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Beware Of Lies And Deception On The Social Networks, Scourge Of AI-Generated Content, False Information And Outrageous Doctrines Promoted By Misguided Christian Brethren, Pauline Extremists And Their Legalism, Confusion Discord Division, Harsh Critics Of Salvation Prayers, My Personal Salvation Prayer In 1971, The Apostle John Encourages Readers' Surety Of Their Salvation, New Testament Characters Were Required To Demonstrate Their Faith Through Their Actions: Simeon, Woman With An Issue Of Blood, Blind Man And Pool Of Siloam, The Paralyzed Man, Man With A Withered Hand, Jesus Raises Lazarus From The Dead, Jesus Heals The Leper, A Centurion With Great Faith, Our Salvation Requires That We Believe In Our Hearts, Receive Or Accept Jesus As Our Savior, Publicly Confess Our Faith In Jesus And Open Our Hearts To The Lord, Similarities Between First Century Petitions For Healing And Saying A Salvation Prayer, Stop Criticizing And Condemning Other Christians For The Way They Choose To Express Their Personal Faith, Jesus Christ Dwells In Our Hearts By Faith

As I have mentioned on multiple previous occasions, when it comes to the social networks, we would all be very wise to be extremely careful. Why do I say this? Because as many of my readers will already know, the social networks -- and the Internet in general -- are one huge rumor mill which promote all kinds of lies and deception on a huge scale. Sadly, with the rather sudden advent and the very fast-growing influence of AI-generated content, the intentional deception -- and the confusion which results from it -- increases at a very worrisome rate with each year that passes. I discuss the latter subject in the article entitled "AI, Deepfakes and Humanoid Robots", which you will find listed at the end of this same series.

It is bad enough that the children of the world engage in such questionable practices. But when our own Christian brethren also begin sharing false information, whether it is intentional, or simply due to personal ignorance, it really

becomes tragic. As some of you will know, I have discussed this very same issue before in a number of BBB articles such as "Facebook False Prophets and Misguided Teachers", as well as in "Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures", to name just a few.

Seriously, my friends, some of the outlandish doctrines and misguided ideas I see certain fellow brethren posting on the social networks really make my jaw drop. I honestly have to wonder what Bible they are reading, and how in the world they arrived at such outrageous conclusions. They certainly are not being Spirit-led. One disturbing group of Christians who I have seen in recent years are the Pauline extremists, who I discuss in the article entitled "Beware of the Pauline Extremists!".

According to those misguided people, the Apostle Paul is the only Apostle for modern Christian believers, and if a book in the Bible was not written by Paul, then it simply does not apply to us today. Some of those people go to such an extreme, that they seem to even elevate Paul's words above the very words of our Savior in the Gospels, and appear to discourage Christians from even reading the four Gospels. Their attitude seems to be that we can learn nothing from the writings of the other Apostles, or apparently from the Lord either. Oh what foolish deception!

Quite frankly, I think those Pauline extremists are rather dangerous, because they are sowing confusion, discord and division amongst the brethren. I am reminded of this set of Bible verses which are found in the Book of Proverbs. Take note of the final seven words:

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, A LYING TONGUE, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Proverbs 6:16-19, KJV

Of course, the Pauline extremists are not alone. Yet another alarming trend I have seen are those Christians who condemn long-held beliefs and practices which have been embraced by Christians for decades, if not for centuries. In fact, it is one particular trend which motivated me to write this current series. While I have discussed this issue before in articles

such as "To Pray or Not to Pray? That is the Question", I am compelled to discuss it again, albeit from a different angle.

I am referring to those Christians who harshly condemn the practice of praying what has come to commonly be referred to as a Salvation prayer. According to these particular people, Salvation prayers are pointless, useless and mean absolutely nothing. Such Christians have convinced themselves that not a single individual has ever been truly saved by saying such a Salvation prayer. To justify their adamant position, these Christians will point to people who say a Salvation prayer, and then go on living like the Devil. These same Christians will also point out that nowhere in the Bible do we find any particular verses which instruct us to ask Jesus into our hearts.

Well, my dear friends, if what these legalistic Christians are saying is true, then even though I have served the Lord for the past fifty-five years, and have witnessed so much, and written and created so much, and prayed such a Salvation prayer with literally thousands of people over the years, I must still be lost and unsaved. Why do I say this? Well, if you have read my online biography that is found on this same Bill's Bible Basics website, then you will already know that I in fact prayed a Salvation prayer to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior in San Jose, California USA back in July of 1971. So am I to believe that my heartfelt prayer was pointless and useless, and that I am not really saved? I think not! I KNOW that I am saved by the Grace of God! As the Apostle John wrote:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

1 John 5:13, KJV

My friends, the minute we listen to the enemy, and begin to doubt our very Salvation, we have begun to lose the battle. Thus, the Apostle John encourages his readers, and he wants them to know that they are indeed saved through their faith in Jesus Christ. There cannot and should not be any doubts regarding this particular matter.

The fact of the matter is this. Throughout the New Testament, we find plenty of examples where people were required to take a certain action as a demonstration of their faith. Allow me

to share a few examples with you for your consideration. The first concerns the old man Simeon who patiently waited for many years for the appearance of God's chosen Messiah. We're informed that on that special day, he was led by the Spirit to the temple in Jerusalem, as we can easily determine by the following group of Bible verses:

"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Luke 2:25-32, KJV

You see, the reason why Simeon received that special blessing on that day is precisely because he took action. Simeon was prodded by the Holy Spirit to go to the temple, and the man obeyed by faith. So he demonstrated both faith and obedience through his actions.

In similar fashion, the woman who had an issue of blood for a period of twelve years also demonstrated her faith through her action of reaching out and touching the hem of Jesus' garment, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

Matthew 9:20-22, KJV

We see the very same thing occurring with the blind man who Jesus commanded to go wash in the Pool of Siloam after the Lord had anointed his eyes with spittle and clay. Similar to the previous examples, that man had to demonstrate his faith through his personal action of washing in the pool. It was

at that point that he was actually healed of his blindness. Consider the following group of Bible verses which mention this particular miraculous event:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

John 9:1-7, KJV

There are so many other examples I can share with you. Allow me to remind you of yet another one. Consider the paralyzed man who Jesus ordered to rise up and walk. Again, that dear man was required to take personal action as a demonstration of his faith. In other words, he had to have the faith to obey Jesus when the Lord said "Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." It was in the doing that the man's miracle occurred. Thus we read the following in the Gospel of Luke:

"And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God."

As another example, let us consider the example of the man who had a withered hand. Just as we have seen with all of the previous examples, that man too had to have the faith to believe in Jesus, and to obey Jesus, when the Lord told him to stretch forth his hand. Once again, he had to put his faith into action, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Luke 6:6-10, KJV

As I said, this same requirement to take personal action as a demonstration of one's faith can be found throughout the pages of the Gospels. Most Christians are familiar with the amazing event which occurred in John 11 when the Lord raised his dear friend Lazarus from the dead. But as we read in the chapter, while Martha and Mary believed that Lazarus would indeed "rise again in the resurrection at the last day", what they did not realize was that Jesus could raise Lazarus that very same day. Thus, when Jesus made His intentions known to the two sisters of Lazarus, Martha remarked "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."

However, just as in the previous story where the friends of the paralyzed man demonstrated their faith by lowering the man down through the roof so that Jesus could heal him, in similar fashion, when Jesus told the friends of Mary and Martha to roll away the stone, they too put their faith into action and they did as they had been commanded to do. Following are some of the closing verses of that wonderful miracle:

"Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the

grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

John 11:38-45, KJV

Turning to Matthew chapter eleven, we encounter another man of faith who approached Jesus and humbly requested that the Lord heal him of his leprosy. Once again, this man put his faith into action. He did what he could do by approaching Jesus and requesting healing, and then Jesus did what the man could not do, as we see by the following set of verses:

"And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

Matthew 8:2-4, KJV

As a final example of faith in action, sometime after He had healed the aforementioned leper, Jesus entered Capernaum in the Galilee region, whereupon a certain unnamed centurion approached Him and requested that the Lord heal his servant who lay "at home sick of the palsy". As I mentioned earlier, palsy is the old name for a type of paralysis which may be accompanied by tremors. What is so amazing about this story is that the centurion's faith was so great, that he did not even request or require that Jesus go to his home in order to heal his servant. Just Jesus' word was enough for him, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel . . . And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

Matthew 8:5-10, 13, KJV

My friends, there is no denying that in all of the previous examples, faith was coupled with a particular action, and it was that action which resulted in the miracles occurring. Of course, Jesus performed the miracles, but only after each of the people had demonstrated their faith. So what about our Salvation? Is it any different? Does it require any kind of action on our part? Well, according to the Scriptures, it actually does. In fact, we are plainly told that we have to believe in, receive and confess our faith in Jesus Christ. We also have to open our hearts to Him in a symbolic sense.

My friends, it should be very obvious to you that all four of them are action verbs which require us to do something on our part in order to demonstrate personal faith. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following sample Bible verses where these particular verbs are used, taking particular note of the words which I have placed in uppercase letters:

"But AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME:"

John 1:12, KJV

"HE THAT RECEIVETH YOU RECEIVETH ME, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

Matthew 10:40, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT RECEIVETH WHOMSOEVER I SEND RECEIVETH ME; and he that receiveth me

receiveth him that sent me."

John 13:20, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life . . . He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:16, 36, KJV

"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I BELIEVE that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

John 11:27, KJV

"And they said, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Acts 16:31, KJV

"That if thou shalt CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE IN THINE HEART that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and WITH THE MOUTH CONFESSION IS MADE UNTO SALVATION."

Romans 10:9-10, KJV

"WHOSOEVER THEREFORE SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 10:32, KJV

"Also I say unto you, WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:"

Luke 12:8, KJV

"BUT THIS I CONFESS UNTO THEE, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:"

Acts 24:14, KJV

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world . . . And WE HAVE SEEN AND DO TESTIFY that the Father sent the Son to be the

Saviour of the world. WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

1 John 4:2-3, 14-15, KJV

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that NO MAN CAN SAY THAT JESUS IS THE LORD, BUT BY THE HOLY GHOST."

1 Corinthians 12:3, KJV

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and OPEN THE DOOR, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Revelation 3:20, KJV

So, my friends, there you have the truth of this matter laid out for you as plain as day. Just as the people of the First Century had to demonstrate their faith through their actions before Jesus would heal some of them, today we do something similar when we believe in Jesus by faith, receive Jesus by faith, confess Jesus by faith, and open our hearts to Him by faith as well. With those people of the First Century, they had the expectation of being healed. In our case today, we have the expectation that we will be saved when we believe, receive, open our heart and verbally confess our faith in Christ.

Are you starting to see the similarities yet? Whether we are praying for a miracle of healing, or praying to accept the Lord, they're all demonstrations of our faith, and with each action -- regardless of what it is -- we have a particular expectation in mind. Those four action verbs are all integral parts of the Salvation equation. So considering how similar a Salvation prayer is to a petition that was made during the First Century, why do those harsh Christians criticize and condemn one action but not the other? As we have seen, they are all demonstrations of one's personal faith.

If a person is comfortable with saying a Salvation prayer, why condemn them? If that is their way of acknowledging the Lord in their life, well all I can say is "Wonderful!". Now, while it is not directly related to our current subject of discussion, I am reminded of something the Apostle Paul said in Romans 14 where he discusses eating meat, Jewish dietary laws and observing Jewish holy days. Consider what he wrote:

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he

alloweth."

Romans 14:22, KJV

Applying that verse to our current discussion, if a person feels more secure in their Salvation by praying a Salvation prayer as their way of receiving and acknowledging the Lord; if that is how they wish to express their faith; and if they do not feel condemned by taking such action, then so be it! More power to them! It is THEIR faith after all, and clearly NOT yours. As such, some of you self-righteous accusers need to back off and mind your own business! You really need to stop criticizing and condemning other Christians due to the way in which they've chosen to express their personal faith. You need to stop spreading the lie that Salvation prayers are pointless and useless, and that no one is ever saved by them. Instead of condemning your brethren, you should be thankful that they have accepted the Lord. Isn't that what our faith is supposed to be all about?

Now, if we have truly believed in Jesus, and truly received him, then the Scriptures plainly declare that Jesus' Spirit dwells in our hearts. This sound, Biblical doctrine becomes evident by Bible verses such as the following ones:

"THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,"

Ephesians 3:17, KJV

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Romans 8:9, KJV

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory:"

Colossians 1:27, KJV

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Colossians 3:16, KJV

"Hereby know we that WE DWELL IN HIM, AND HE IN US, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

1 John 4:13, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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Controversy: Salvation Prayers - Part 2

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Do We Need To Verbally Ask Jesus Into Our Heart?, Jesus Said To Ask For The Holy Spirit, Jesus Often Reminded The Apostles To Ask God For Things In His Name, Most Christians Ask God For Things Via Prayer, Jesus' Active Prayer Life, Jesus Also Encouraged The Apostles To Pray A Lot, I Asked For God's Holy Spirit Through A Prayer, Jesus Promises Apostles Holy Spirit Prior To His Ascension, Fifty Days Which Changed The World, Were The Apostles And Brethren Praying For The Holy Spirit In The Upper Room Prior To The Day Of Pentecost?, By Prayer And Supplication Let Your Requests Be Made Known Unto God, Don't Praying For The Holy Spirit And Praying To Receive Jesus Into Our Heart Fit The Same Biblical Pattern?, Promise Of The Holy Spirit Fulfilled On The Day Of Pentecost, A Friend Or A Thief And A Robber?, Do We Need to Invite Jesus Into Our Hearts?, A Comparison Between Revelation 3:20 Ephesians 3:17 Luke 11:13, A Very Difficult Question, Spirit Of Christ And Spirit Of God Seem To Be Synonymous Phrases, Jesus Promises The Holy Ghost, Jesus Breathes The Holy Ghost On The Apostles Prior To Actual Day Of Pentecost, Earnest Of The Spirit: Down Payment Preview Sampling Or Foretaste Of The Glory Which Shall Be Revealed

Continuing our discussion from part one, at this point, here is an important question that we need to ask ourselves: Do we need to verbally -- or at least mentally -- ask Jesus to come into our hearts? Is there any Scriptural precedent for such a thing occurring during the First Century? As we discovered in the first part of this series, there are certain very harsh

Christians who adamantly condemn this practice, and who claim that it is a pointless and useless act which saves absolutely nobody. But what do the Holy Scriptures really say regarding this matter? Well, for those Christians who staunchly resist the necessity of any kind of Salvation prayer, the very first verse that I'm going to share with you may possibly shock you. Consider what it says:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them THAT ASK HIM?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

Wait! What?! Jesus said that we need to actually ASK for the Holy Spirit?! You mean just as certain people in the Gospels also ASKED Jesus to heal them? Well, don't be too surprised. After all, the New Testament makes it very clear that if we desire anything from our Heavenly Father, we need to simply ASK for it in faith, believing that we have in fact received whatever we are asking Him for. Furthermore, as some of my readers will no doubt already know, this is precisely what Jesus instructed His followers to do. He told them to ask the Father for things in His name. Jesus likewise said that He would fulfill their petitions. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following group of sample Bible verses:

"ASK, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH RECEIVETH; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Matthew 7:7-8, KJV

"And all things, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN PRAYER, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

And WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. IF YE SHALL ASK ANY THING in my name, I will do it."

John 14:13-14, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: THAT WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:16, KJV

"And in that day YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING. Verily, verily, I say unto you, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have YE ASKED NOTHING IN MY NAME: ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, that your joy may be full."
John 16:23-24, KJV

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
Ephesians 3:20-21, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ASK OF GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

James 1:5-8, KJV

"YE ASK, and receive not, because YE ASK AMISS, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

James 4:3, KJV

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, IF WE ASK ANY THING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, WHATSOEVER WE ASK, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

Based on the previous set of Bible verses, it is indeed very evident that Jesus encouraged His followers to petition or ask God the Father for things which they needed in order to fulfill their mission for the Lord. There's simply no other way to interpret the previous verses. Or do you disagree? Now, while it should be rather obvious to you, when people ask God for things, they usually do it by way of a prayer, right? As some of my readers will know, in the Gospels, the Lord would often get up very early in the morning in order to pray to His Father, and on other occasions as well. The Lord had a very active prayer life. For example, consider the following set of Bible verses which confirm this point:

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there

prayed."

Mark 1:35, KJV

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone."

Matthew 14:23, KJV

"And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."

Mark 6:46, KJV

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."

Luke 5:16, KJV

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

Luke 6:12, KJV

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening."

Luke 9:28-29, KJV

Furthermore, as many of you will know, when Jesus asked His Father to remove the cup of suffering from Him, He did so by way of a very desperate prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, as we likewise see by the following verses which are found in both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:

"And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

Matthew 26:39-44, KJV

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stones cast, and

kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,"

Luke 22:41-45, KJV

Lastly, we all know that the Lord taught His followers to pray what is commonly referred to today as the Our Father, or the Lord's Prayer. So not only did Jesus himself engage in a significant amount of prayer, but He likewise often reminded the Apostles to pray as well, because that is how we ask and receive things from our Heavenly Father. That being the case, when Jesus said to ask for the Holy Spirit, does it not seem likely that He was saying to ask for it via a prayer? Please remember this thought, because I will be sharing a related incident with you in just a moment.

On a personal side note, concerning Luke 11:13, and asking for the Holy Spirit, this is precisely what I likewise did fifty-five years ago. After praying to receive Jesus into my heart in San Jose, California in July of 1971, a number of months later during that same year, I also learned about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and how it helps Christians to be a stronger witness for the Lord. So, exactly as Jesus said to do in the previous verse, that is what I did too.

My friends, this leads us to yet another rather interesting and related question. As I explain in a number of other BBB articles such as "Fifty Days Which Changed the World", after His resurrection from the dead, the Lord spent another forty days on the Earth, during which time He was seen by hundreds of His followers. Then, just prior to returning to Heaven on the Mount of Olives, Jesus instructed the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit, as we can easily determine by the following group of Bible verses:

"And, being assembled together with them, [Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . . But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:4-5, 8, KJV

As I point out in the aforementioned article, it was exactly ten days later -- which completed an actual jubilee of fifty days from the Passover when the Lord was crucified, to the day of Pentecost -- when the miracle of the Holy Spirit did in fact occur at the beginning of Acts chapter two. But what I personally find rather interesting is what they were all doing BEFORE that day of Pentecost arrived. The writer Luke provides us with an answer in the following set of verses:

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord IN PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

Acts 1:12-14, KJV

As you can plainly see, the Apostles, mother Mary and Jesus' biological brethren were gathered privately in that upper room, where they were all praying and making their requests known to God. Most of my readers will know what supplication means, right? It is simply the act of asking or begging for something in an earnest and humble manner. In fact, this is precisely what the Apostle Paul tells us in his Epistle to the brethren at Philippi, as we see by the following verse:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Philippians 4:6, KJV

Now, considering that only ten days earlier, Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit, does it not make a lot of sense that they were earnestly praying to receive the Holy Spirit in that upper room, exactly as Jesus had said in Luke 11:13, when He pretty much said that one receives the Holy Spirit by asking for it? Let me share that verse with you one more time to refresh your memory:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto

your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them THAT ASK HIM?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

So in light of what Jesus said in the previous verse, and what He stated about asking our Heavenly Father for things in His name, and what He told the Apostles on the Mount of Olives just prior to His ascension, while I obviously cannot prove it fully, I believe that my conclusion holds a lot of merit. In other words, I think they were earnestly praying for the Holy Spirit in that upper room, and that is exactly what they got shortly thereafter at the beginning of Acts chapter two, right? In short, their prayers were answered, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:1-4, KJV

Now I am going to go out on the limb, and suggest something challenging to you. We have already seen how we are to ask our Heavenly Father for things in Jesus' name. We have also seen how different people of faith in the Gospels asked to be healed by the Lord. Along the same lines, even today, it is our Christian custom to ask God for His protection, for His divine healing, for His provision, and for other needs, either for others, or for ourselves. We do all these things via prayer. That being the case, is it really that strange, or that long of a stretch to consider that we must ask Jesus to dwell in our hearts by way of a prayer, so that Ephesians 3:17 can be fulfilled in our lives? Does that not fit right in with everything else we have discussed in this series?

Don't both praying for the Holy Spirit, as well as praying to receive Jesus into our hearts, fit the same Biblical pattern, contrary to what those naysayers and Salvation prayer critics like to scream at us? Now if you're one who disagrees, please explain exactly how it is really any different in your view. Think about it, my friends. If we have to pray and ask to be anointed -- or indwelled -- with the Holy Spirit as the Lord advised His followers to do, does it not make a lot of sense

that we would likewise have to pray and ask Jesus to dwell in our hearts as well? How else can His spiritual presence fill our being unless we ask Him to do so?

For me personally, this is a very easy concept to grasp. If one of our friends comes to visit -- Jesus is obviously our friend as well -- he can stand outside knocking on our door all day long. However, unless we open the door and invite him into our home, he is never going to enter our abode, is he? Well, unless, of course, he is a thief and a robber as Jesus describes in John chapter ten in this verse:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

John 1:10, KJV

So just as we have to ask our friend to enter our home, and in fact give him permission to enter our home, it seems to me that with regard to the Spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts -- as per Ephesians 3:17 -- we must do the very same thing. We must ask or invite Him in, so that we can engage in spiritual communion and fellowship with Him. Personally, I do not believe that Christ is just going to pop into our lives, or into our heart, uninvited. In my experience, and based on my knowledge of the Scriptures, that is just not how the Spirit of God works. It is gentle and wooing, and it waits to be invited. In contrast, the spirit of Satan is very rude, very loud, very forceful and very aggressive.

My friends, this idea of voluntarily inviting Jesus into our hearts and lives by way of a prayer in order to engage in a more personal and intimate relationship with Him is in fact implied in the following well-known verse which is found in the Book of Revelation. Furthermore, when we view Revelation 3:20, Ephesians 3:17 and Luke 11:13 side-by-side, it seems to make a lot of sense. Consider for yourself:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Revelation 3:20, KJV

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,"

Ephesians 3:17, KJV

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

In my view, those three Scriptures carry a similar intention. The Apostle Paul desires that the Spirit of Christ dwells in our hearts, while Revelation 3:20 and Luke 11:13 inform us exactly how to accomplish it. We must simply and symbolically open the door of our heart by asking for it through a word of prayer. Taken together, that is what those three verses tell me personally. How about you?

So you see, it seems to me that Jesus dwells in our hearts because we personally ASK Him to do so, just as Jesus very clearly said that we must ASK for the Holy Spirit. However, that is not all, my friends. In my 1997 article called "Holy Ghost: The Spirit of Jesus Christ?", I wrestle with a rather difficult question regarding whether or not there is really that much of a difference between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit of God, if any at all. Honestly speaking, I have not reviewed that particular article in many years, so I cannot remember everything that I state in it. However, please consider the following thoughts.

As we learned at the end of part one, God's desire is that His Spirit dwells in us. In some verses of Scripture, this indwelling is referred to as the Spirit of Christ, while in other verses it is referred to as the Spirit of God. What we see then is that these two phrases appear to be synonymous and interchangeable. In other words, they seem to hold the same meaning, and they are referring to the very self same Spirit. As proof that this is so, consider what the Apostle Paul wrote in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Please notice how in the very first verse he refers to BOTH the Spirit of God AND the Spirit of Christ. However, then in the second verse he very explicitly refers to the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, only to say that it is the Spirit of God that dwells in us in the third verse. After all, when he writes "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you", we know that he is referring to the Father:

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life

because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Romans 8:9-11, KJV

I have already shared Ephesians 3:17 several times with you now. However, if we take the time to read the following two verses which come after it, what we really discover is that Paul is actually saying the very same thing that he says in the previous verses from the Book of Romans. In other words, Paul states that for Christ to dwell in us is to "be filled with all the fulness of God." Consider the three verses for yourself:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Ephesians 3:17-19, KJV

To continue then, as I discuss in a number of other BBB articles -- including "Are You Saved and Sealed and Healed and Filled?" -- Jesus promised His followers that the time would arrive when they would eventually be filled with the Spirit, as we can easily determine by the following set of Bible verses:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 14:16-17, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

John 15:26, KJV

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:8, 13, KJV

While many Christians are familiar with the miraculous event which occurred at the beginning of Acts chapter two when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, fewer people are aware of the fact that following the Lord's resurrection from the dead when He appeared to His disciples, something else occurred, which at first glance seems mystifying to a certain degree. I'm referring to the following verses which are found in John chapter twenty:

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

John 20:21-22, KJV

Now wait a minute! What is going on here? If the Apostles did not receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit until Acts chapter two -- which as we have seen was fifty days into the future from the time of the Lord's Crucifixion on the day of Passover -- how can this event even be happening? Well, as I believe I may possibly explain in the article "A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit", the only way in which I personally can reconcile this apparent difference in timing is by suggesting that what occurred here was NOT the full-blown indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we read about in Acts chapter two.

What do I mean by this? Well, maybe Jesus simply wanted to give the Apostles a type of preview, sampling or foretaste of what was going to occur in the days ahead in that upper room in Jerusalem following His ascension to Heaven. As I point out in the aforementioned article, what we see in the previous two verses was a type of down payment. Furthermore, in his second Epistle to the brethren at Corinth, believe it or not, but this is exactly what the Apostle Paul wrote with regard to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As you can see below, he refers to it as "the earnest of the Spirit":

"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, KJV

So exactly what is meant by "earnest"? According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the word "earnest" is translated from the Koine Greek word "arrabon", which refers to the money which in purchases is given as a pledge or downpayment that the full amount will subsequently be paid". Please likewise notice where Paul explains this "earnest" is stored: IN OUR HEARTS! And in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where did Paul say the Spirit of Christ dwells? IN OUR HEARTS! Oh man! Are you starting to get the picture yet? Are the pieces starting to fall into place in your mind?

While I have stated that what occurred in John 20:21-22 was a preview of what would soon occur in Acts chapter two, my friends, it goes way beyond that. In other words, as I point out in articles such as "This Little Light, Glory of the Lord and Our Bright Future", even being fully filled with the Holy Spirit as the Apostles were on the day of Pentecost is really nothing compared to the glorious spiritual reality in which we will all live, once this earthly life has passed. If you doubt that this is so, consider the following set of verses and rejoice at what lies in your own future, if you remain faithful to the Lord to your last dying breath:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

1 Corinthians 2:9-10, KJV

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Romans 8:18, KJV

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

1 Peter 4:13, KJV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again

unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1 Peter 1:3-5, KJV

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:"

1 Peter 5:1, KJV

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Revelation 21:1-2, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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Controversy: Salvation Prayers - Part 3

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Cruelty Of A Roman Crucifixion, Reaction Of Our Human Flesh To Encounters With Spiritual Entities, Skepticism Regarding People Who Claim To Have Encounters With Jesus And Angels, False Angel Of Light: Satan's Counterfeit Experiences, Jesus Was Filled With His Father's Spirit Without Measure, Phrases "I And My Father Are One" And "He That Hath Seen Me Hath Seen The Father", A Special Body Was Prepared For Jesus, Why The Holy Spirit Couldn't Be Given Until Jesus Returned To Heaven, Miracles Were Performed By God's Spirit Which Dwelt In Jesus, God The Father Jesus And Holy Spirit Are Constituted Of Same Spiritual Substance, The Spirit Is A Type Of Creative Energy

Or Force, God The Father Is Greater Than Jesus, Key Points, What Can We Conclude From The Evidence?, Praying To Receive Holy Spirit And Asking Jesus To Come Into Our Hearts Amounts To The Same Thing, My Personal Position Concerning Saying A Salvation Prayer And Those People Who Condemn Them, Expected Result Of Receiving The Lord, Not Saved By Our Good Works, A Gift Of God's Grace And Mercy Through Faith In Jesus Christ, Importance Of Bearing Spiritual Fruit After Coming To Christ, Salvation Prayers Are Not The Problem, People Who Backslide From The Lord Are The Real Problem, Demas And Dogs Which Go Back To Their Vomit And Swine To Mud Pits, God Keeps His Word

Continuing our discussion from part two regarding what may have happened in John 20 when the Lord breathed the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, something else which has occurred to me is the possibility that perhaps the Apostles needed this to occur at that time. Why so? Well, while they were present when Jesus raised Lazarus and a few other individuals from the dead, this was something quite different. Remember, they had watched as the Lord had been beaten, tortured, whipped, forced to carry a heavy Roman cross -- or stake -- and then died a very slow, agonizing death as He hung on that cross.

Furthermore, we have no idea what Jesus looked like after the Romans were done with Him. In other words, how much He may have possibly been disfigured. I mean, folks, it was a pretty dark experience, and the cruel Romans were not known for their kindness. Crucifixion was meant to be as painful, and as excruciating as possible, right? This form of public execution was obviously meant to drive fear into any foolish person or group who was even contemplating rising up against Rome.

In light of these facts, it seems to me that the sudden and unexpected appearance of a dead man in their midst -- behind locked doors no less, because they were hiding from the Jews out of fear -- must have been rather unsettling. So perhaps Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on them in order to calm down the Apostles. Remember what He had said to them previously in John 14 regarding giving them His peace? As I point out in articles such as "Sex, A Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels", suddenly being confronted with a spiritual entity from the Spiritual Realm can be a frightening, overpowering experience which our human flesh simply cannot handle. In fact, in the Scriptures, we are informed that some of the

Prophets and holy men fainted and fell down as one dead when they experienced such encounters. Consider the following set of Bible verses as proof of this point:

"And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and THERE REMAINED NO STRENGTH IN ME: FOR MY COMELINESS WAS TURNED IN ME INTO CORRUPTION, AND I RETAINED NO STRENGTH. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I STOOD TREMBLING . . . And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I HAVE RETAINED NO STRENGTH. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, STRAIGHTWAY THERE REMAINED NO STRENGTH IN ME, NEITHER IS THERE BREATH LEFT IN ME. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me."

Daniel 10:7-11, 16-19, KJV

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and THEY FEARED AS THEY ENTERED INTO THE

CLOUD."

Luke 9:28-34, KJV

"And when I saw him, I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:17-18, KJV

As I have mentioned before, it is because of verses such as the previous ones, that I have a lot of skepticism regarding the many online accounts where certain Christians claim to have encounters with Jesus Christ or with Angelic Beings, as if it is the most natural thing in the world. I am sorry, my friends, but there is absolutely NOTHING natural or calming about it. Such supernatural experiences would freak out your flesh, unless you are some kind of superhuman, which I doubt. If anything, perhaps some of those people are being deceived by Satan, who can appear as a false angel of light, as we know from the following Bible verse written by Apostle Paul:

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

2 Corinthians 11:14, KJV

At any rate, the next obvious question is why Jesus was able to breathe the Holy Spirit on them in the first place. Well, as I explain in other articles, it is because even though He was still the Son, the Lord was filled with the full Spirit of His Father without measure -- that is to say, without any kind of limit -- as Jesus himself -- as well as the Apostle Paul -- both indicate in the following set of Bible verses:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

John 3:34, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;"

Colossians 1:19, KJV

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Colossians 2:9, KJV

As I explain in a few other BBB articles, it is my view that this is why Jesus said "I and my Father are one" and

"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father", as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"I and my Father are one."

John 10:30, KJV

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake."

John 14:7-11, KJV

Sadly, it is my view that in our modern day, there are many misguided Christians who have seriously misunderstood what the Lord was saying in the previous Bible verses. However, in order to avoid going off on a huge tangent from our main discussion, and being as I amply discuss the issue in other published and yet-to-be-published articles, I will refrain from delving any deeper into this subject in this current series. On a side note, you may find it interesting to know that in addition to the fact that Jesus was filled with his Father's Spirit without limit or measure, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are also told that a special body was in fact prepared for Jesus to dwell upon the Earth. Consider the following three verses:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

Hebrews 10:5-7, KJV

Returning to the issue of how "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" seem to be used as synonymous or interchangeable terms in the Bible, aside from the event we find in John 20 which occurred about fifty days before the day of Pentecost, the Lord said something else which partially reveals how the Spirit of God works. I am referring to the following verse:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."
John 16:7, KJV

Well now, isn't that interesting! Exactly why is it that the Comforter of the Holy Spirit couldn't even be sent until the Lord's bodily presence was removed from the Earth? For my part, I think the previous group of Bible verses explains it to us rather clearly. To say it again, the full power of our Heavenly Father was concentrated in Jesus during the time He spent on the Earth. That is why the Lord was able to perform such powerful miracles. It was NOT Jesus -- the man in human flesh -- who was actually performing the miracles. It was the power of the Most High which resided in His body of flesh. In fact, Jesus plainly stated so Himself, as we can determine by the following Bible verses:

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise . . . I CAN OF MINE OWN SELF DO NOTHING: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

John 5:19, 30, KJV

So while I may possibly be mistaken, it seems to me that as long as Jesus remained on the Earth, and as long as the full power of his Father's Spirit resided in Him, it could not be properly dispersed amongst the Apostles, or amongst anyone else who received the Holy Spirit after that very first main indwelling of the Spirit which occurred in Acts chapter two. To be clear, this is just my personal theory at this current time. You may accept it or reject it as you wish. Anyway, one of the primary points I want you to consider here is the fact that whether we are talking about God the Father, or Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, they ALL seem to be constituted of the very same spiritual substance. They are all one in that regard, although their levels of authority do appear to be different, as I explain in other BBB articles. Let's not forget that Jesus did say "My Father is greater than I", as we see by the following Bible verse:

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I

go unto the Father: for MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I."

John 14:28, KJV

Now exactly what that substance is, is a very good question. I have mentioned before that my personal view has long been that Spirit is simply some type of energy. It is a positive, creative force. We learn this from the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis where we are told that the Spirit of God moved upon the waters, and then the act of creation began, as we know from the following two verses, as well as from the first chapter of the Gospel of John:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Genesis 1:1-2, KJV

So, my friends, taking into consideration all of the various pieces of Scriptural evidence I've now presented to you, what can we really conclude? Well, let's consider the facts which we have uncovered thus far in this current series:

1. Jesus said to ASK for the Holy Spirit. He also engaged in a lot of prayer time, and encouraged others to pray as well.
2. Amongst Christian believers, asking God for things is for the most part usually done by the way of personal prayer.
3. We are told that we must believe in, RECEIVE and confess Christ as part of the Salvation process.
4. We are informed that the Spirit of Christ dwells in one's HEART by the Apostle Paul.
5. The Apostle Paul appears to use the phrases "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" as interchangeable, synonymous terms when he writes about God's Spirit dwelling in our HEART.
6. Father, Son and Holy Spirit all form a part of what Paul refers to as the Godhead.
7. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all constituted of the same spiritual substance.
8. Jesus was fully empowered by the Spirit of His Father

during His time on the Earth.

9. We are informed that the Holy Spirit could not be given until Jesus returned to Heaven.

So then, when a person PRAYS AND ASKS to receive the Holy Spirit -- just as the Lord himself indicated in Luke 11:13 -- can we conclude that by praying and asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, one is in effect also asking Jesus to come into his or her heart being as Spirit of God and Spirit Of Christ are used interchangeably in the Scriptures? I have presented you with the evidence. Now I will just let this question percolate in your mind, and allow you to arrive at your own conclusion.

Personally, I will simply say the following. While there may not be any verses which outright instruct us to pray and ask Jesus to come into our hearts by way of a prayer, I believe that I have now demonstrated -- as I likewise discuss in "To Believe in Jesus Is Also to Accept Jesus" -- that based on what we are told in the Scriptures, praying to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and asking Jesus to come into our hearts, pretty much amounts to the same thing.

So am I saying that we MUST say a Salvation prayer in order to be truly saved? No I am not. I simply will not go that far precisely because it is not stated directly in the Scriptures. Yet at the same time, as I have already made clear, I embrace the view that it is wrong to harshly criticize and condemn any Christian, simply because they happen to believe in the merit of saying a Salvation prayer. Again, each individual must live and believe according to their personal faith, and they should not be too concerned with the opinions of other Christians who may disagree with them, or worse.

However, I most certainly do believe that we must believe in what Jesus did for us, and accept Him as our Lord and Savior, and also verbally confess our faith in Him to others, because that's what the Bible plainly instructs us to do, as we have already discussed. As I mention in my personal biography, I believed in Jesus for many years before I ever said a prayer in San Jose. I simply did that at the time, because I wasn't yet well-grounded in the Scriptures, and that is what those Jesus People told me I had to do in order to be saved. That was fifty-five years ago, and the widespread practice of the Salvation prayer has continued to this day. Again, I really see nothing wrong with doing it, as long as one's prayer is

said in faith, and from one's heart. If you wish to disagree with me, that is your right, but I will not debate the point.

Now, if we truly believe in Jesus, and if we have also truly received Him so that His Spirit dwells within our hearts as we learned earlier with Ephesians 3:17 and various related Scriptures, then what should be the obvious end result of our faith? Well, as I amply point out in the series entitled "The Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service", our Salvation should result in good works being done for the Lord. Let me be clear about this. As I have taught for literally decades now, I am fully convinced that our Salvation is definitely NOT the result of our good works. Our Salvation is totally a gift of God's mercy and grace through our faith in Christ. It is God's unmerited favor resting upon us, as I point out in so many other BBB articles such as "Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace". Consider the following Bible verses which confirm this point"

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Galatians 2:16, 21, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT OF GOD: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Romans 11:6, KJV

"For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:23, KJV

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the GIFT OF GOD, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

John 4:10, KJV

HOWEVER, if our Salvation does NOT result in good works for the Lord -- such as through public witnessing, or serving the Lord in some other capacity -- then it would seem that something is obviously seriously wrong somewhere. As I have mentioned on previous occasions, once we accept God's gift of Salvation through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, God expects us to bear some manner of fruit for His Kingdom. Consider the following group of Bible verses which confirm this particular point:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, THAT WE SHOULD BRING FORTH FRUIT UNTO GOD."

Romans 7:4, KJV

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Psalm 1:3, KJV

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE."

Proverbs 11:30, KJV

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold . . . But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Matthew 13:8, 23, KJV

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Matthew 13:31-32, KJV

"And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

Mark 4:20, KJV

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Luke 8:15, KJV

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Luke 13:6-9, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

John 12:24, KJV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned . . . Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:1-6, 16, KJV

So again, bearing fruit for God's Kingdom is an obvious sign that a person is truly saved and filled with the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit. But here is what those Christians

who harshly condemn Salvation prayers need to understand. It is NOT that there is something wrong with the prayer itself. As I have explained on previous occasions, if a person does earnestly pray such a prayer with sincerity and a heart full of faith, I am fully convinced that they are truly saved on the spot. I know that I was fifty-five years ago. The prayer itself is NOT the problem. The problem is actually the person themselves.

This is precisely what Jesus talks about in the Parable of the Sower, as I fully explain in the aforementioned series. Not every seed that is planted will sprout and eventually bear fruit at some point in the future. Jesus offers the various reasons why this may happen in that Parable. Just like the dog who returns to his vomit, or the swine to his mud pit, some people who accept Christ will cool off and backslide into the world. As we know, that is precisely what happened to the Apostle Paul's former companion named Demas. There are a number of Bible verses -- aside from the Parable of the Sower -- where this issue is mentioned. I also discuss it in articles such as "Backsliding, Divine Chastisement and the Divine Agreement". Consider the following sample verses:

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."

2 Timothy 4:10, KJV

"Remember Lot's wife."

Luke 17:32, KJV

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"

John 6:60-67, KJV

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

2 Peter 2:20-22, KJV

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Hebrews 10:38, KJV

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

1 John 2:19, KJV

So to reiterate that key point, repeating a Salvation prayer is NOT the problem. The efficacy of the prayer itself most certainly remains sure. It is solid, because God will stand behind the promise of Salvation which is found in His Word, for anyone who prays such a prayer with a believing heart. Many people have been truly saved through such prayers, and gone on to serve God faithfully in some manner. As I already stated, I am one of them. It is what certain people do AFTER they have said such a prayer that is the real problem.

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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Controversy: Salvation Prayers - Part 4

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Using Straw Man Arguments To Criticize And Condemn Salvation Prayers, God's Loving But Firm Divine Chastisements, How The Straw Man Argument Works, Other Online Attacks Against Our Christian Beliefs, Beware Of Contentious Brethren And Other Online Ravenous Wolves, Serious Harm And Damage Being Caused By Salvation Prayer Detractors, A Fictitious But Realistic Situation, My Stiff Warning To Salvation Prayer Detractors, Jesus' Clear Warning Regarding Those Who Cause His Children To Stumble And Fall Away From Their Faith, Apostle Paul And The Apostasy, Closing Remarks, BBB Suggested Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part three, there is a huge issue which is directly related to the criticism which has been launched against Salvation prayers which really irks me. In fact, every time I see it online, it is coming from an individual who is strongly opposed to Salvation prayers. What am I referring to? It is the bogus argument -- a very fictitious straw man argument really -- which claims that people who say a Salvation prayer have the attitude that once they have said such a prayer, they can live as they please, do as they want, and continue to sin away, without facing any kind of consequences due to their rebellion.

My dear friends, as I have stated several times now in this series, I have believed in the Lord since I was a young boy, and I've strived to serve our King faithfully for more than five decades now. Speaking from my own personal experiences, I have never once met a single Bible-believing Christian who believes as the Salvation prayer detractors claim. That is why I have framed it as a straw man argument. I am convinced that said argument is something which they themselves have invented for the sole purpose of trying to justify their own position.

As I point out in a number of BBB articles, if there is one thing I know, and which the Scriptures make absolutely clear, it is that if any true, Bible-believing Christian steps out of line in a serious way, God will most certainly deal with him about it. The Lord simply will not allow the situation to slide for very long. Following are some of my favorite Bible verses concerning the subject of divine chastisement:

"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be

weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Proverbs 3:11-12, KJV

"Open rebuke is better than secret love." Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Hebrews 12:5-8, 11-13, KJV

So then, returning to the issue of using straw man arguments, this seems to be a very common online practice in our modern day, and I assume it occurs offline as well. Detractors of a particular issue will accuse the supporters of the issue of either saying a certain thing, or believing a certain thing, or doing a certain thing, or having a particular attitude regarding a certain thing. Yet in reality, absolutely not a word of their accusation is even true. But you see, friends, it does not really matter to them. They know that what they are saying is not even true, but if they can convince you it is true anyway, then they have accomplished their goal. Why so? Because they can then attack whatever it is that they have invented, in order to defeat it, and thus supposedly validate their own position.

Salvation prayers are NOT the only issue where I see this happening. I have seen other online instances where other issues and beliefs which are related to our Christian faith are likewise attacked using the very same strategy. So that being the case, I urge all of my Christian brethren to be very careful. Watch out for these grievous, ravening wolves in sheep's clothing who employ this method to try to attack your beliefs and tear you down. Ask God for His wisdom and

spiritual discernment, avoid the reprobates and contentious brethren, and don't allow yourself to unwisely become their next meal. Be smart and avoid time-wasting, futile doctrinal debates.

But concerning those self-righteous Christians who outright dismiss and harshly condemn Salvation prayers, personally, I am convinced that they are doing a lot of damage to the Body of Christ. While they may not realize it, through their stiff condemnation, I believe that they are causing certain weaker brethren to not only become discouraged, but their mean words may even be causing some brethren to actually doubt their own Salvation. Imagine that you are a relatively young Christian who has only recently come to know the Lord. Some Christian brother or sister led you in just such a Salvation prayer, and you are now not only convinced that you are truly saved, but you are now faithfully reading the Bible, and you have begun fellowshipping with a close-knit group of like-minded Christians.

However, one day while you are surfing one of your favorite social networks, you happen to come across some very vicious posts which scream at you that your prayer was totally said in vain, and that you are not truly saved as you had thought. My friends, now imagine what a terrible shock that could be to such a young Christian. Whereas before they had been so positive and full of faith, suddenly, they find themselves questioning and doubting everything they have done since the day that they said their Salvation prayer and accepted the Lord. Such is the devastating effect that those critics may have on certain weak-minded Christians.

Furthermore, the harm and the damage may not even end there. By strongly condemning such sincere prayers of faith -- as I have seen some of those online detractors do -- they may even push and convince weaker Christians to lean more towards what amounts to a works-based religion, instead of relying solely on a faith-based religion. Whereas before they believed that they were saved by their faith in Jesus Christ, now they are being told that they have to do this, that or the other in order to secure their Salvation, and to also hold on to it for dear life. My friends, I hope that you can see that this is a very serious matter.

So as I mentioned in part one of this series, those of you who are guilty of doing this really need to pray about the harm you are doing to your brethren. You really need to back

off, and STOP condemning those of us who at some particular point in our lives prayed a Salvation prayer as our way of accepting Jesus in our lives. If any Christian should fall back from their faith due to your harsh, condemnatory words, I am sure that God will hold you personally accountable for it. Why do I say this? Well, because it is what Jesus also said as well in the Gospels. He clearly warned about placing a stumbling block or impediment before weaker brethren so that they fall away from their faith. Now if you doubt that this is so, then please take note of the following Bible verse and for your own sake, wake up:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matthew 18:6, KJV

In the previous verse, the word "offend" is derived from the Koine Greek word "skandalizo". It is in fact from this word that we derive our English words "scandal" and "scandalize". While this Greek word is translated as "offend" in the New Testament, Thayer's Greek English Lexicon actually defines "skandalizo" as "putting a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall". Thus, in the previous verse, Jesus is actually warning those people who, by whatever means, lead His lambs away from the truth of the Scriptures and faith in Christ. As you can see, this lexicon definition is substantially different from the more modern meaning of the word "offend" with which most people are now familiar.

Furthermore, the act of someone tripping or falling away from the truth is also directly related to what the Apostle Paul wrote regarding the tragic conditions which would exist prior to Jesus Christ's return to the Earth. Please note what Paul wrote in the following verse which is found in Paul's second Epistle to the brethren at Thessalonica in Macedonia:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

2 Thessalonians 2:3, KJV

In the previous verse, the words "falling away" are derived from the Koine Greek word "apostasia". Thayer's Greek English Lexicon defines this word as "a falling away, defection or

apostasy". In our modern day, there are quite a few reasons regarding why so many Christians are now falling away -- or stumbling -- from the true faith and doctrines of the Bible. However, this topic is amply discussed in other articles, so I will not dwell upon it here. Returning to the earlier verse that is found in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus then continued to warn against those people who would offend His little ones by saying the following:

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

Matthew 18:7, KJV

Thus again we can see that these "offences" -- or stumbling blocks, from "skandalon" -- are the lies, deceptions and false doctrines which are causing so many people to be led astray from their faith in the saving grace of God through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. In my view, condemning Christians who came to Christ by way of a Salvation prayer is one such serious stumbling block. So again, anyone who is guilty of doing it had better watch out! You really need to stop your foolishness right now! Mind your own business, and let other Christians live their faith as they feel so led by the Lord and His holy Word.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

[A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit](#)
[Age of Accountability and Parental and Divine Discipline](#)
[AI, Deepfakes and Humanoid Robots](#)
[All Are Given a Chance, But](#)

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Backsliding, Divine Chastisement and the Divine Agreement
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Fifty Days Which Changed the World
Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace
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