exhortations about what we as believers should do, while 13% emphasizes encouragement, promises, and God's love. However, the largest portion, about 32%, is devoted to Jesus' harsh words, which announce warnings, consequences, and judgment. About 40% of the text is neutral.

This emphasis challenges us: Do we perceive Jesus in his entirety, or do we only accept the pleasant aspects of his message?

In today's preaching landscape—even in evangelical circles—the emphasis is almost exclusively on God's goodness and mercy. His holiness and the serious demands he places on believers are often neglected. The result? A distorted gospel that presents a one-sided view of God and produces followers who do not truly know him in his entirety and

follow him with complete sincerity. But the Bible clearly shows that God's holiness is just as central as his love.

This applies not only to the Gospel of Matthew, but also to the other writings of the New Testament. However, God, as a good teacher who knows that we need above all encouragement as followers of Jesus, often presents very serious issues in an educationally sensitive way, making them more acceptable to us.

### **Examples from the letters – encouragement and clear boundaries**

The apostles and Jesus himself often emphasize difficult but necessary truths in their message, embedded in encouragement and reassurance.

#### **1. Purity and holiness – "Flee from sexual immorality!" (1 Cor 6:15-20)**

Paul urges the Corinthians to be aware of their belonging to Christ and to honor God through purity. Here he takes a positive approach without making threats. Nevertheless, it becomes clear in other passages that continued fornication leads to exclusion from the kingdom of God. Positive encouragement and clear warnings are both necessary.

#### **2. Devotion to the true Christ – "No other Jesus!" (2 Cor 11:2-4)**

Paul lovingly warns the church not to be led astray. He compares this to Eve's temptation, which ended in spiritual death. Although the warning consequence is only hinted at, the message remains clear: our eternal salvation depends on our constant devotion to the true Christ and the true gospel.

#### **3. Way of life – "No inheritance in the kingdom of God!" (Eph 5:3-11)**

Paul emphasizes that followers of Jesus should live differently. Positive encouragement and clear consequences—such as exclusion from salvation for persistent sin—go hand in hand. The appeal to honor God is complemented by serious warnings against a godless life.

#### **4. Spiritual strength – "Put on the armor of God!" (Eph 6:10-13)**

Paul encourages us to put on the armor of God in order to prevail in spiritual warfare. He does not say what will happen if we fail to do so ( )



– presumably to keep the focus on the path to victory. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is no alternative to this path, and defeat requires repentance and restoration through Christ.

## **Conclusion**

### **Proclaiming a balanced gospel**

The message of the Bible reveals a tension between encouragement and demand. In our preaching culture, it is crucial to keep both in balance in order to proclaim the wholeness of God. One-sided emphasis—whether on love alone or judgment alone—leads to a distorted image of God and false discipleship.

Our salvation depends on a constant relationship of faith with Christ. This includes recognizing the whole Christ: the loving Savior and the righteous Judge. Only in this way can we remain faithful to him, treat him with reverence, and walk the path of life to its destination.

## **7.6 Conclusions**

### **Faith, works, and eternal salvation**

An examination of the numerous passages in the New Testament concerning salvation and faith clearly shows that the path to eternal salvation cannot be reduced to a one-time confession. Rather, the Bible presents salvation as a path that begins with conversion but is completed by a life of obedience in faith until the end.

1. **Saving faith is obedient, active faith:** Analysis shows that genuine saving faith always encompasses the whole personality. It manifests itself in obedience to God's Word and in good works. Hearing the Word in the biblical sense does not mean passive listening, but active implementation. Those who believe follow. Those who believe do good. Those who believe remain on the narrow path.

Jesus himself describes eternal life as the goal of those who do God's will and do good, while those who do evil will go into judgment (Mt

7:15-28; John 5:28-29). Paul summarizes the life of those who are eternally saved as a constant life and striving for God's glory through doing good and separating from evil (Rom 2:7; Rom 8:13). James makes it clear (James 2:17-26) that faith without works is dead. Faith in Jesus is the beginning, but continued obedience and faithfulness in everyday life prove this faith to be genuine.

**2. Salvation is grace—and yet it requires faithfulness to the end:**

Scripture emphasizes God's grace as the basis of all salvation. No one is justified by works. Nevertheless, human beings remain responsible for allowing this grace to be effective in their lives. The New Testament shows that ultimate salvation is linked to enduring faith, which is expressed in works of faith. These works of faith are not the cause of salvation, but the proof that faith is genuine.

Paul says in Romans 2:6-8 that in the end God will reward everyone according to their works: those who persevere in doing good will attain eternal life. This text does not contradict grace, but describes the consequence of a life shaped by God's grace.

**3. The path is just as necessary for salvation as the beginning:**

Jesus describes the path to salvation as narrow and difficult. Entering through the narrow gate is the beginning. But the path itself leads to final salvation. Those who stop at the beginning will not reach the goal. Saving faith is demonstrated by perseverance. Grace enables obedience, but this obedience remains necessary.

**4. Hope and sanctification are part of salvation:**

The Bible makes it clear that waiting for Christ and striving for sanctification are essential elements of the path of faith. Hebrews 9:28 says that Christ will appear for salvation to those who wait for him. This attitude of waiting is not passivity, but is expressed in a life of devotion and sanctification.

Scripture shows (Titus 2:11-13) that God's grace not only saves us, but also educates us to live a godly life. The expectation of Christ's return

strengthens us in sanctification. Final salvation is thus closely linked to a life lived in hope of Christ and in separation from sin.

5. **The final judgment will evaluate the fruit of life:** the judgment at the end of days will reveal the works. Jesus and the apostles emphasize that this is not about a new basis for salvation, but about the reality of faith becoming visible. The works show whether the faith was genuine. Those who have abandoned the faith, who have abused grace, who persist in sin, will be lost.
6. **Assurance of grace:** Through God's grace we are saved. Through God's grace we remain saved, even if we fall along the way. God accepts us again and again, no matter how often we fall on the narrow path, if we return to him.
7. **Warning against abuse of grace:** A central finding of the study is the warning against a false understanding of grace. Grace is not a license to sin. Those who abuse grace devalue it. Scripture warns against turning grace into debauchery. Grace leads to sanctification. Those who abandon sanctification abandon the path of grace.
8. **Grace and responsibility form a unity:** The Bible maintains the tension between grace and responsibility. Man is saved by grace alone. But this grace has an effect in life. Those who remain in grace will be saved. But those who abandon grace, whether through unbelief, sin, or lukewarmness, will lose their salvation. It is man's responsibility to remain in grace.

**Conclusion:** The results of the study lead to a clear and at the same time challenging conclusion: Salvation is a gift of grace that is received through faith. But this faith is an obedient, active faith that remains until the end. Those who stop believing, stop obeying, and do not align their lives with God's will forfeit the gift of salvation.

True grace is not cheap, but demands our whole life. Yet it also gives us the strength to walk this path—to the goal, to eternal glory with Christ.

## **7.7 (Urgently) recommended practical steps for faithful discipleship that remains in our salvation—for individuals and the body of Christ**

*I strongly recommend the following practical steps to promote and ensure that we, as individuals and as a church, can follow Jesus faithfully and be saved. The list is not exhaustive.*

### **1. Individual strengthening in faith**

- **Strengthen hope:** The Word of God reminds us of Jesus' return and eternal glory.
- **Exemplary biographies:** Reading the life stories of faithful Christians who believed until the end.
- **Theology of suffering:** Rediscovering and teaching about suffering and persecution according to the promises of Jesus and the apostles.
- **Promoting perseverance and commitment:** Already in education through sports, binding commitments, and role models.
- **Encouragement and admonition:** Key to personal growth and strengthening in faith.
- **Daily Bible study:** Independent Bible reading protects against superficial teaching and deepens faith.

### **2. Measures at the church level**

- **Preaching and teaching:** Promoting devotion to Jesus and detachment from worldly things through clear, Bible-based sermons.
- **Devotional material:** Development of in-depth books and devotionals that convey biblical truths about salvation and discipleship.
- **Art and media:** Use contemporary Christian art (e.g., images, theater, films) that illustrates the path to eternal life, especially

a contemporary re-creation of the image "The Wide and the Narrow Way."

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Teaching about the difference between form and content in worship and life.
- **Church discipline:** Rediscovering and implementing biblical church discipline in response to increasing individualism.
- **Sermon content:** Striking a balance between God's love and holiness to promote reverence for God and genuine repentance.

### ***3. Essential teachings***

- **Righteous fruits of repentance:** Necessary signs of genuine discipleship and prerequisites for salvation.
- **Salvation by grace and faithfulness:** Salvation is given by grace, but preserved by continuing faith and devotion.
- **Time and responsibility:** Greater knowledge and resources mean greater responsibility before God. At the same time, even the smallest acts of faithfulness are seen and honored by God.
- **Education in the fear of God:** Training to distinguish between cultural influences and biblical truth.
- **Teamwork with God:** Cooperation between divine grace and human responsibility on the path to salvation
- **Encouragement through role models:** Promoting discipleship through spiritual role models, including Jesus as the ultimate role model.

### **Conclusion**

Balanced teaching, personal devotion, and communal commitment are essential for preserving faith and remaining on the path to eternity as the church of Jesus. Both individual and communal steps are necessary to promote deep, effective discipleship.

## Appendix Counterarguments and responses from the Word of God

### 1 ***Counterargument: "Salvation comes only through faith, not works."***

One may object that salvation is possible only through faith, not works. The entire New Testament is full of this testimony. And it is true. No lost sinner in this world—and that is what we all are by birth—can be saved without a healed relationship with God. Everyone must first be saved from their godless life and nature and become a child of God through rebirth from the Word of God. And this must happen consciously through one's own recognition of sin and the grace of God—there is no such thing as a false salvation of babies who do not know what is happening to them in the entire Scripture. When someone is saved from their sins, it is consciously, here and now. And this salvation happens solely by grace, without any contribution of our own works. Through rebirth, God gives us love for our glorious Savior Jesus Christ and God the Father, as well as brotherly and sisterly love. He enables us through His Spirit, who dwells in us, to love Him and our brothers and sisters in faith and to follow His commandments.

And this is where our own responsibility begins to love God and to multiply the talents we have received from God. Every born-again child of God will only be eternally saved if, gifted with God's free love, they love God in return as the fruit of their salvation, according to the measure of their insight and possibilities—and these are works of faith for God, done AFTER (temporal) salvation.

The contradiction lies in wanting to do works for either temporal or eternal salvation WITHOUT prior temporal salvation, that is, without first being reconciled with God. Such works of the old man cannot please God, for they are dead works, done by unclean sinners in self-righteousness and attempted self-redemption, and cannot make us righteous before God.

Therefore, when we read in the New Testament that sinners want to be saved by works without prior reconciliation with God, they always fail, and Scripture condemns their attempt to become righteous before God by their own efforts.

*"Unless you do this and that, you cannot be saved"* (according to Acts 15:1).

Such (false) claims refer to the saving relationship with God NOW, not to heaven. The apostles make it clear that the fundamental saved relationship with God NOW does not depend on (such and other) formal fulfillment scriptures. Nor does eternal salvation. No mere formal fulfillment saves anyone, only God's love for him in conversion and our love for God in eternal salvation.

The apostles fight with all their might against a false gospel based on formal fulfillment as a prerequisite.

We do not enter into a saved relationship with God or into heaven through our own works. But the apostles distinguish

- our saved position before God now through faith in the gospel, without any works, from our
- our future eternal salvation through holding fast to faith in the redeeming grace of Christ and through works of faith done in and for God.

On the other hand, the Word of God clearly testifies that no one who claims to be born again and to love God will be saved without works of faith in which his own love for God is expressed.

Do we see how closely salvation with works and salvation without works seem to be related?

The test question we must always ask ourselves when Scripture speaks of salvation through works is:

Is the person in question already reconciled to God?

If not, no work will be of any use in becoming acceptable to God and being saved for time and eternity.

If yes, then everything depends on the followers loving God in return and expressing this through works of faith.

Let us look at some Bible passages on this subject, always keeping this distinction in mind.

First, let us focus on the works we do as natural citizens of the world, without being redeemed by God.

*John 7:7 NIV*

*7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its deeds are evil.*

*Matthew 23:3*

*3 So whatever they tell you to do, do and obey, but do not judge by their deeds, for they say one thing and do another.*

*Matthew 23:5*

*5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others.*

*John 3:19 Meng*

*19 But this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

*Rom 3:20 Meng*

*20 For by works of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

*Romans 3:28 Meng*

*28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

*Acts 26:20 Meng*

*But [I] preached to those in Damascus first, and then in Jerusalem and throughout the whole region of Judea, and to the nations, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.*



*Hebrews 6:1 Meng*

*1 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God.*

The exemplary Bible passages considered make it clear: Natural man does evil works or no works that could please God. Dead works are the futile attempt to please God without turning to Him and being re-deemed through faith. God does not accept such works.

**First comes** repentance and faith in God and His undeserved grace, **and only then do** works pleasing to God **come** into our lives through Jesus Christ.

*Hebrews 9:14 NIV*

*How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!*

*Titus 3:5*

*5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but according to his mercy, through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

*Mt 5:16 Meng*

*16 In the same way, let your [the redeemed disciples'] light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and praise your Father who is in heaven.*

*Rom 2:6-8 Meng*

*6 [God] will repay each person according to their deeds, 7 namely eternal life (he will give) to those who, persevering in good works, seek glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but (his) wrath and fury to those who are stubborn and do not obey the truth, but serve unrighteousness.*

*James 2:17, 26*

*17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

Eph 2:10; Tit 2:14; Tit 1:16; Rev 3:1-3; Rev 2:26; Rom 2:6-8; Rev 22:12; John 7:7; Matt 23:3; Matt 23:5; John 3:19; Rom 3:20; Rom 3:28; Acts 26:20; Matt 5:16; Heb 6:1; Heb 9:14; Tit 3:5; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14; Titus 1:16; James 2:17, 26; Rev 3:1-3; Rev 2:26; Rom 2:6-8; Rev 22:12

## **2     *Counterargument: "We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and no one but Jesus can break that seal, and he will not do so."***

The Spirit of God, which God has given us in His grace, is the guarantee that God will raise us up to life with Christ in the end. If we do not lose the Spirit of God along the way, we will be saved. Can we even lose the Spirit of God once we have received it? Not only did we receive the Holy Spirit at our conversion, we are even sealed with him. And no one can touch the seal of God, no one can break it except the Lamb of God himself (Rev. 5:5).

The sealing with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament corresponds to circumcision in the Old Testament.

Both are THE signs and realities of belonging to God's people. Could anyone in the Old Covenant lose their membership in God's people even though they were circumcised? Yes, as Paul shows us in Romans chapter 2.

And how do we come to spiritual circumcision and receive the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant? Through our God-given righteousness by faith, as we learn from Abraham in Romans 3.

Circumcision was the seal of righteousness by faith that Abraham received from God (Romans 4:11). The cause was faith; the seal only confirms the faith that was exercised. When the cause is gone, the seal also becomes invalid. It is not the seal that carries the content; the content causes the seal. We can also see this in the fact that the seal of God can be revoked and, as a result, we can lose the Spirit of God again.

In the Old Testament, we have an example of the loss of the Holy Spirit.

We should not be and live like Saul. Saul was first filled with the Holy Spirit to be king of Israel. Later, because of his sin, the Spirit of God departed from him (1 Sam. 15+16).

Now one could argue that this is all Old Testament, and that in the New Testament our salvation is more complete. The New Testament speaks a different language. The Old Testament is meant to serve as an example for us in the New Testament. There, spiritual truths are vividly portrayed, which in the New Testament are less visible but much more real. Not different, but reinforced as in the Old Covenant is the motto of the New Testament.

*1 Corinthians 10:10-12 Meng*

*... 10 Do not grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the end of the ages has come. 12 Therefore, let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

*Hebrews 4:2-11*

*2 For the gospel was preached to us just as it was to them, but the word they heard did not benefit them, because it was not united with faith in those who heard it. ... 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same example of disobedience.*

And in the New Testament, the standards are not the same, but even stricter. John tells us

*1 John 3:15 Meng*

*15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.*

Not only physical murder, but even evil thoughts against fellow believers are a reason to lose one's salvation in the New Covenant if one remains unrepentant.

Yes, Jesus can potentially remove us from the book of life (Rev. 3:5).

Yes, we can sin unto death (1 John 5:16).

Yes, those who doubt their faith are already on the brink of fire (Jude 1:22-23).

Yes, we can sin deliberately and lose our salvation (Heb 10:26).

Yes, we can turn away from faith and return to our old filthy life without Christ (2 Peter 2:22).

And in summary: Yes, God can break his seal. And he will break the seal on those who do wrong. We can lose the Holy Spirit, the down payment on our salvation.

*Ephesians 1:13 NIV*

*13 In him you also, **after** listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and having **believed**, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.*

*2 Tim 2:19 Slt*

*19 But God's solid foundation stands firm, bearing **this seal**: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "**Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**"*

*Jer 22:24 Meng*

*24 As I live, says the LORD, even if Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were **a signet ring** on my right hand, **I would tear you off from there.***

*Ezek 28:12-16 Meng/Slt*

*[The king of Tyre as an image of Lucifer] **You were the image [lit.: seal] of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect beauty.** 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God. 15 **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created until sin was found in you.** 16 Through your many business transactions, your heart has become filled with wickedness, and you have sinned. Therefore, I have cast you from the mountain of God and destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 **Your heart has become proud because of your beauty; you have corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.** So I cast you to the earth and made you a spectacle before kings. 18 With your many mis-*

*deeds, through the injustice of your trade, you have defiled your sanctuaries; so I sent forth a fire from you that consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth, before the eyes of all who saw you. 19 All who know you among the nations are appalled at you; you have become a horror and are gone forever!*

Jer 22:24; Rev 5:5; Eph 1:13; Jer 22:24; Ezek 28:12-16; Rom 4:9-11; Rom 2:25; 2 Tim 2:19; 1 Cor 10:10-12; Heb 4:2-11; 1 John 3:15; Rev 3:5; 1 John 5:16; Jude 1:22-23; Heb 10:26; 2 Pet 2:22

### **3 Counterargument: "Salvation in the Old Testament was imperfect, but in the New Testament it is so perfect that we cannot be lost."**

The New Testament testifies to us that God's principles of action are universal. He judges both the angels in heaven and the believers before the law, after the law, and the believers in the New Covenant according to the same principles. What happened before us in terms of falling away from God and subsequently losing our relationship with Him serves as a warning to us not to do the same and suffer the same fate. Nowhere does the New Testament say that we can preserve our salvation through a special status in the New Covenant, even though we have forsaken God. The redemption that Christ brought is indeed perfect. But it is perfect for those who remain in redemption, in the realm of Christ's redemption, indeed in union with Christ. God saves his people through trials—and from his side, this is perfect—but he does not preserve his people through an irreversible one-time act.

*Hebrews 2:1-3 Meng*

*1 Therefore we must hold fast to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For if the word proclaimed through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

*Jude 1:5 Meng*

*5 But I want to remind you—though you already know all this—that the*

*Lord (first) saved the people of Israel from the land of Egypt, but the second time he destroyed those who did not believe.*

*Heb 2:1-3 Meng*

*1 Therefore, we must hold fast to what we have heard, lest we lose it. 2 For if the word proclaimed by angels was binding, and every transgression and disobedience received its just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

*Hebrews 10:26-32 Meng*

*26 For if we sin deliberately after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no sacrifice for sins, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire that will consume the rebellious. 28 Anyone who has rejected the Mosaic law must die without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely, then, will those be punished who have trampled the Son of God underfoot, who have treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who have insulted the Spirit of grace! 30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

*2 Peter 2:4-10 Meng*

*4 God did not spare even the angels who sinned, but cast them into the depths of the abyss, bound in chains of darkness, where they are kept for judgment. 5 He did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly. 6 He also condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, making them an example to those who would live ungodly lives in the future. 7 But he rescued righteous Lot, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless, 8 for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard. 9 The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 especially those who follow their lusts and reject authority.*

*Hebrews 2:1-3; Jude 1:5; 2 Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 10:26-32*

#### **4     *Counterargument:* "Christ's work is perfect—do we need or have to do anything to add to it?"**

##### **The work of Christ: Perfection and responsibility**

Christ's work of redemption on the cross is perfect and provides the basis for our salvation. Nothing can or needs to be added to it. At the same time, Christ continues his work as High Priest by interceding for his followers and preserving them. But our salvation does not depend solely on this work: it requires our continuous discipleship and faithfulness.

##### **Election and Discipleship**

God knows the elect who will be saved to the end. However, this is not visible to us. We can only see ourselves as the elect if we live according to God's will. Those who live in sin permanently show that they are not among the elect. Scripture emphasizes that initial conversion and complete salvation from sin are no guarantee of final salvation—it depends on the continued faithfulness of Christ's followers to their perfect Lord Jesus Christ.

##### **Challenges and security**

No one can be sure that they will not fall. Our security lies in Jesus, who as our perfect High Priest intercedes for us, preserves us, and ensures that we are not tempted beyond our ability to bear it. However, this security depends on our willingness to accept His protection and follow Him.

##### **Examples from the Bible**

Despite our perfect redemption through Jesus, if we are currently in God's salvation, the following applies:

- **End times and temptations:** The Father shortens the tribulation period so that the elect can overcome. Those who do not overcome show that they were not chosen. Even Jesus' perfect redemption at the beginning of our life of faith does not change this.

- **Worship of the beast:** Those who worship the beast prove that they were never written in the Lamb's book of life. Here, too, it is overcoming that counts, not our perfect initial redemption through Christ.

**In any case, it is clear** that no matter how perfect Christ's redemption is, it does not release us from our own responsibility to follow Jesus consistently.

But the good news is:

- **Encouragement through God's faithfulness:** God does not give us temptations that are beyond our ability to bear. He ensures that we can overcome them.

## Conclusion

Salvation is an ongoing process based on the grace and faithfulness of Christ. Our security does not lie in a one-time experience of faith in which we are saved once and for all through Jesus, regardless of how we live afterwards. Rather, our security lies in our daily relationship with our perfect Savior, who loves us and, as our high priest, preserves us and shapes our circumstances especially for us so that we can follow him to the end with the abilities we have been given. Glory be to him who, through his power and love, leads us safely to our goal!

*Hebrews 9:12 Slt*

*[Christ] 12 did not enter the holy place with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, once for all, and obtained eternal redemption.*

*Hebrews 5:9 Slt*

*9 And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

*John 10:27-28*

*27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.*



*1 Cor 10:13 Meng*

*God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 10:27; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Corinthians 10:13

## **5 Counterargument: "The temple of God is here, the temple of God is here!"**

The existence of God's people in God's presence and in the Promised Land in the Old Covenant and the salvation of believers in the New Covenant are inextricably linked to the presence of God—through His Spirit—in His temple. At no time did the temple of God itself have permanence and security. The temple of God will only remain standing if the people of the temple live in accordance with God's will. If the people do not live according to God's will but live lawlessly and do evil, the Lord will leave his temple and abandon it to destruction. This is a principle of God.

1. In the Old Testament, God endures much and forgives his people when they repent, restoring them to himself. But there is and was such a thing as too much sinning. Then God moves out of his temple because of the atrocities committed by his people, and he abandons his temple to destruction.
2. The New Testament also assures us that the temple of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament believers, can be destroyed by sin and by seduction into sin. And the Greek word used for this in the New Testament (G2647 – καταλύω – katalyo) is the same word used in the New Testament for the destruction of the external temple.

*1 Cor 3:16-17*

*16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

*Jer 7:1-15 Meng* **4** Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, this is it!" **5** For only if you earnestly amend your ways and all your deeds... **7** only then will I let you dwell in this place, in this land that I gave to your fathers, from everlasting to everlasting.

1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Chr 7:17-22; Jer 7:1-15; Ezek 8; Ezek 9; Rom 14:20; Luke 21:6

## **6 Counterargument: "Those who are saved are sanctified once and for all."**

God has made those who are sanctified perfect forever with one sacrifice. They are forgiven, and God will never again remember their sins. These truths, as presented to us here by the writer of Hebrews, sound eternal and irrevocable.

However, the facts of salvation are not merely static in this description. The writer of Hebrews also confirms this to us.

They become and remain ours

- through our trust in Jesus and his sacrifice and
- through our additional claim in faith.

Those who have been sanctified by God but turn away from Him run to their destruction, no matter how perfectly they were sanctified before.

Our new position as followers of Christ—sanctified in Christ—is the one that is perfect and will definitely attain salvation. And if we remain in this position through our following of Jesus combined with a following of practical sanctification in our lives, we will also experience salvation.

*Hebrews 10:14-18 Meng*

**10** And by that will (of God) ***we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*** ... **14** For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

*Hebrews 10:23-39 Meng*

*23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ... 28 Anyone who has rejected the Mosaic law must die without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely, then, will those be punished who have trampled the Son of God underfoot, who **have treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them**, and who have insulted the Spirit of grace!*

*Hebrews 12:12-14 Meng*

*14 **Pursue** peace with all people, and **holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord.*

Hebrews 10:14-18; Hebrews 10:23-39; Hebrews 12:12-14

## **7 Counterargument: Burnt works and yet saved**

By accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ and following him, we lay the right foundation for our future salvation. On the way to heaven, however, we can still follow Christ more or less obediently and well, building either gold, silver, and precious stones on it, or wood, hay, and straw. And for that we will receive a corresponding reward or no reward in heaven. The greatest destroyer of rewards for heaven is doing the right thing for the wrong reasons. Those who exalt themselves in their service to Jesus will receive no reward for it, and their life's work built on the foundation of Jesus Christ will be burned. Those who are saved as if through fire but receive no reward because their entire life's work burns up in God's judgment still had their life-saving foundation. And that is their faith in Christ, which is so genuine that they at least do what Jesus defined in his Sermon on the Mount as necessary for the salvation of our life's work:

This includes doing God's will from the heart, purity in thoughts and deeds, forgiveness toward others, and the willingness to walk the narrow path that leads to life. Those who disregard these commandments

and do not bear good fruit show that they are not doing God's will and will therefore not enter into eternal life.

*1 Cor 3:11-15 Meng*

*11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 But if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If anyone's work that he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 But if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

*Mt 7:21-23 Meng*

*21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

*Mt 7:12-13 Meng*

*12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. — 13 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. .*

*Mt 7:24-27 Meng*

*24 Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*

*Mt 6:1 Meng*

*1 Take care that you do not practice your righteousness ["charity"] before others in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

## **8 Counterargument: "Danger of pride in works, danger of comparison, danger of judgment, danger of despair, danger of discouragement."**

How can we avoid the danger of pride in our own works?

Scripture strongly discourages all thoughts of comparison among us as followers.

Looking at Jesus' example of service is healing and protects us from unwholesome comparative and judgmental thoughts and our own attitude of service, even unto death.

Even the most devoted Christian ultimately only does what he or she owes to God and what is worthy of Jesus' love for him or her. And recognizing this is salvation for the soul.

But God also resists all our possible feelings of inferiority. We are all dependent on God's love, forgiveness, and grace. And God will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoldering wick. If we allow Jesus to cleanse us now, he will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and we will be loved and valued in his eyes.

It is always about getting the most out of my own life for Jesus—and for that we need each other and can help each other.

It is spiritually dangerous to talk about one's own spiritual achievements – especially when it comes to self-aggrandizement or trying to appear better than others. However, when it comes to encouraging others in their faith, it is quite common in Scripture to report – in all humility – what God has done through one's own life.

Furthermore, it is extremely important and beneficial to keep in mind our own salvation by grace and our own fallibility and tendency to fall, so that we do not judge our brothers and sisters from above, but humbly try to stand by them and help them up.

Then we might be tempted to think: If we are only saved eternally through works of faith, how many works of faith are enough? This would lead to fear instead of freedom in Christ.

Jesus prevents this with Peter as an example: it is not primarily about (works of faith), but about whether we love Jesus.

We love because he first loved us. We do works of faith because we believe in the one who saved us by grace. Only those who have first experienced God's love and grace can and will love God in return and thus remain in God's place of salvation. We are already in God's place of salvation, so we can breathe a sigh of relief because we don't have to earn heaven first. This relieves us of unpleasant pressure to perform. We can and need only live out of the love we ourselves have experienced, without first having to give anything to God.

However, no work of a person who has not been redeemed by Christ and does not know God at all will bring him or her to heaven. And this is true even if the works of the unredeemed appear to be very similar to those of the redeemed. Without the forgiveness of sins and the love of God received beforehand, there is no salvation and no redemption. Without first being reconciled to God from our natural enmity toward him, all our works are dead works. It remains true that we are saved only by grace and through faith, a genuine faith that enters the heart, arms, and feet and, based on the love of God experienced firsthand, works for God and people in this world.

Do not ask: How many works are enough? Rather, ask yourself: Do you love as you have been loved?

*John 21:17 Meng*

*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*

And ONLY THEN do the mission and works for Jesus follow. We may sit at Jesus' feet like Mary (Luke 10:40-42).

Our motivation to simply love Jesus back, out of love for Jesus who loved us so much, is by far the greatest and most important part of our lives and of Scripture, to follow Jesus completely.

Only then come holy and serious words of admonition.

When we do what we do out of love for God, out of love for Jesus, then we do everything right. And that will protect us from any kind of bad motivation.

*Rev. 1:5-6 Meng*

*5 To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen*

*John 21:17 Meng*

*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*

*Phil 2:1-11 Meng*

*1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation from love, if any sharing in the Spirit, if any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete by being of one mind, having the same love, being united in spirit, and striving together for the same purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every other name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Luke 17:10*

*10 So also with you, when you have done all that was commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.*

*Luke 22:25-27 Meng*

*25 But he said to them, "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But among you it shall not be so; but the greatest among you shall be as the youngest, and he who is chief as he who serves. 27 For who is greater,*

*he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*

*1 Cor 15:10 Meng*

*10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain, but I have accomplished far more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

*Gal 6:4 Meng*

*4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he may have reason to boast for himself alone, and not toward another.*

*Matthew 6:1*

*1 Take care that you do not practice your righteousness ["charity"] before others to be seen by them, otherwise you will have no reward from your Father in heaven!*

*Mt 23:11-12 Meng*

*11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 But whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

*John 21:21-22 Meng*

*21 When Peter saw him, he asked Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain (alive) until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"*

*Matthew 12:20 Meng*

*A bruised reed he will not break, and a **smoldering wick** he will not extinguish.*

Mt 6:1-4; Lk 17:10; Jn 21:17; Mt 23:11-12; Phil 2:1-11; Lk 22:25-27; 1 Cor 15:10; Gal 6:4; Rev 1:5-6; 2 Cor 1:12; Heb 13:18; 2 Cor 12:19; Gal 6:1; Jude 1:22-23; Mt 12:20; Isa 57:15; 1 Jn 1:9; Jn 21:21-22



**9 Answer: "Our salvation is always and only 'in Christ'. If you are 'in Christ', then you are safe."**

Through faith, we are "in" Jesus Christ and "in Christ" and "in" God's love and protection and promise, and we have access to God and confidence through him.

(Only) those who are "in Christ" are and remain saved.

How do we "enter into Jesus"?

Through faith in Jesus on our part, through rebirth on God's part. We are connected to Jesus through our faith in him and maintain our relationship with him through our faith in him.

Where is our salvation? IN CHRIST. We have the fulfillment of all God's promises IN CHRIST. In order to share in all that God has promised, I must be IN CHRIST.

And it is interesting to see WHERE God's love is, WHERE God's preservation is, and WHERE God's salvation is:

They are always IN Jesus Christ. If you are IN CHRIST, you are safe and saved. If you leave Christ, you leave the source of eternal life and salvation. Therefore, remain IN HIM and return to HIM, for only IN HIM is there life—now and forever.

*Eph 1:7 SlT*

*7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the riches of his grace.*

*Rom 8:38-39 F*

*Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is IN CHRIST JESUS our Lord.*

*John 15:5-6 Meng*

*5 I am the vine, you are the branches: whoever remains IN ME and IN WHOM I remain, bears much fruit; but without me you can do nothing.*

*6 Whoever does NOT remain IN ME is thrown away like the branch and withers; they are then gathered and thrown into the fire, where they are burned.*

Eph 3:11-12; John 15:5-6; Rom 8:38-39; 2 Cor 1:18-21; Eph 1:7; Eph 3:12

## **10 Summary: Counterarguments and responses from the Word of God**

**Presentation of counterarguments to salvation by faith alone and their refutation**

**Counterargument 1: Salvation comes only through faith, not through works**

**Argument:** Salvation comes by grace and not by our own works (Eph 2:8-9). Works before conversion are "dead works" and cannot please God (Heb 6:1). Saving faith is a one-time act and not a process.

**Rebuttal:** Faith necessarily produces works (James 2:17, 26). Jesus teaches that true disciples must do God's will (Matthew 7:21-23). Good works are a sign of genuine salvation (Ephesians 2:10).

**Counterargument 2: We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and no one can break that seal.**

**Argument:** Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). No one can snatch them out of Jesus' hand (John 10:27-29).

**Rebuttal:** Scripture shows examples where God removes his seal because of disobedience (Jer 22:24). Jesus only promises security to those who follow him (John 10:27).

**Counterargument 3: Salvation in the Old Testament was imperfect, but in the New Testament it is perfect**

**Argument:** Salvation in the New Covenant is final because it is based on the perfect sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 7:25).

**Rebuttal:** The principle of faithfulness to God remains the same in both covenants (Jude 1:5). Those who do not remain in Christ lose their salvation (John 15:6).

#### **Counterargument 4: Christ's work is perfect—we can do nothing to add to it**

**Argument:** Jesus accomplished salvation (John 19:30), and anyone who doubts this diminishes his sacrifice.

**Rebuttal:** The Bible distinguishes between the foundation of salvation and the necessity of remaining in it (Matthew 7:24-27).

#### **Counterargument 5: The temple of God is here, the temple of God is here!**

**Argument:** Believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), which God will not destroy.

**Rebuttal:** The temple of God can be desolated and abandoned through sin (Ezekiel 8:6-7).

#### **Counterargument 6: Those who are saved are sanctified once and for all**

**Argument:** Once sanctified, one remains holy (Heb 10:14).

**Rebuttal:** Sanctification is a process, not a completed state (Hebrews 10:19-22).

#### **Counterargument 7: Works burned, yet saved**

**Argument:** 1 Corinthians 3:15 says, *"If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

From this it is concluded that even if one's works are lacking or poor, salvation is not lost.

**Rebuttal:** In this passage, Paul is talking about the responsibility of teachers and preachers. The "work" refers to their teaching and not generally to the deeds of every believer. The passage shows that although the work will be tested and possibly burned, this does not automatically guarantee the person's salvation. Other passages warn against a false sense of security (Hebrews 10:26-27). Jesus says that whoever believes has eternal life (John 5:24).

**Rebuttal:** Only those who remain faithful to the end will attain salvation (Hebrews 3:14).

**Counterargument 8: Danger of pride in works, danger of comparison, danger of judgment, danger of discouragement**

**Argument:** If good works are considered necessary for salvation, pride in one's own achievements could arise. Likewise, emphasizing works could lead to comparing oneself with others or judging others. Those who feel incapable of doing enough works could become discouraged.

**Rebuttal:** Scripture emphasizes that good works result from faith and are not a reason for pride (Eph. 2:8-10). Everyone has different gifts, which is why comparisons are inappropriate (Rom. 12:4-6). Jesus teaches us not to judge others (Matthew 7:1-2). Salvation does not depend on the amount of works, but on the grace of God (Philippians 1:6). Those who are truly born again remain faithful (1 John 2:19).

**Rebuttal:** There are examples of people who have fallen away from the faith (2 Peter 2:20-22).

**Answer and CONCLUSION**

**Our salvation is always and only in Christ—if you are in Christ, then you are secure.**

Our salvation does not lie in ourselves, but solely in Christ. He carries us with his unchanging love (John 10:28-29). But Jesus warns: "Whoever does NOT remain in me will be thrown away like the branch and wither" (John 15:6).

God wants everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9). The Father joyfully welcomes back the prodigal son (Luke 15:20-24). Therefore, we can say with confidence: "We are not of those who shrink back, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39).

Jesus is our good shepherd (John 10:11). Even when we falter, he remains faithful (2 Tim 2:13). He gives us everything we need to remain in him: his word, his Spirit, and his grace. When we fail, the door of for-

giveness remains open (1 John 1:9). Those who follow Jesus NOW remain in Christ. And those who are in Christ may live in deep joy and security—today, tomorrow, and for all eternity.