

## **The True Story of Salvation** (A Study of Titus 3:3-7)

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A man by the name of Billy had been a terrible and wicked sinner. He was so bad that he was sentenced to die for his crimes. However, while on death row in a Southern prison, Billy finally met Christ Jesus, and was able to lead several other death-row inmates to the Lord. But in January, Billy's execution date arrived. The following account was told by a volunteer chaplain who had been instrumental in leading Billy to his Savior. Several people were on hand to witness the execution including a woman who had been a key witness against Billy at his trial. This woman hated Billy, doubtless with good reason.

A closed curtain covered the window between the viewing room and the electric chair while preparations were completed. Before the curtain was opened the audience in the viewing room heard someone singing, "Amazing Grace." Then, when the curtain opened, they realized the singer was Billy. His last request had been to sing that song as a witness of his changed life. When he finished, he nodded to the executioner and went to meet his Lord.

The chaplain who was also present saw that the woman was so touched that she began to cry and he was able to lead her also to receive Christ as her Savior. Even in his death Billy gave a powerful witness to his beloved Lord and the wonderful salvation he had received through Him. Billy's story reminds us of the true story of salvation.

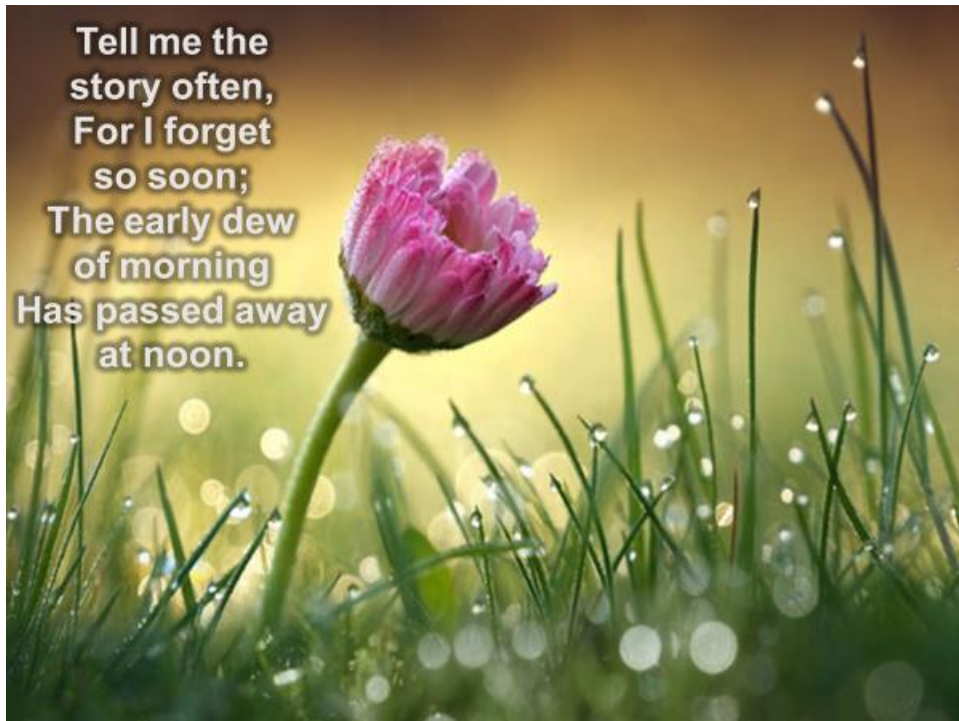
In this study we want to reflect upon the true story of salvation from start to finish. We have many fraudulent stories and half-truths being propagated today about salvation but what we need today is the true story as it is clearly presented in the Bible and in particular in Titus 3:4-7.

Titus 3:3-7

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and]

hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 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; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

As Christians (God’s people), we also need to have our hearts captivated once again with God’s great story and plan of salvation, realizing where we once were and what Christ has done for us. We should live with a daily and deeper appreciation of this “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3) and not lose sight of the riches of God’s marvelous saving grace. As I think of the true story of salvation, I am reminded of the old hymn which say:



The Bible gives us the true story of salvation.

There are three chapters to the story of our salvation.

**I. Chapter One: We must remember what we were (Titus 3:3).**



This is the first chapter in the story of our salvation. It's not a story that will stroke a person's self-esteem and help them glory in their grandiose humanism. Humanism says man is basically good, but the Bible says man is dirty from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. We must get through the bad news first before we can really appreciate

the good news in the following chapters of this story.

Titus 3:3

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

In the beginning chapter we are reminded what we were before we were saved.

God's picture of us before our conversion is not flattering. In remembering *where we were*, Titus is going to reveal how we were morally depraved in our thinking and actions. He is going to give the true story and picture of you and me before we knew Christ. He is not going to fudge the facts or grade us on a curve. We need to know and remember where we were and where Christ brought us from. The Bible paints a portrait of a depraved sinner. Let's not forget what we were before we were saved.

"Roll back the curtain of memories now and then.  
Show me where you brought me from  
And where I could have been.  
Remember I'm human, and humans forget  
So remind me, remind me dear Lord."

1. We were dumb – "foolish."

Before we met Jesus Christ as our Savior, we were dumb. Have you ever said, “That dumb animal ran right in front of the car and got hit.” Well, the Bible says that we were spiritually dumb (a spiritual dunce) before we were saved. We were foolish instead of sensible in our living and thinking. We were “foolish” (anoētos – senseless, unintelligent) in the sense of not being able to comprehend spiritual truths. We were spiritual discerned (1 Cor. 2:14) and we were also unwise in our choices and conduct of living. This means we had a PhD which means, phenomenal dud!

The colorful Vance Havner said:

“The wise Christian wastes no time trying to explain God’s program to unregenerate men; it would be casting pearls before swine. He might as well try to describe a sunset to a blind man or discuss nuclear physics with a monument in the city park. The natural man cannot receive such things. One might as well try to catch sunbeams with a fishhook as to lay hold of God’s revelation unassisted by the Holy Spirit. Unless one is born of the Spirit and taught by Him, all this is utterly foreign to him. Being a Ph. D. does not help, for in this realm it could mean ‘Phenomenal Dud!’”

The word “foolish” (Rom. 1:14) connotes unintelligence, senselessness, and lack of wisdom. Foolish is a good and accurate translation. Paul had never forgotten what kind of person he had been and how blind and foolish he was before he was saved. Unsaved people often think they are clever in their philosophies, their phony theories, and Satan-inspired delusions. But God calls them fools! God calls them dummies. With God even the wisdom of man is foolishness. 1 Corinthians 1:20 says, “Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” – legalism, humanism, evolutionism, asceticism, etc.

Recently a football player in the NFL ran back a kick for a touchdown. When interviewing him, he said, “It was a spiritual experience.” Now, this just goes to show you that people without salvation are senseless in their evaluations of spiritual things. As Vance Havner said, they have PhD’s which mean they are phenomenal duds when it comes to comprehending and understating spiritual realities.

No matter how advanced a person's education and intellectual accomplishments may be, if he does not recognize God and trust in Him for deliverance from sin and salvation, then he is foolish concerning the most important truth of life (salvation through Jesus Christ). There are many intellectual dummies in this world. I like to call them dumb smart. They have intellect from the world's viewpoint but no spiritual sense.

Before we were saved the way that we lived was foolish. We ignorantly engaged in sinful practices that defiled our lives. Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:13: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious (harmful and hurtful toward others): but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

Today we see the rapid acceleration and acceptance of such things as abortion, homosexuality, pornography, sex outside marriage, Satanism, and even the sexualizing of our children. Our culture promotes almost everything except chastity or purity. People who engage in these evil, corrupt, destructive, and ungodly practices are spiritually dumb (ignorant) or senseless. Then too, every lie that we have said, every evil thought we have thought, and every evil and immoral practice that we did in our past unsaved state made us nothing but a bunch of foolish and dumb sinners who had repeatedly broken God's holy Law.

An elderly man told me that during his younger years he decided to roll up some corn fodder and tried smoke it without his dad seeing him. He told me that when he looks back and sees himself smoking corn fodder that he was a fool on one end with a fire on the other end. Listen, we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) and because of this we were all foolish in our lost estate before God. We did many foolish things. We were spiritually ignorant and dumb!

## 2. We were disobedient ("disobedient") – 3a.

This is why our parents must chase us with the paddle! We are born with the natural inclination to be disobedient. Before we met Jesus Christ as our Savior, we were rebellious. We were disobedient instead of submissive to God's will and plan for our lives. The word disobedient suggests that we were unwilling to be persuaded concerning salvation and living for God and

Jesus Christ. We were obstinate Christ's rejectors and defiantly rejected God's ways over our lives.

Ephesians 2:1-3

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead (DEAD – lifeless toward God) in trespasses and sins (DEPRAVED); Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, (DIABOLICAL) the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation (*manner of living*) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (DISOBEDIENT); and were by nature the children of wrath (DAMNED), even as others."

The Bible says that all of us were spiritually dead and disobedient to God's will and ways before we were saved. We were "children of disobedience." We were defiant, not willing to embrace the right and only way to Heaven, the right path for holy living, or the right pattern of acceptable behavior that pleases God. We lived our lives the way we wanted to live and did not care about God's truth or His desire to save us. We did not want to live according to His holy purposes.

One man said to me, "I'll live the way I want to live, and no person is ever going to tell me how to live. If I want a beer, I am going to drink it." Well, this is the philosophy of the unsaved. It was the way we lived before we came to Christ and received salvation. We were disobedient to the most important things in life – the way of salvation and sanctification (holiness).

Hurrying her 11-year-old daughter to school, a mother turned right on red where it was prohibited. "Uh, oh," she said, realizing her mistake. "I just made an illegal turn." "It's all right," the daughter said. "The police car behind us did the same thing." We were all disobedient before we were saved. We may have broken the laws of men, but one thing is for certain, we transgressed God's holy Law time and time again for the Bible says that "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). We were all disobedient sinners in our unsaved state who broke God's commandments. None of us can escape this scathing rebuke indictment.

3. We were deceived ("deceived") – 3b.

Before we came to know Jesus Christ as our Savior we were also deceived. First, our heart was sinfully deceived. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Before we were saved our human heart led us astray into the land of unbelief. It was a heart unaided by grace, which approved of our sinful lifestyle, and kept us bound to sinful deception.

Second, our mind was satanically deceived. 2 Corinthians 4:4, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” Deception is the devil’s device for keeping people in the dark about salvation.

Third, our life was sanctimoniously deceived. Romans 10:3 declares, “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Particularly, our life was deceived into thinking that we were morally superior, and that God will accept us because we all have some good traits and qualities that we can present to Him which will give us a pass into Heaven. People reject the teaching of salvation by grace and want to establish their own meritorious system of righteousness. They actually think that man is basically good, and that God will accept his good deeds as sufficient payment for the wrongs that he has done and allow him to enter Heaven. But God could never accept the depraved works of sinners as payment for their sins. We will note this in our next point.

Before we were saved, we were open to deception from the heart, Satan, and the lie that our works will buy us a ticket to Heaven. We were deceived and ignorant of the only way of salvation. We lived in the deception of our own perverted judgment, always missing the right way, and ending up on dead-end streets. The unsaved man always finds himself in a dark alley with no place to turn.

4. We were depraved (“serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in

malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” – 3c).

This verse reminds us of the moral depravity or sinful corruption and condition of fallen man in his lost estate. Man is totally depraved and evil in God’s sight. The doctrine of total depravity is an acknowledgement that the Bible teaches that as a result of the fall of man (Genesis 3:6) every part of man - his mind, will, emotions and flesh have been corrupted by sin. In other words, sin affects all areas of our being including who we are and what we do. It penetrates to the very core of our being so that everything we do is tainted by sin in some way.

Romans 3:10-12 explains it like this:

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

These verses in Romans indicate that man’s entire inner being is totally controlled by sin: his *mind* (“none that understandeth”), his *heart* (“none that seeketh after God”), and his *will* (“none that doeth good”). Sin has affected man in every way - his human intellect, emotions, and volition. Measured by God’s perfect righteousness, no human being is righteous before God (Rom. 3:10), no human being is without sin and acceptable before God’s holy and flawless presence.

Simply stated, human depravity means that man is so corrupted by sin in his inner nature that everything he does in his outward practice is somehow tainted by sin. Depravity means that man fails the test of pleasing God in everything he does. God in His holiness can only see unsaved people as depraved or morally filthy and wicked sinners in His sight. God sees our sins and He knows that everything we do is flawed by sin.

Total depravity does not mean that man is always as wicked or sinful as he could be, nor does it mean that man is without a conscience or any sense of right or wrong. Neither does it mean that man does not or cannot do things that seem to be good when viewed from a human perspective or measured



against a human standard. It does not even mean that man cannot do things that seem to conform outwardly to the law of God.

What the Bible does teach and what total depravity does recognize is that even the “good” things man does are tainted by sin because they are not done for the glory of God. Behind all the alleged “good” things unsaved people do is the element of the flesh and pride. This is why they boastfully and pridefully throw their good works in front of God and say, “Here they are, accept them, they are good enough to get me into Heaven.” But as previously mentioned, God could never accept the depraved works of sinners as payment for their sins.

While man looks upon the outward acts and judges them to be good, God looks upon not only the outward acts but also the inward motives that lie behind them. Since all of man’s actions proceed from a heart that is in rebellion against Him, they are not done for His glory. For this reason, even the good deeds that unsaved people do are like “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6) or menstruating cloths in His sight. In other words, fallen man’s good deeds are not motivated by a desire to please God but by his own self-interest and are therefore corrupted to the point where God declares that “there is none that doeth good, no not one!”

Every aspect of man’s existence, his outer and inner desires, emotions, and will are depraved, bound to sin, and cannot do good in God’s sight or properly respond to God. Man cannot respond favorably to God’s plan of salvation unless His heart is touched by grace. It takes grace of God’s inner work to connect with a person’s will so they can see their total depravity before God. It takes God’s penetrating power to awaken us from our sinful estate and show us our need for grace and salvation. It takes a “grace awakening” in our soul for us to see ourselves as lost sinners that are in desperate need of salvation through Christ alone.

It’s only then, when a person’s eyes are open to their sinfulness, that God gives an individual the opportunity to make a valid choice regarding his or her eternal destiny.

Isaiah 1:18 brings out the truth how God can penetrate through depravity: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

God can move in man's heart, and He can reason with man, and man can respond favorably to His proposals (invitation to salvation) even in a fallen state. Total depravity does affect the human will. It shuts man off from God! But with God's intervening grace He can break through the bondage of the will which is bound to sin and unbelief and open the eyes of people, revealing to them their sinfulness and need for salvation (John 16:8). At this point, each person is given the personal responsibility to believe or reject His gracious plea and offer of salvation. Only God and His grace can overcome total depravity!

"Oh the glory of His presence,  
O the beauty of His face;  
I am His and His forever,  
He has won me by His grace."

Without God's aid, man could not and would not respond to God's plan of salvation for "there is none that seeketh after God" (Romans 3:11). Ah old wise Christian man was asked what his part was in the salvation of his soul. He replied, "My part was running away from God and His part was running after me."

You see, if God would not seek after us, we would not seek after him. God always takes the gracious initiative in salvation for we are totally depraved of sin and unbelief.

"Though I knew Him not, still He loved me,  
Though I sought Him not, still He sought me,  
He was seeking for me."

Of course, the higher Calvinism floating around today adds its own philosophy to total depravity by claiming that man at no point has any free volition to respond to God. This is philosophical – not Biblical. Although God

must break through man's moral depravity, including his bondage and unresponsive will toward God, the biblical truth and balance is that man can respond to God on his own free volition as God interacts with man's soul through inner conviction and drawing.

I know that this is often labeled by Calvinists as semi-Pelagianism, but this is not case for the heretic Pelagius denied original sin and he believed in a perfect (not depraved) human will that could respond favorably without God's initiative and drawing power upon the soul. In other words, he taught we can take the first step toward Christ and salvation on our own power or ability and because of our own innate goodness without God's intervening help or grace.

As we have seen, Romans 3:10–18 does not describe humanity as only being “partially” tainted or depraved by sin, but totally depraved. For this reason, the more rigid form of Calvinism teaches that God must give someone the faith to believe, without a person's individual choice, or God must regenerate a person before he believes so that man and is human works are totally out of the picture. But again, this is philosophy – not bibliology (Acts 16:31). A person believes in order to be saved - he is not saved in order to believe. Furthermore, a person's ability to express faith in Christ is not a work as Calvinists will sometimes teach (Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-8). Works are always juxtaposed or contrasted with faith. Here is the point. When God breaks through the total depravity of man and his stubborn will, He opens the heart where a person can respond favorably to His plan of salvation by either receiving it or rejecting it.

The Bible clearly teaches that without God's drawing we are incapable of coming to Christ because of our moral depravity. Jesus taught in John 6:44 that “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Martin Luther once said:

“The drawing is not like that of the executioner, who draws the thief up the ladder to the gallows; but it is the gracious allurements, such as that of a man whom everybody loves, and to whom everybody willingly goes.”

This drawing of God is not a selective statement of God choosing some people over others (consigning some to hell) but a saving statement of biblical fact. Here is the point. Without God's intervening grace in our hearts and lives, we are utterly incapable of cooperating with or even recognizing our need for salvation for the simple reason that we are spiritually dead in sin ("when we were dead in sins" – Eph. 2:5). But spiritual deadness is not the same as physical deadness for a corpse cannot react to stimuli while a spiritually dead person can react through God's intervening grace (spiritual stimulus upon the soul) react to His offer of salvation (Matthew 11:28).

Here is the biblical balance between God's sovereign work of grace upon the depraved human will and man's freedom. A person's faith is and salvation is made possible by the work of God upon the human heart. God's grace **ENABLES** unsaved people to express faith in Christ since salvation is "not by the will of man" (mere human determination - John 1:13) but at the same time God makes unsaved people **RESPONSIBLE** for their faith ("But as many as received him" - John 1:12).



Because of God's intervening grace, opening the eyes of spiritually depraved people, spiritually dead people can hear and believe. God allows them to possess a free will response to His saving grace.

Jesus taught in John 5:24-25:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word (*pre-conversion – before we were saved*), and believeth on him that sent me (*pre-conversion – before we were saved*), hath everlasting life (*post-hearing and believing – after we have been saved*), and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (*after hearing and believing we receive spiritual and eternal life*). Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now

is (*during Jesus' day*), when the dead (*spiritually dead*) shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (*hearing and responding to the truth results in spiritual life*).

Regeneration and spiritual life do not come BEFORE one can believe (John 3:15-16; 6:47) as some assert but hearing and believing RESULTS in spiritual life (new birth). Let's study our Bible instead of Reformed Theology on this matter. A person is responsible for "his faith" which results in righteousness being credited or imputed to his account before God (Rom. 4:3).

In other words, people pass from one realm (spiritual death) to another (spiritual life) the moment they hear and believe (1 John 3:14). God makes man responsible for his belief and eternal destiny (John 3:19). God's grace overcomes total depravity of the human will through convicting and redirecting people to the cross of Christ through the Spirit's pre-salvation work (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13) so they can decide to reject or receive His offer of salvation. God breaks through hardened hearts to shows people the true story and way of salvation.

Sadly, Jesus said in John 5:40:

"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

He did not say at this point that they could not come but they would not come to express personal faith in Him as the Messiah and Savior. Well, there is a Biblical balance between God's intervening grace in drawing unsaved people to salvation, breaking through the moral depravity of man's sin and rebellious will that is set against God, and man's responsibility to place faith in Christ. Of course, God must receive all the credit for a person's salvation for He is the true Soulwinner and Savior. He seeks us, breaks through our depraved condition, inspiring faith in the hearts of those which were once far away from God (Eph. 2:12).

"Oh, the love that sought me!  
Oh, the blood that bought me!  
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold.  
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold."

Introduction: Katherine Hankey was born in 1834 at Clapham, Surrey, England. She was the daughter of a banker. During her lifetime she was a member of the Clapham Sect. This group fought slavery and funded Christian missionaries.

She wrote the words of a precious hymn while recovering from a serious illness in London. As providence would have it, the famous musician George Washington Doane heard the poem being recited by Major General Russell in 1867.

It was he who went on to add the music to these beautiful words. And because of this we now have this beautiful song that we have all come to love.

Tell me the story slowly,  
That I may take it in -  
That wonderful redemption,  
God's remedy for sin.  
Tell me the story often,  
For I forget so soon;  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon.

Tell me the old, old story;  
Tell me the old, old story,  
Tell me the old, old story  
Of Jesus and His love.

We now see a general review man's moral depravity in the remaining story of Titus 3:3. It is an awful state of wickedness. Again, the word depraved means to be corrupted or wicked and perverted in practice, totally unresponsive to God and His ways. Although there are different depths to depravity, depravity is still depravity. Our sinful wickedness separates every unsaved sinner from God.

Isaiah 59:2 illustrates this:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."

We were depraved in four areas.

a. In our sinful degradation – “serving divers lusts and pleasures”

Degradation speaks of our debased sinful living or our lack of morals. This is a picture of our life before we were saved. The word “serving” means to be enslaved. In our unsaved state we were enslaved to sin. The word “divers” means many different kinds of lusts (a smorgasbord of evil passions).

Where we live, we have a place called Shady Maple Smorgasbord. My wife and I wanted to go there for breakfast. They had a “buy one get one free” special to get people to come to breakfast. When we arrived, the place was total packed. The people were standing outside the doors at 8:30 in the morning. As Shady Maple has many different types of food, so there are many different types of lusts.

Some people lust for money, others lust after sex, still others lust after fame, recognition, and higher positions in this world. The word “pleasures” speaks of hedonism. We actually get our English word hedonism from this Greek word (*hēdonē*). It speaks of sensual delights (the playboy philosophy of life). It points to the gratification of sinful desires and pleasures. In Luke 8:14 Jesus spoke about the “pleasures of *this* life” that people engage in and allow to control them. Many people have been kept from salvation by their love for pleasure and passion. Jesus taught that “men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19). Pleasure is one of the key characteristics of the last days for the Bible teaches that people are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4).

Although the unsaved natural man *willfully* chooses to sin, he does so because his very *constitution* is sinful, and he has neither the desire nor the ability to be anything but sinful. With this kind of hopeless condition every unbeliever is inevitably enslaved to sin (serving sin) in its many and various forms of lust.

Ephesians 2:3 says we were “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” This tells the true story. We were once enslaved by our fleshly

desires (evil passions) and had nowhere to turn. Our human mind was depraved or corrupt (wicked) and it was enslaved to wicked thoughts and sinful patterns. We were in an awful state before we were saved. We were chained to sin (Eph. 2:3) and energized by Satan (Eph. 2:3). Our ship was not merely sinking, it was sunk! It had gone down under to the depths of depravity in the sea of sin. My friend, this is a frightful description of the human race without God. It's also a description of us before we were saved. We were serving various unclean habits, enslaved by an evil thought-life, and many different types of sins.

b. In our sinful disposition (“living in malice”)

Disposition speaks of a prominent and prevailing tendency, a general characteristic of a person's life. What kind of person were we in our overall living before we were saved? The Bible says we were “living in malice” prior to our salvation. The word “malice” (kakia) is only used here and in 2 Timothy 2:2. It means badness, evil, or wickedness.

Because of our very nature (sinful disposition), we were evil and wicked. Therefore, we lived out a life of evil before we were saved. We were bad and lived without regard for God. This is how God sees us in our unsaved, unregenerate state. He does not see us as “goody-to-shoes” people but as sinners who are evil, wicked, and bad in His sight. Again, we were a sinner from the sole of our foot to the crown of our head!

Romans 3:10 again states, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:12 adds, “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

This means we are all bad. We are sinners! I shared the above verses to a lady at our Ephrata Fair ministry and she looked up at me and said, “I don't believe that.” Well, you might not believe it, but this is just another proof that unsaved people are not “righteous” and cannot do anything that pleases Him for they are filled with the works of self-righteousness and cannot accept their diagnosis as a totally depraved sinner that is separated from God's moral perfection.



As an unsaved sinner, God sees our entire life being polluted by sin. We were a bunch of dirty, rotten, filthy, no-good, dirty-bird sinners before we were saved who were going straight to hell. This is the sad but true story of all of us before we were saved. If you want to argue with God, then do it, but you will lose the argument! There is no escape from this indictment against the human race. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" – His moral perfection (Rom. 3:23). We sin because we were linked to Adam (the original sinner) and we sin because we are sinners at the very core of our being. The verdict stands!

c. In our sinful desires ("envy")

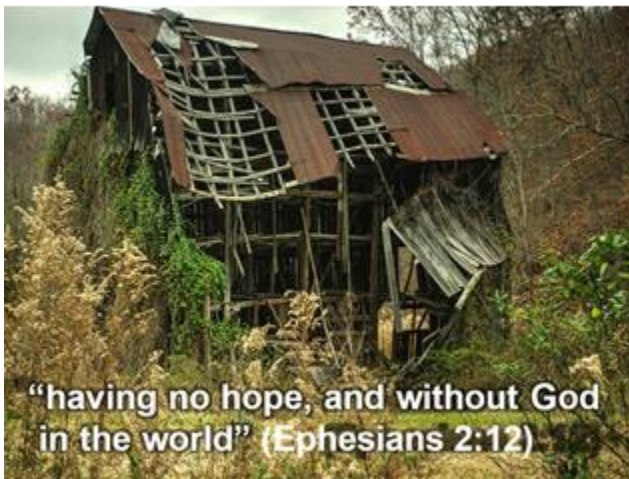
As unbelievers we were once, by our very nature, living in a state of "envy." Envy is a sin that carries its own reward. It guarantees its own frustration and disappointment. By definition the envious person cannot be satisfied with what he has and will always crave for more. Unsaved people envy their talents, gifts, money, cars, material things, brilliance, power, position, and looks over other people. People become envious when someone else is honored, promoted, preferred, and extolled over them. Envy is a core sin that affects the unsaved human race. It's at the root of most sins. Envy is woven into the sinful fabric of every unsaved person. We see this from the days of Cain and Abel to our present day. Envy is a root cause of many other sins.

d. In our sinful dislikes ("hateful, and hating one another")

The Bible goes on to say that we were "hateful and hating one another." As unbelievers we were once by our very nature "hateful." Therefore, we expressed this sin toward God, truth, the Gospel, and other people. Hate is a natural fruit of envy, but it is also produced by many other things. Multitudes hate God, Jesus Christ, truth, and anything that has a moral base attached to it. They hate what God says about them and rebel against it. We sometimes wonder why people support abortion, same sex marriages, and even sexualizing our children with a strong passion. The reason for this is because people are depraved in their inner being. The love what God hates and hate what God loves.

The unsaved also hate others (“hating one another”) for what other people do to them and because of the positions and accomplishments of others. Hateful persons despise anyone or anything that stands in their way, or which displeases them. They find themselves hating one another and eventually hating everyone. What a sad commentary on life among quarreling neighbors, warring with fellow employees, cut-throat business competitors, and feuding families! Children raised by hateful parents will themselves likely become hateful of each other, of their parents, of their teachers, their friends, of any person who threatens their freedom and self-will. Hatred is perhaps the loneliest of all sins.

Man is totally depraved or wicked before God’s eyes and can do nothing to please God or make lasting changes in his life without God’s divine intervention. If you are ever going to be saved you must face who and what you are and cast yourself upon God’s love, grace, and mercy for salvation. This is what chapters two and three teach us in the true story of salvation.



I once saw an abandoned and dilapidated barn in the middle of a field that was falling to pieces. It was crooked and ready to collapse. There was no hope of fixing it or trying to improve it. The old barn was a hopeless case. The human nature is the same way. Our old sinful nature (the old barn within us) is too bad to be

improved, too dilapidated to be repaired. Our unsaved lives are despicable before God and beyond repair. There is only one thing that can be done. A new barn must be erected. A new nature and man must be created. This is what God graciously does for the sinner. He makes a dreadful sinner into a new man. He tears down the old and builds up the new.

What can we say in response to this first chapter of the story of our salvation? There is only one thing. We are nothing but sinners saved by grace!

“If you could see what I once was,  
If you could go with me,  
Back to where I started from,  
Then I know you would see,  
A miracle of love that took me in its sweet embrace,  
And made me what I am today,  
A sinner saved by grace.  
I’m just a sinner saved by grace,  
When I stood condemned to death, He took my place.

Now I know and breathe in freedom,  
With each breath of life I take.  
Loved and forgiven, back with the living,  
I’m just a sinner saved by grace!”

## II. Chapter Two: We must remember when Jesus came.



The second chapter of the true story of our salvation becomes much brighter.

Titus 3:4

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.”

### 1. God’s intervention (“but”)

We are saved by a conjunction! The little conjunction “But” tells the story of how God intervened when we were depraved and lost sinners. Our salvation is all about God – His divine intervention into our lives. We are reminded as Jonah said long ago, “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9). Paul is obviously looking back to Christ’s entrance into the world and remembering the time when God’s love and salvation was specifically displayed to lost mankind on the cross. Paul had just retraced the story of our unsaved lives. He concluded that we were all *dumb, disobedient,*

*deceived*, and *depraved* in our sinful degradation, disposition, desires, and dislikes. After doing this he now retraces the history of Christ's death upon the cross. Why does he do this? It's because if we only remember our past sinful lives, then we have not completed the full story of our salvation. We must also remember what God did for us when He sent Jesus Christ into the world to die in our place and save us from hell.

I have heard many stories of how people were delivered from drugs, sex, alcoholism, and many other vices and sins. This is all very wonderful. But this is only half the story! The complete story of our salvation includes the exaltation of God's grace and love as displayed in Christ's death upon the cross. Paul recalls when Jesus appeared in the world to save dumb, disobedient, deceived, and depraved sinners! In telling the true story of salvation we must not only retrace our steps but the steps of God our Savior! God came down to us to shower His grace and mercy upon our lives.

Without the intervention of God's grace and love we would be hopelessly and helplessly lost! However, our God and Savior Jesus Christ came to save us and change us suddenly, completely, and forever!

Someone wrote these words on their gravestone, explaining what happened when Jesus came into their life to save them. Only three words appeared on the tombstone. They were the words "Never the Same." Since Jesus came to save us, we have the scales lifted from our eyes and the sinful shackles of our old life broken. Although we struggle in our Christian life, we can never really be the same since God has come into our lives.

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee."

The dismal picture of man's depravity is interrupted by one of the great words of Scripture – "But." The text says, "But after that the kindness and

love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” How thankful we can be for this conjunction in the English language which signals God’s marvelous intervention to save us! We were saved by a conjunction! But – this is God’s roadblock on man’s way to hell.

Someone said:

“But is the small hinge upon which great matters turn.”

My entire salvation rests upon this one little word in Scripture. If it were not for God’s intervention, I would be on the broad road that leads to hell and damnation (Matt. 7:13-14).

Ephesians 2:4-5 is similar in nature:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.”

Romans 5:20

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Paul is saying that we were at one time headed to hell because of our sinful depravity “but” God in His grace intervened and saved us and changed our lives forever. Our salvation hinges on this little word. It reminds us that He looked beyond our fault and saw our need!

Luke 15:20

“And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

The boy was worthy of the husks of corn and the hogs! But despite the son’s terrible plight and condition, the father in His grace welcomes the son! What a glorious picture of salvation this is! Because we were wallowing in the muck and mire of sin God came to save us from our slavery to sin. He came to save us from the husks, hogs, and hell. What a Savior!

The expression “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4) speaks of God’s divine intervention in our lives. The word “kindness” (chrēstotēs) speaks of God’s goodness and grace extended to us. It’s directly related to grace for this is what grace means. It’s as if Paul is saying, “I was lost and going to hell, but when looking back at Christ’s entrance into the world and His death upon the cross, I’m reminded how Jesus came into this world to save me.” This is Paul’s personal testimony and ours as well.

“Christ receiveth sinful men,  
Even me with all my sin;  
Purged from ev’ry spot and stain,  
Heav’n with Him I enter in.  
Sing it o’er and o’er again:  
Christ receiveth sinful men;  
Make the message clear and plain:  
Christ receiveth sinful men.”

Actually, the rendering in the Greek language is “But when the kindness and the love to man appeared of our Saviour God” and suggests a specific time when Jesus entered into the world to save sinners from their awful sinful plight. We know that God’s grace and love was displayed when the Lord Jesus appeared in the world over nineteen hundred years ago to die on a cross and pay the penalty for man’s sin. Paul mentioned this already.

In Titus 2:11 he also mentions the appearance of God’s grace:  
“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

The fact that Christ “appeared” (Titus 2:11; 3:4) has reference to the manifestation of God’s grace in the appearance of Jesus Christ in His incarnation and death upon the cross. This is the specific time when God’s grace and love was displayed to a world lost in sin. This becomes the time when God broke into humanity to provide a sacrificial and saving appearance or epiphany of grace for the world of lost mankind.

One thing is certain, only grace, the expression of God’s kindness in Christ, can bring salvation into our lives.

Ephesians 2:8 – 9

“For by grace (charis – God’s kindness, goodness, favor) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God (*referring to our salvation*): Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Grace is God’s kindness and favor reaching out to us without expectation of return. In other words, grace is given to us freely (in the sufferings and death of Christ). This is why human works are not involved in the grace transaction that occurred on the cross. In fact, as we have said on several occasions already, the sinner’s “works” (good deeds) could never be part of the grace way of salvation for God could never accept the depraved and sinful works of people as payment for their sins. Only grace can pay the sinner’s fine and let him go free!

God’s grace was centered in His Son Jesus Christ who came to pay the penalty of sin that satisfied the Father so we could be saved from hell and accepted before His presence. The gracious death of Christ is the only sacrifice for sins that God the Father will accept (1 John 2:2; Heb. 9:14). The issue is not whether your religion satisfies you but whether it satisfies God! The Bible teaches that God is only satisfied (Isa. 53:10) with the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son (1 John 2:2). Only Christ’s sacrifice can pay the sinner’s debt, satisfy the demands of divine justice, and set the sinner free! This is what the “kindness and love of God our Saviour” (Titus 3:4) is referencing.

In Titus 3:3 Paul was remembering how he was once blind, bound to sin, and banished to hell’s damnation because of his lost estate before God. But then he remembered in Titus 4:4 when God’s kindness, grace, and love entered the world through Jesus Christ. Grace relates to love for it was the love of God for sinners that brought this display of matchless kindness or grace into the world. You cannot have grace without love or love without grace.

Romans 5:8

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

So, Paul summarizes that it's not merely what we were without God but what God did for us through His grace and love. And it was very personal for Paul for he had expressed faith in Jesus Christ and allowed grace to save him and set him free from his awful state of sinful depravity.

“Years I spent in vanity and pride,  
Caring not my Lord was crucified,  
Knowing not it was for me He died  
On Calvary.

By God's word at last my sin I learned;  
Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned,  
Till my guilty soul imploring turned  
To Calvary.”

“O the love that drew salvation's plan!  
O the grace that brought it down to man!  
O the mighty gulf that God did span  
At Calvary.

Mercy there was great, and grace was free;  
Pardon there was multiplied to me;  
There my burdened soul found liberty,  
At Calvary.”

In telling the salvation story we must not only retrace the story of our past lives but also the story of God's grace and love that was displayed when Jesus died on the cross of Calvary.

## 2. God's illumination (“appeared”)

Paul says that the “Saviour toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4). I mentioned this already but let's zero on this word and concept. The word “appeared” (epiphainō) comes from a word that means “to shine, bring to light, to make visible.” It means to make something known and suggests that when God came to save us through Christ's death and the gracious provision of the cross, He brought the illumination or light of salvation into the world so



that men could embrace the light and be saved. The manifestation of God's grace and love through Jesus Christ is comparable to a shining light or beacon that is designed to guide men to the heavenly shore before they crash on the rocks of life and sink into hell. The message of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4) which is the story of Christ's death and resurrection is a spiritual light that shines throughout all of history and the world today. Christ appeared and grace and kindness became known to the human race ("grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" – John 1:17). When Jesus came into the world the lights came on! Jesus Christ and His death on the cross was an epiphany of grace brought a shining light into a world of darkness and sinful depravity.

In fact, this same light is still shining today through the message of the Gospel which reveals God's grace to a world lost in sin.

2 Timothy 1:10 says this about God's present saving purpose:

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death (*spiritual death for the Gospel believer*), and hath brought life (*spiritual and eternal life*) and immortality (*an incorruptible and deathless body – 1 Cor. 15:53*) to light through the gospel" (*the good news of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection*).

The word "abolished" (*katargeō*) means "to make of no effect, render inactive, terminate." In other words, Jesus Christ has destroyed the effects of spiritual death and made it possible for us to live with God eternally in a transformed body because of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The Gospel is the revelation of God's plan to rescue men from the effects of sin and death. This verse of Scripture speaks of the Gospel as a message of light ("light through the gospel"). The message of Christ's death and resurrection through the Gospel brings the promise of spiritual and eternal life to hell-bound sinners and the prospect of a glorious resurrection and transformed body. Through the Gospel, He has given us assurance of eternal life, resurrection, and the hope of Heaven. When Jesus came into the world to die for sinners God's revelatory light began to shine. His personal presence and saving message acted as a light in the midst of a dark world.

It's equally true that the Gospel message that was once in picture forms and shadows within the Old Testament is now brought out into the light by what Jesus spoke and what He accomplished in His own death and resurrection. The Gospel message of Christ's death for sinners and His resurrection brings all the types and shadows out of Scripture and puts a face and Savior to them!

John 8:12

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness (*the spiritual darkness of sin and blindness*), but shall have the light of life" (*the illumination that results in one receiving spiritual and eternal life*).

John 1:4 reveals that "In him was life (spiritual life); and the life was the light of men." In other words, the illuminating light of grace in Christ and His saving message bought men to the place where they could understand their lost estate and need for salvation, receiving spiritual and eternal life through Him. John 1:9 says that Jesus "was the true Light, which lighteth (illuminates) every man that cometh into the world." The Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses are not the light of the world. Secular humanism is not the light of the world. The philosophies of men are not the light of the world. The Roman Catholic Church is not the light of the world. Jesus is the light of the world!

What does it mean when the Bible says that Jesus "lighteth (illuminates) every man that cometh into the world?" It does not mean that every man has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. This can only come through special revelation of the Gospel and not everyone has heard this message. Rather, it means that the Light shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color, without distinction, as the Gospel is taken into the world (mark 16:15). Titus says Jesus "appeared" as our God and Savior when He entered the world. As the Gospel is spread throughout the earth, the promise is that Jesus would illuminate people (without distinction) to their lost condition and bring the spiritual light and hope of the Gospel into their hearts.

Luke 1:78-79 records:

“Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring (*morning star or the rising of the sun – the promise of hope*) from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

When Jesus came into the world the sun came up! The spiritual sunrise of God’s amazing grace and love cast its beautiful beams upon a dark world lost in sin. When Jesus appeared in the world the illumination or light of God’s wondrous grace appeared in the world to reveal man’s sinfulness, to break through man’s depravity, and bring people out of the realm of spiritual darkness and blindness.

Acts 26:18 states the Gospel mission clearly: TURN

“To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”



The entrance of Jesus Christ into the world and the Gospel message of His death and resurrection is a penetrating light that can dispel the darkness of sin and unbelief in the hearts of lost humanity. The “Saviour toward man appeared” with illumination of God’s glorious grace and salvation (Titus 3:4). Christ’s coming into the world to die the sinner’s death and be raised from the dead was a illumination or light that poked a hole in the world of darkness. The same Gospel message is still a revelation of light to people who are lost in the darkness of sin and unbelief. The antidote for darkness is light!

2 Corinthians 4:4-6

“In whom the god of this world (*Satan*) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (*bring the illumination of a person’s sinfulness and need for the Savior*). For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who

commanded the light to shine out of darkness (*in the past physical creation*), hath shined in our hearts (*with the Gospel message - breaking through our moral depravity to produce a spiritual creation*), to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

In Paul’s conversion, which he seems to be looking back to, which was a conversion from darkness to light, He experienced the brilliance of God’s glory which at that time was radiating from the face of Jesus (Acts 9:3). And in a sense, we all experience this when we place our personal faith in Christ – not physically but inwardly. The glory of God’s person shines through Jesus (His person and work), and we behold the wonder of God’s grace and love when placing faith in Christ for our salvation.

Pastor Dennis Rokser gave this recent word in an email: “During her hospital stay (his daughter), God gave me the opportunity and boldness to directly converse with over 30 nurses, aides, doctors, etc. All of them professed to be a ‘person of faith’ and over 20 of these folks were from Baptist churches (what a surprise in the South). I believe that a handful were already saved by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (though at times needing some clarification or tweaking doctrinally). When I would ask these many folks, ‘Do you know John 3:16?’ Most could quote it for me. Yet when I followed up with, “Why should Jesus Christ let you into Heaven?” most never even mentioned the name of Jesus Christ as part of the equation, let alone faith in Him alone, nor did they mention His death for our sins or resurrection from the dead. This is unbelievable on the heels of quoting John 3:16! Instead, they answered with such replies as:

- ✓ ‘I’m a good person.’
- ✓ ‘I keep the rules.’
- ✓ ‘I’m kind and try to help people.’
- ✓ ‘I share God’s Word with others.’

“I also found it interesting when asked, ‘Do you know Ephesians 2:8-9?’ most did not (what a surprise). As I was pondering this sad reality (but rejoicing in their receptivity to the clear gospel I shared with them), I was reminded of 2 Corinthians 4:3-5 - “In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the

glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them ...”

The world is getting darker, but the light is shining brighter. The Bible says that “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” needs to “shine upon them” (the minds and hearts of lost people). The Holy Spirit needs to shine (reveal) the truth of Christ’s saving provision to the hearts of lost humanity. Paul explains this in even greater detail in verse six. When God created the world, He did so by bringing light out of darkness (“who commanded the light to shine out of darkness”). God said, “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). The same is true in spiritual creation. When the truth of the Gospel message shines upon the souls of lost people, they can become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). When the Gospel is preached, the Spirit of God moves in the heart of a person, just as He moved on the face of the deep after the original creation. God moves by showing a person that he is a guilty, lost, good-for-nothing sinner that needs a Savior (John 16:8), breaking through His moral depravity and rebellion, so that the sinner can respond to God’s overtures (initiatives) upon his life and be saved.

Someone said:

“The material creation in Genesis began with light and so also does the spiritual creation. God shines in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and then spiritual life begins.”

The “Saviour toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4). What an epiphany. What a light! People need this message of light impressed upon their heart in order to be saved. They need God’s illuminating revelation of the Gospel to impact their souls.

Jesus said in John 12:3:

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

When the light is shining God makes you responsible to believe in the light of Gospel truth and be saved. This brings human responsibly into the picture of salvation. God won’t believe for you. You must believe in the

light of God's revelation as found in the Gospel of God's grace and love. When God turns on the lights don't put them out by your unbelief.

John 3:19 says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." There is no problem with the light. The light is shining. The problem is with man's stubborn heart and love for sin. Man loves the darkness more than the light and therefore rejects the light that shines upon His soul! Many choose to reject the light and commit themselves to intellectual defiance and darkness. How sad! After speaking His discourse on the Light of the World the Scripture records in John 12:37 – "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him."

The light is shining. The "Saviour toward man appeared" (Titus 3:4). The light of this Gospel message is shining everywhere. You must respond in faith to the light of God's saving message in order to be rescued from hell.

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;  
The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,  
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness with sin-blinded eyes,  
The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Go, wash, at His bidding, and light will arise,  
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee;  
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;  
Once I was blind, but now I can see;  
The Light of the world is Jesus."

Mel Trotter, the famous rescue mission worker, was the son of a bartender who "drank as much as he served." Trotter followed in his father's footsteps, losing job after job because of his addiction to drinking and gambling. Each time he lost a job, he promised to reform and start doing better, but each time he failed. After the death of his baby son, Trotter

made his way to Chicago where he intended to drown himself in Lake Michigan. He had sold his shoes to get money for another drink and was walking barefoot through the snow toward his death when he went inside the Pacific Garden Mission and was saved. For the next forty years, Trotter did everything he could to help those like himself who had fallen prey to the deceptively alluring temptations of sin.

### 3. God's interest ("kindness" and "love")

This third point is brought out in the words of kindness and love.

Titus 3:4

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."

We have mentioned about God's kindness and love but let's delve into the depths of this. The words "kindness," "love," and "Saviour" express to us the interest that God had toward us when Jesus Christ died on the cross and paid the penalty for our sins, which we deserved.

#### ➤ Kindness

"In loving-kindness Jesus came  
My soul in mercy to reclaim,  
And from the depths of sin and shame  
Through grace He lifted me."

Kindness actually is what grace is all about. Grace is God's unmerited, unearned, and undeserved kindness and favor demonstrated toward a world of rebellious sinners who were lost and going to hell. If God had not decided to express kindness toward us, we would not be saved today.

"For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind."

Martin Luther once said:

“People don’t earn God’s approval or receive life and salvation because of anything they’ve done. Rather, the only reason they receive life and salvation is because of God’s kindness through Christ. There is no other way.”

Ephesians 2:7 says:

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

God the Father expressed kindness to us when He sent His only Son (God the Son) to die in our place upon a cross. God in His kindness came to us and saved us when we were wretched sinners. The fact that God is kind (gracious) is why He appeared. The fact that Jesus came into this world to save us was a visible expression of God’s loving benevolence and kindness. We didn't deserve God's kindness and yet He showered it upon us through Jesus Christ.

“O hope of every contrite heart,  
O joy of all the meek,  
To those who fall, how kind thou art:  
How good to those who seek!”

God’s kindness speaks of the genuine goodness and generosity of His heart. Jonah 4:2 says: “... for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness ...” God is kind! God is gracious! This is why we can be saved.

“He saw me ruined by the fall,  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;  
He saved me from my lost estate,  
His lovingkindness, oh, how great!  
Lovingkindness, lovingkindness,  
His lovingkindness, oh, how great!”

#### ➤ Love

The Greek word used for “love” (*philanthrōpia* - fil-an-thro-pee'-ah) is where we derive our English word philanthropy from. It combines the



thoughts of loving graciousness, compassion, and concern for the welfare of lost people. It's a specific love directed toward the spiritual welfare of mankind. God was concerned about our spiritual welfare and He has showered loving compassion upon us and this is why we are saved today.

Psalm 86:15

"But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

I remember a time when I was talking to someone who seemed somewhat suicidal. I immediately told them that God loved them. Why? It's because people need love today and the Bible says that God loves lost people and is concerned about their spiritual plight and welfare. The fact that God loved us is why He appeared to save us. God had our spiritual welfare in mind when He sent His only Son to die in our place. This is what the word "love" is conveying to us.

Ephesians 2:4

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us."

1 John 3:1

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ..."

"What wondrous love is this,  
O my soul, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this  
That caused the Lord of bliss  
To lay aside his crown  
For my soul, for my soul,  
To lay aside his crown for my soul."

➤ Savior

The next truth expressed ("God our Saviour") reminds us how important God is in relationship to our salvation. Only God can be our Savior! The Lord

Jesus is also called “God our Savior” in Titus 2:13. Both the Father and Son share the same existence as the one true God. The cults reject the reality of this. The point is this. Only God can save us. If you are looking for salvation, then look to God for the Father sent the Son into the world to be our Savior and Jesus is God incarnate.

1 Timothy 4:10 declares that “God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” This means that Christ died and paid the necessary price to save all mankind. There is no such teaching as limited atonement or redemption in the Bible. Christ died to pay sin’s penalty for “all men” without distinction. He died as the potential Savior of every individual. Therefore, His death is *sufficient* to save all mankind but only *efficient* for “those that believe” or who express saving faith in His person and work.

In summary, God loves everyone without distinction (John 3:16), died for everyone without distinction (Heb. 2:9), wants everyone to repent without distinction (2 Pet. 3:9), desires everyone to be saved without distinction (1 Tim. 2:4), illuminates everyone without distinction (John 1:9), draws everyone through Christ’s cross without distinction (John 12:32) and offers salvation to everyone without distinction (Rev. 22:17).

William Carey said:

“When I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey, speak about Dr. Carey's Savior.”

The fact that God is the Savior tells us that we need a Savior! God wants to save you from hell. And if you don’t think you need a Savior then you are in a sad and sorry state today. This is because you are going to Hell without a Savior. Friend, you must face the record. You are a dreadful sinner in God’s sight and therefore you need a Savior who will rescue you from everlasting hell and damnation.

Psalm 9:17

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.”

God is the Savior. Hell-bound sinners need a Savior. We have no hope without the Savior. We must look to the Savior!

Isaiah 45:22 is a Millennial verse that captures the heart of what we have been talking about. Only God can save us. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Once again we see the truth that God is our Savior as Titus 3:4 declares.

This was the very text that an old Methodist laymen preached which resulted in the salvation of Charles Spurgeon. Here are Spurgeon's own words and testimony of his salvation as he listened to the layman preach from Isaiah 45:22.

"Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, 'Young man, you look very miserable.' Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, "And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live!"

I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said—I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought . . . I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me. Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away."

"There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, 'Trust Christ, and you shall be saved.' Yet it was, no doubt, all wisely ordered, and now I can say—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die. . .

“And as the snow fell on my road home from the little house of prayer I thought every snowflake talked with me and told of the pardon I had found, for I was white as the driven snow through the grace of God. Upon his return home, his appearance caused his mother to exclaim, “Something wonderful has happened to you.”

This testimony reminds us that we don’t need a new reformation. We don’t need self-esteem. We don’t need a new creed. We need a Savior and only God can be our Savior! “God our Saviour.” This is the true story of salvation.

The first two chapters on salvation’s story should recapture the hearts of those who are already Christians and convict the hearts of those who are not saved and prepared to die. God wants to save you today and He can save you forever if you will express faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What a story!

### **III. Chapter Three: We must remember what God did (Titus 3:5-7)**



Many years ago, I traveled with a music group called the Choralaires from the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music. On Sundays we would travel to other churches to sing and play our instruments. I can still remember those cold January mornings in Grand Rapids. I would get up early and trudge through the snow and cold with my boots on. The temperature seemed to be hovering around zero many Sunday mornings during the dead of winter. I would walk about a quarter of a mile to get to the music building. I was normally the first one there and had a key, so I would go inside to warm up my body and also warm up my trumpet. I can remember playing many of the hymns early in the morning. But one hymn that I often played to prepare my heart for ministry on Sunday was the old hymn “Tell Me the Old, Old Story.” Dear friend, the true story of our salvation will never change! It’s an old story with the overtones of God’s love, grace, and mercy.

“Tell me the old, old Story,  
Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory,  
Of Jesus and His love.

Tell me the story simply,  
As to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary,  
And helpless and defiled.

Tell me the story slowly,  
That I may take it in  
That wonderful redemption,  
God’s remedy for sin.  
Tell me the story often,  
For I forget so soon:  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon.

Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story  
Of Jesus and His love.”

We now come to our final chapter of the true story of salvation.

Titus 3:5-7 gives us the truth and nothing but the truth:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done (*no manmade legalism is involved with our salvation*), but according to his mercy (*compassion, pity*) he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (*forgiveness and new birth*); Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace (*underserved favor and kindness*), we should be made heirs (*recipients of God’s spiritual riches*) according to the hope of eternal life.”

What did God do for us? The Bible once again states that He saved us! It reiterates that Christ is “our Saviour” (vs. 5) or our deliverer from sin’s

judgment. This makes it personal. He is our Savior! Sweetest story ever told! The Bible also declares that “he saved us” (vs. 5). This expression is the Greek aorist tense which means our salvation was a completed action or transaction which took place in the past. Every Gospel believer can look back upon the day of his salvation and possess the complete assurance that he was saved by God’s mercy! We are not in the process of being saved or trying to be saved. We are saved! This is the only kind of salvation that the Bible speaks about. It’s “eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) and a completed salvation.

2 Timothy 1:9 similarly declares:

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

The Bible once again teaches that we are saved. Some people are hoping that they will meet God’s approval someday and in the end merit and find salvation. This is not the Bible picture of salvation. The Bible pictures salvation as a completed transaction that took place when we placed our faith in Jesus Christ. Let’s get our theology straight! All of us who have believed in the finished work of Jesus Christ can rest in what God has already done for us through Jesus Christ. We do not have to doubt our salvation. We can know that we are saved. The Bible text says that “he saved us.” Again, this is a finished transaction that is non-repeatable.

“‘Tis done, the great transaction’s done  
I am my Lord’s and He is mine.  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.  
Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!”

Our salvation is an accomplished fact. It’s about a merciful God reaching down and saving a bunch of hell-doomed sinners from the fire of God’s wrath.

Acts 16:31

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Romans 10:13

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

When we place our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are saved from the penalty of our sins which is a judgment that involves being separated from God forever in hell. The Bible says that “we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:9). The salvation that God provides for us is a deliverance from the righteous wrath of God Almighty! Salvation means deliverance from God’s divine wrath, judgment, and eternal hell. Matthew 1:21 says that Jesus came to “save his people from their sins.”

This means that Jesus Christ came to bring salvation or deliverance from the dreadful consequences of dying in our sins. When a person dies without having his sins forgiven and erased in God’s sight, he goes to hell which is a place of God’s unending judgment and the sinner’s doom. You may say, “I don’t believe in hell.” Quite frankly, this does not change anything. Jesus declared there is a hell, and we need to be saved from this terrible fate and place of judgment.

Jesus spoke about the “danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:22) and being “cast into hell” (Matt. 5:29). Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” In Matthew 23:33 Jesus said, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about Heaven. Jesus believed in hell, and He taught the doctrine of endless punishment.

Matthew 25:46

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Yes, we need a Savior! Let’s get the story straight! It has not changed. Jesus did not come to save us from our low self-esteem. He did not come to save us from all of our problems. Jesus did not come to save us from our financial difficulties and hunger. He came to save us from hell’s damnation.

This is the primary thrust and emphasis of our salvation in Scripture. Salvation is not about improving the conditions of people in this life (social gospel); it's about saving people from hell in the next life.

Titus 2:11 declares:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

We should shout hallelujah today! Now I am saved, I can shout hallelujah! How wonderful it is to be saved from the eternal burnings of hell and know that we are going to Heaven someday when we die. When I think of eternity I can only say, “Thank you Lord for saving my soul!” Yes, “he saved us” (Titus 3:5). The wonderful truth about our salvation should cause us to pause with great wonder and amazement. It should bring us to the place of worship and grateful service. God saved us!

“Life now is sweet and my joy is complete  
For I'm saved, saved, saved!”

Our salvation should be the most important and precious thing to our hearts and lives. Nothing else can ever begin to compare to the glorious truth about our salvation. Biblical Christianity has a saving message. Salvation has always been the central theme of Christian songs and hymns down through the centuries. Is salvation the song of your heart today? The text says, He saved us!

During the Spanish-American War, Clara Barton was overseeing the work of the Red Cross in Cuba. One day Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came to her, wanted to buy food for his sick and wounded Rough Riders. But she refused to sell him any. Roosevelt was perplexed. His men needed the help, and he was prepared to pay out of his own funds. When he asked someone why he could not buy the supplies, he was told, "Colonel, just ask for it!" A smile broke over Roosevelt's face. Now he understood--the provisions were not for sale. All he had to do was simply ask and they would be given freely. Such is the case with our salvation. It is given freely.



Psalm 40:2 provides us with a perfect illustration of salvation:  
"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

"He took my feet from the miry clay  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!  
And placed them on the rock to stay,  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!

O Jesus washed my sins away,  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!  
And made me happy all the day,  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!

He died on the cross to save my soul,  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!  
He ransomed me and made me whole,  
Yes, He did, yes, He did!

I can tell the world about this,  
I can tell the nations I'm blest,  
Tell them that Jesus made me whole,  
And he brought joy, joy, joy to my soul!"

The story has not changed! God saved us from the penalty of all our sins – past, present, and future. God saved us from hell fire and brimstone. What a story!

D. L. Moody told the story of a passenger on an Atlantic steamer who lay in his bunk during a raging storm with a severe case of seasickness. Suddenly he heard the cry, "Man overboard!" "May God help that poor fellow," he prayed, "but there's nothing I can do." Then he thought, "I can at least put my lantern in my small window," and with an effort he did so. The man was finally rescued. In recounting the story, the next day, he said, "I was going down in the darkness for the last time when someone put a light in a porthole. It shone on my hand, and a sailor in the lifeboat grabbed it and pulled me in."

Dear friend, God pulled us in and saved us when we were going under. He reached down and saved us freely, fully, finally, and forever! What a day it was! He saved us!

“I love to tell the story,  
Because I know 'tis true;  
It satisfies my longings  
As nothing else can do.”

The story of our salvation is now specifically unfolded in Titus 3:5-7. We need to tell this story more often. There is a wealth of Biblical words that are taught in these verses. I cannot plummet the depths of these truths regarding our salvation. I cannot adequately explain them.

How does salvation come into our life?

1. Our works are excluded (Titus 3:5).

The Bible says, “not by works of righteousness which we have done.” Salvation from hell does not come into our lives through human effort. Legalism is the way of human effort. Man tries to make himself acceptable before a holy God by the meritorious things that he



does. He offers him the fruit of his own labor as Cain did (Gen. 4:3-5). Cain was the first legalist and modernist! Many people today are religious but lost thinking that they have done enough and gone through enough religious ceremonies that God will accept them. They have been catechized, baptized, ritualized, and even galvanized but they are still going to hell. This is because human works has absolutely nothing to do with our salvation.

2 Timothy 1:9 declares:

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 once again declares:

“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.”

We cannot trust completely and only in Christ to save us until we realize that we are helplessly, hopelessly lost, and unable to save ourselves by our own good works.

As Spurgeon put it:

“We must see that we are convicted and condemned, with the rope around our neck, before we will weep for joy when Christ pardons us.”

The world religions teach that people can earn or merit their salvation. Catholic dogma along with the works-oriented cults of our day all teach that people can earn their salvation, but the Bible teaches otherwise. Not by works of righteousness!

“Nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;  
Helpless look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly,  
Help me, Saviour, or I die.”

God will not accept our works of human righteousness since they are comparable to “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). Unregenerate people without God’s life and who are totally depraved by sin (inwardly and outwardly) are not capable of doing any works that are pleasing before God. We talked about this in chapter one of the story of our salvation. The Bible says, “there is none that doeth good, no not one” (Rom. 3:12). Human goodness has no weight with God. This is a reality that lost people have to understand. From God’s point of view unsaved people cannot perform any good works that are acceptable to Him. This is because everything they do is tainted by sin in some measure and in some way.

Behind all of the good works (“works of righteousness”) that unsaved people perform is the element of the flesh and pride. For instance, they somehow feel that God must accept on the basis of their good deed

(works) and this alone shows that the works are done for fleshly and prideful reasons (Matthew 7:21-22). Let me reiterate something: God could never accept the depraved works of sinners as payment for their sins.

In the sphere of human relationships “Red Cross” work, “social service” work or “charitable” works are good. But none of these human achievements can commend people to God and help them to obtain righteousness before God since there are no people that can do good in God’s sight. God only views the human race as bad people who have repeatedly broken His law. He sees no goodness in them. The blackness of sin covers them and darkness is in everything that they do. This is the sad but true story of our salvation.

Sometimes people think they are a good person when standing beside a drunkard, drug addict, immoral, foulmouthed, or dishonest person. But our brand of goodness is faulty for we are not measuring ourselves by the impeccable standard of God’s perfect righteousness. Therefore, in God’s sight we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23) and have fallen short of His standard of goodness. We have all broken God’s law (Rom. 3:19). For this reason, Romans 3:10 says, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” This is God’s view of the human race. He only sees the lost human race as bad sinners and not good people. He only sees the cover of darkness over their lives in everything they do. For this no man could ever merit salvation based upon good works. Our salvation is “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5).

It is important to understand that becoming a Christian doesn’t mean turning over a new leaf or making some New Year’s resolutions before God. These promises do not make you a Christian. There is no goodness in us that can save us. All attempts to live better, do better, and make us fit before God are futile. We cannot save ourselves by anything that we do. Only God can save us!

## 2. Our wrath is eradicated (Titus 3:5).

Titus 3:5 goes on to say, “but according to his mercy he saved us.” Dear friend, did you know that in salvation the wrath of God or the hell that we

deserved was eradicated or eliminated from our lives. This is what God's "mercy" is all about. God showers pity upon our lives and withholds the wrath that we deserved. Mercy speaks of God's sympathy, compassion, and good will being demonstrated toward the miserable and spiritually afflicted.

From a theological perspective mercy is God demonstrating sympathy to us by withholding something that we deserve. What we all deserved was hell or God's wrath, but instead of giving us what we deserved God gave us salvation. This is mercy! Mercy withholds the punishment that is due. God was merciful to us. It's only because of the mercy of God that we are saved ("according to his mercy he saved us"). Let us never forget this. It was God's own pity and sympathy that motivated Him to save us! There was nothing in us that motivated Him to save our souls. No! It was His own mercy that motivated God to reach out and save us. God saved us because He pitied us! What a story! William Newell wrote a commentary on the book of Romans, but he also wrote the most beloved hymn of all time – "At Calvary."

"Years I spent in vanity and pride,  
Caring not my Lord was crucified,  
Knowing not it was for me He died, On Calvary.  
Mercy there was great, and grace was free;  
Pardon there was multiplied to me;  
There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."

Ephesians 2:4 repeats the same story:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us."

1 Peter 2:10

"Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Romans 9:16

"So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Romans 11:32

“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever! God in great mercy has saved us through Jesus Christ His Son. God has showered pity upon our lives instead of judging our lives. God pitied us and for this reason alone He saved us!

“Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree.”

Oh, the wonder of it all! God had mercy or compassion upon poor lost hell-bound sinners like you and me!

1 Timothy 1:13

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

God pitied us as a mother expresses pity toward her little child who has fallen and skinned his knee.

Not long ago I saw a mother holding her little boy who had fallen. She was hanging on to him for dear life and the tears were rolling off that little boy's cheeks. This is pity! God pitied us like a Father would pity his son who has taken a wrong turn in life and is not on the right path. God is like the father who reaches out to his son and loves him despite his failures. Dear friend, God pitied us when He envisioned us burning in hell for all eternity! God pitied us and expressed mercy and compassion upon us when He contemplated our eternal judgment and separation from His presence in the Lake of Fire. He pitied us, reached down to us, and saved us!

“There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.  
There is welcome for the sinner,  
And more graces for the good;

There is mercy with the Saviour;  
There is healing in His blood.”

When a Michigan deer hunter found a 100-pound buck struggling to get out of a mud-bog in which it was hopelessly stuck, the hunter's first thought was to shoot, but he couldn't bring himself to pull the trigger. Instead, he called for the help of his partner. Together they snared the animal with a rope and pulled it out of the mud. The moment it was freed, the deer bolted to freedom.

The hunter later recalled, "When you see a deer like that, eyeball to eyeball, it's a little different. I think the eyes did it--that longing look, like, 'What are you going to do?'" Dear friend, one day we looked at God with those same longing eyes and said, "What are you going to do?" And God said, "I want to show pity and mercy toward you and save you. I love you." This is the true story of salvation. God showers pity upon our lives and withholds the wrath that we deserved.

3. Our washing is explained (Titus 3:5-6).

## THE WASHING OF REGENERATION

The Bible goes on to explain that our salvation came about “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). In this double expression Paul explains the channel by which salvation reached us. How did we become the recipients of salvation? What an amazing story this is. Tell me the stories of Jesus. Write on my heart every word!

There are two facts related to regeneration.

a. There is the way to regeneration (“washing of regeneration”)

The way or road to regeneration is the way of washing or cleansing! In the act of regeneration God washes away a person’s sinful account before His presence (clearing his human spirit of sin and his sin debt before God) and this prepares them to receive God’s very own life. Our washing paves the

way for regeneration to occur – “the washing of regeneration.” The word “washing” means to take a bath. It looks back to the ceremonial baths of the Old Testament which typified cleansing from the defilement of sin.

Dear friend, have you ever had a bath? Have you ever had the spiritual bath or spiritual washing where God washes all your sins away in His sight? The concept of “washing” signifies the spiritual cleansing from the record of our sins before God’s presence. The word “washing” is a metaphor for spiritual cleansing. It conveys the thought of receiving complete forgiveness before God for all the sins that we have ever committed or ever will commit in our life. Jesus spoke of this same bath in John 13:10 when using the expression, “He that is washed.”

If a person is ever going to be saved, he needs to have his sins washed away! In other words, the sinner needs to be washed or cleansed through the shedding of Christ’s blood and death on Calvary’s cross. In God’s sight we are so vile that we need a complete washing! A complete bath is required! This is not the washing of baptism as the liberals and modernists teach. This is not the washing away of sins by physical water. A thousand times no! God does not wash us with physical water to save us! God washes us with the blood of Jesus Christ for it’s “the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). It’s a blood bath that we need so we are prepared and ready to receive God’s life.

“What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

Ephesians 1:7

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Colossians 1:14

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.”



“Jesus loves me! He who died,  
Heaven’s gate to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin,  
Let His little child come in.”

What a story! When Jesus died on the cross all our sins were still in the future. Therefore, Jesus died to provide forgiveness for every sin that we would commit throughout our entire lifetime on earth. When the Bible says that “Christ died for our sins” (1Cor. 15:3) it means He paid the necessary fine or penalty that our sins deserved so we could be acquitted before God through the legal forgiveness of sins which we receive through Christ’s death. God accepts the payment of the death of His Son to cancel out our sins before His presence and provide us with legal forgiveness and pardon in His sight.

“All our sins were laid on Jesus,  
Jesus bore them on the tree;  
God, who knew them, laid them on Him  
And, believing, we go free.”

This is the significance of Calvary. Jesus died and paid the debt of sin that we had before God releasing us from the obligation to pay the penalty of judgment for our own sins and providing us with a wonderful washing that is beyond all description.

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow’r?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you washed in the blood,  
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?  
Are your garments spotless?  
Are they white as snow?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

Every person needs to be bathed in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ if they are going to have their sins forgiven. In other words, every person

needs to have the saving merits of the blood of Christ and His sacrificial death applied to their human spirit if they are going to be saved. I need to believe in Jesus Christ and allow His sacrifice to cleanse me from all my sins. This is the washing of Titus 3:5 that comes to our lives the moment we place our faith in Christ. Do you want to be forgiven of your sins? God will forgive every one of them forever and finally through Jesus Christ. What a washing! What a story!

“I know a fount where sins are washed away,  
I know a place where night is turned to day;  
Burdens are lifted, blind eyes made to see;  
There’s a wonder-working pow’r in the blood of Calvary.”

1 Corinthians 6:11

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

This again explains the washing that is related to the forgiveness of our sins which only comes through the merits of Jesus Christ or the shedding of His precious blood and sacrificial death upon the cross.

“I have ceased from my wand’ring and going astray,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And my sins, which were many, are all washed away,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!”

I ask one more time. Have you had your bath? Have you had your sins washed away? Revelation 7:14 speaks of those who “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” What a beautiful expression of forgiveness or “the washing of regeneration” that Titus speaks about.

Many years ago, when a large religious service was being conducted at the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, many people quickly became aware that the minister delivering the main address was not thoroughly orthodox. Although a gifted speaker, he began to direct most of his eloquence against the power of the blood of Christ. Ruth E. Marsden

relates that when his fluent oratory ended, a timid, elderly lady stood up in the midst of the crowd and softly began to sing a great hymn by William Cowper as a touching rebuttal to the modernist's remarks. A hush fell over the assembly as they heard those faint but familiar words: "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."

Before she could begin the second stanza, approximately a hundred people rose to join her. By the time she reached the third verse, nearly a thousand Christians all over the audience were singing that blessed song of faith. The triumphant, thrilling strains rang out loud and clear: "Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power, till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more." Many were deeply moved as that humble believer stood up for her Lord and with the light of Heaven upon her face gave testimony that she had found forgiveness and peace through the blood of His cross!

So, as we contemplate the way to regeneration, we must realize that from a theological perspective washing precedes regeneration ("by the washing of regeneration"- Titus 3:5). The washing speaks of the cleansing of the believer from sin which makes regeneration possible. The road to regeneration is the way of cleansing! In other words, our washing (cleansing from sin) paves the way for regeneration to occur in our lives. Although it happens simultaneously and synergistically, our washing (cleansing) occurs first, and regeneration then follows this cleansing from sin. Our cleansing becomes the preparatory step to regeneration. It paves the way for regeneration to occur in our lives. For regeneration to occur God must first get rid of the legal record of our sins so He can regenerate (make alive) our human spirit. Out with the bad and in with the good! Out with our sins and in comes God's new life! This is the story of our salvation.

When Adam sinned, he plunged the entire human race into sin (Rom. 5:12). When Adam sinned God's life was no longer present in his spirit. God left the human race. When sin entered God departed! This means that before God can come back into our human spirit there needs to be a washing or forgiveness of sin. The washing must occur before the new life can once again be reinstalled!

But what is regeneration? We need to consider what this word means. Regeneration means that God implants within our spiritually dead human spirit His very own spiritual life (Eph. 2:1-2). In regeneration the very life of God enters our human spirit, so much so, that we are said to be “born again” (John 3:3-7). When God regenerates us, He makes our spirit alive from a spiritual perspective. In regeneration God clears the record of our sin before Him and then brings spiritual life into the realm of our human spirit so we can now possess spiritual life. That is what happened when God made us alive. God implanted within the spiritual part of our human existence His very own life. Once the washing takes place then regeneration occurs (new life) and the whole instantaneous process is called “the washing of regeneration.” Jesus calls it the new birth. In fact, the idea of washing and new birth is paired together in several passages.

John 3:5

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Various interpretations have been given concerning the meaning of water – baptism, physical water of the mother’s womb, the repentance water of John the Baptist, or a symbolic expression for the Word of God based upon Eph. 5:26. I don’t really accept any of these interpretations since they are foreign to the context. The concept of water to Nicodemus, known from the Old Testament Scriptures, would mean cleansing from sin. And this is what *precedes* the impartation of new life in the human spirit.

Ezekiel 36:25 says, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”

Jesus taught in John 3:6-7

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead that imparts and implants within our spirit God’s life so we can be born again from a spiritual perspective. As we have discovered, there must be a washing and then regeneration - “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:6).

How beautiful! How wonderful! What a story! God cleanses us from all our filthy sins in His sight (positional forgiveness) and then the Holy Spirit comes along and gives us God's new life or implants within our human spirit the life of God.

If I want to plant a garden, I will till up the soil and get rid of the weeds before planting the seed that springs forth new life. This is the way it is with the new birth. Before God gives us new life, He must get rid of the old life of sin and defilement, and He does this by washing our sins away and giving us a clean slate before God's presence. Out with the bad and in with the good! This is the story of my salvation! God washes my sins away and gives to me His very own life – "the washing of regeneration."

Dear friend, we don't need reformation! We need regeneration! We need God's divine life implanted within our human spirit if we are ever going to be saved from hell and go to Heaven. We need to be cleansed from all of our sins and born again with God's life. The two concepts of cleansing and regeneration are inseparably linked together.

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation purchase of God;  
Born of the Spirit washed in His blood.

This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Saviour all the day long;  
This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Saviour all the day long."

b. There is the agent of regeneration ("renewing of the Holy Spirit")

The Bible teaches that unsaved people are lost within the realm of their human spirit because in some unseen way they have been born with the record of sin transferred upon their human spirit. Therefore, they need to be renewed in the realm of their human spirit. This work of renewing or renovation (complete change) describes the impartation of God's life in the person by the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit renews the spiritually dead

human spirit by introducing God's life within our human spirit. At the same time the Holy Spirit restores our lost relationship with God which was the relationship that Adam lost in Garden.

The renewal includes our new life and restored reconciled position before God by the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:21). In other words, it's the ministry of the Holy Spirit that regenerates us by imparting within our human Spirit the very life of God so we can once again have our relationship restored before God. The renewal or renovation is one of new life, a new nature, a new creation, and a new relationship with God.

The Holy Spirit is the bestower and begetter of life. The renewal (complete change) that the Holy Spirit brings to our human spirit allows us to experience God's life internally, eternally, relationally, intellectually, emotionally, and volitionally. In other words, the Holy Spirit brings regeneration into our human Spirit so we can live differently, godly, and righteously. The Holy Spirit gives us God's life so we can live like God.



We need to be turned inside out! We need to be completely renovated or changed! We need to be born again! This is what Paul means when he talks about "the washing of regeneration (rebirth) and renewal of the Holy Spirit." God cleans us up and gives us His own life. That's the true story of our salvation! God completely makes us over on the inside by giving us new life. God does not patch us up from the outside like an old garment but gives us new life on the inside. The Holy Spirit does not put new clothes on the old man; He puts new life in the believing man. The Spirit of God brings about a marvelous transformation. The Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration that introduces God's new life and nature into our lives. As a result of the Spirit's work, we become a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) – a fantastic creation of God with God's life and nature residing within us. He gives us a new dynamic for living.

"I tell you Jesus Christ is a myth," shouted an atheistic lecturer as he concluded his talk in which he ridiculed the Bible and denied the existence of God. A miner, who had come to the meeting in his grimy clothes, stood up and said, "I am only a working man. I don't know what you mean by the word 'myth.' But, can you explain what happened to me? Three years ago, I had a miserable home. I neglected my wife and children. I cursed and swore. I drank up all my wages. Then someone came along and told me of the love of God and of deliverance from the shackles of sin by turning to Christ. Now all is different! We have a happy home. I feel better every way. A new power has taken possession of me since Christ came into my life! Sir, can you explain this change to me?"

You see, when the Spirit gives you God's life, you can never really be the same person you once were. Something happens on the inside of us that begins to change our hearts and lives forever. We possess God's life and nature, and God begins to remold and reshape our lives and make us into a different person. Let God be born in you today! He will give you His life and change you forever.

I once read about a man whose name had been mistakenly printed in the obituary column of his local newspaper. Can you imagine waking up one morning and reading that you were no longer among the living? To be sure, it would be a little disconcerting. This man did what any of us would do in the same situation. He went down to the newspaper office and demanded to see the editor. "This is terrible," he told the newspaper boss. "Because of your error, I am going to face embarrassment. And I will probably lose business. How could you do this to me?" "Sir, I'm sorry," said the editor. "It was a mistake. It was certainly not intentional." But the man would not be consoled. He continued to rant and rave about the injustice of it all. "Look, cheer up, buddy," the editor finally said. "Tomorrow I'll put your name in the birth column, and you can have a fresh start in life." This is what the new birth does for a man's life. It makes him new from the inside out and gives him a fresh start in life.

Titus 3:6 goes on to say:

"Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Verse six grammatically relates back to the thought of verse five concerning the general theme of our salvation experience (“he saved us”). The point seems to be this. We are saved from the pit of hell “through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” God the Father “shed” or lavishly poured out His mercy upon our lives and saved us through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. He has “abundantly” or copiously and richly provided salvation for our lives through the death of Jesus Christ. God has washed us thoroughly and completely by the saving blood of Jesus Christ. As a result, we can be judicially forgiven and pardoned in the presence of God forever. Every blessing that is related to our salvation has come to us “through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

In Titus 3:5-6 we can see how all three members of the Godhead were involved in the work of our salvation. The Father planned it (“according to his mercy he saved us” – vs. 5), the Son paid for it (“through Jesus Christ our Saviour” – vs. 6) and the Spirit produced it (“renewing of the Holy Ghost” – vs. 5). The entire Godhead was involved in our salvation. The blessings related to our salvation were prepared by the Father, carried out by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

#### 4. Our wonderful justification is declared (Titus 3:7)



Titus 3:7

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”



The conjunction (“That”) sets off a purpose clause which explains the result of our salvation. In other words, because of our washing and pardon before God and the life of God being communicated to our spirit (vv. 5-6), we can have the assurance that we have receive a justified standing before God’s presence.

In justification our sinful record is removed (we are declared positionally forgiven before God) and we are then declared legally righteous in His presence through God’s imputed righteousness placed on our record. Out with the bad and in with he good. This is the true story of our salvation. Our wretched sins are forgiven, and we are then given perfect righteousness before God.

We have seen in Titus 3:5 that regeneration follows cleansing or forgiveness (the clearing of our sinful record in Heaven) in the phrase “the washing of regeneration.” But our justification also follows on the heels of our forgiveness where we are freely given God’s imputed righteousness and declared legally righteous in God’s heavenly courtroom. God removes our sin and immediately regenerates and justifies us, declaring us legally righteous through Christ’s imputed righteousness. In the onetime act of justification, we are given a standing of perfect righteousness before God.

a. Consider the meaning of justification (“justified”).

The word “justified” (dikaioo) is a legal term used in the courtroom that means to render righteous, to declare righteous in God’s presence forever. The word does not mean “to be made righteous” through a process where man cooperates with God (Roman Catholicism) but “to be declared righteous” by God because of the application of Christ’s death to the sinner’s record in Heaven. The condemnation of the Law (Col. 2:14) has no claim over a justified person who has been declared forever right in God’s presence. A justified person has been acquitted before God of all charges and in God’s sight has no record of being guilty of any wrongdoing. In justification our sinful record is cleared, and we are declared perfectly righteous before God.

Although some find fault with the old saying, it is Biblical to conclude that justification is “just as if we’ve never sinned” in God’s sight. In one sense this statement is accurate for justification clears a wretched and wicked sinner of all his guilt and sinful record before God and declares him legally righteous before God, so much so, that he is never seen to have sinned in the presence of God.

There was a man in England who put his Rolls-Royce on a boat and went across to the continent to go on a holiday. While he was driving around Europe, something happened to the motor of his car. He called the Rolls-Royce people back in England and asked, "I'm having trouble with my car; what do you suggest I do?" Well, the Rolls-Royce people flew a mechanic over! The mechanic repaired the car and flew back to England and left the man to continue his holiday. As you can imagine, the fellow was wondering, "How much is this going to cost me?" So when he got back to England, he wrote the people a letter and asked how much he owed them. He received a letter from the office that read: "Dear Sir: There is no record anywhere in our files that anything ever went wrong with your Rolls-Royce." This is a way to look at the doctrine of justification. God looks at us, and He looks in our files recorded in Heaven, and says, “There is no record anywhere in my files that anything ever went wrong with you.”

We are justified because of all our sins have been eternally blotted out in God’s sight, the record of our sins has been cleared, and we are given God’s imputed righteousness. God says in Hebrews 8:12 that their “sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” God then says in Romans 4:6, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”

This is what happens when a person receives a justified standing before God. A sinner is cleansed of all his sins and acquitted before God and is then given God’s perfect righteousness. As a result of this saving transaction, God never sees any record of sin as occurring. “It’s just as if I have never sinned.”

“Born of the Spirit with life from above,  
Into God’s family divine;  
Justified fully thru Calvary’s love,  
O what a standing is mine!

And the transaction so quickly was made,  
When as a sinner I came,  
Took of the offer of grace He did proffer,  
He saved me, O praise His dear name!"

Romans 5:1 says:

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Justification is mentioned many times in the New Testament as a finished transaction of a believer's standing before God. Justification is God's action – not man's. It is the action of God whereby He declares a believing sinner righteous in His sight through acquitting (pardoning) him of all his sins, erasing his record of sin, and imputing to the sinner's record perfect righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 explains it like this:

"For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

In other words, we are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the Father sees us through Christ's righteousness.

Romans 4:5 declares:

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

For our justification to occur before God, He must credit or transfer the very righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ to our legal record or account in Heaven (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9) so we can be declared legally righteous in His presence. The righteousness of Jesus Christ provides us with the perfect righteous standing we need for a holy God to accept us. God puts to our account the righteousness of His Son, so we no longer stand condemned before His presence (Rom. 8:33 – "Who is he that condemneth?"). The free gift of the righteousness of God's Son (Rom. 5:16-17) is bestowed upon all believers so that they are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and accepted in the presence of God.

What a story! God clears the memory of our offense from His legal records. God declares that we have never had any sinful record or guilty past. Our justification or righteous standing in Heaven declares that believers have never sinned or possessed any record of guilt before God. This is what justification is all about. Again, "It's just as if we've never sinned." This is the glorious truth of what God has done for us.

"I love to tell the story:  
More wonderful it seems  
Than all the golden fancies  
Of all my golden dreams;  
I love to tell the story:  
It did so much for me;  
And that is just the reason  
I tell it now to thee."

Our faith which we express in Jesus Christ results in the application of God's justifying declaration upon our lives.

Romans 4:5 states that "his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 5:1 declares we are "justified by faith" and Romans 3:22 confirms that "the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." and Philippians 3:9 reiterates the same thing: "the righteousness which is of God by faith." The moment we believe is the moment we receive this justified standing before God.

Romans 3:26

"To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

The moment we believe is the moment the transaction is completed. Justification is an instantaneous act. It's not a process as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Man has nothing to do with his justification before God. It's God who does the justifying once and for all and forever! Justification has nothing to do with a person's baptism, good works, or participating with church sacraments. Justification is something that has taken place before God – not something that is constantly taking place

through the meritorious works of man. Our justification is rooted in the blood of Jesus Christ! It has nothing to do with following legalistic requirements and the church traditions or dogmas or man.

Romans 5:9 declares:

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood (not Roman Catholic sacraments), we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

God sees the blood of Jesus Christ as the ground for our righteous standing of justification before Him. This is because the blood of Christ (Calvary’s sacrifice) provides us with forgiveness and acquittal before God, resulting in our legal righteous standing before God’s presence.

At the Council of Trent, the declarations of which are still in force, the Roman Catholic Church formally condemned the Biblical doctrine of faith alone in Christ alone for justification. Consider the following declarations of Trent (1545-1563) which are still in force today by the

The Roman Catholic Church teaches:

"If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone (faith alone) that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (cursed to hell) - Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12.

Roman Catholicism has not changed since the days of the Reformation. They still reject the Protestant teaching of Luther, Calvin, and all the other Reformers which stated the glorious truth that justification was by faith alone in Christ alone. For many people today justification before God is the combined effort of both God and man. Man must take the sacraments of the church and seek to justify himself before God based on his good works. This teaching is heresy and is sending untold numbers of people to hell!

The real anathema is this. Every man who preaches a false Gospel of works will go to hell. Galatians 1:9, “As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (damned or judged to hell). This is God’s anathema or curse –

not Rome's. It's God who justifies the sinner upon faith alone! Man has nothing to do with his justification before God.

Romans 3:28

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Galatians 2:16

"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."

Galatians 3:11

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is evident*: for, The just shall live by faith."

Who are you going to believe? Roman Catholic doctrine or God's doctrine! In justification God removes the guilt of the sinner, supplies him with Christ's righteousness, and restores him to His rightful position before God once and for all and forever!

Romans 8:30

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Justification takes place outside of the sinner's presence in the tribunal of God. It occurs in God's heavenly courtroom where the sinner is acquitted before God of all his sins, credited perfect righteousness, and is declared legally righteous before God. For the believing and blood-washed sinner all charges against us have been thrown out of court!!

Romans 8:33

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is God* that justifieth"

Oh, to be right with God! How wonderful to know that we are right before God because we are resting in the saving mercy of God and the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior.

When the Royal Canadian Mounted Police found the frozen body of a former atheist in a snowbound cabin, they picked up a note he had written to his mother. It read, "The question that haunts me as I face death is not whether there is a God, but how I as a sinner can face Him." Dear friend, we can only face Him through the saving and justifying work of His Son. It's only through Christ that we can be forgiven of all our sins and be accepted before God.

b. Consider the medium of justification ("grace").

Titus 3:7 concludes that we are "justified by his grace." This is the same conclusion of other Scriptures.

Romans 3:24

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Grace is the medium that brings justification into our lives. Grace is God's unmerited favor and kindness extended toward undeserving sinners. Grace gives us what we do not deserve. We do not deserve to be forgiven, to have our sins removed, to have Christ's own righteousness imputed to us, to be justified, to be saved from hell. Grace is what brings a person into a justified position and standing before God. God reckons them righteous by an act of amazing grace. It's grace ("the riches of grace" – Eph. 2:7; 3:8), and not the works of man which brings a person into a right relationship with God where God can accept him in His presence and declare him legally righteous.

You will never be right before God without grace! Never! Only God's grace, which is here identified as the forgiveness and righteousness He freely provides through the death of His Son Jesus Christ, can give a person acceptance before God. My friend, you can only fly to Heaven on the wings of grace! Our hearts need to stay in tune with the story of God's amazing

grace, kindness, and free favor extended toward undeserving sinners. We owe everything to God's grace! Let us never forget!

“Amazing grace  
Shall always be my song of praise  
For it was grace that brought my liberty.  
I'll never know  
Just why Christ came to love me so  
He looked beyond my faults and saw my need.”

c. Consider the marvel of justification (“heirs”).



The believer has been qualified through justification for a future inheritance (“we should be made heirs” - Titus 3:7). This is the result and marvel of justification according to this passage of Scripture. An heir is someone

who has been given the right to a future inheritance. In short, we become heirs of all that God has prepared for those who are justified.

Galatians 4:7 declares:

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Romans 8:17 adds:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.”

Yes, we are also a co-heir with Jesus Christ, which means that we are going to experience all that Christ experiences in the future. We are heirs of God and even joint heirs with Jesus Christ! Titus 3:7 says that all of these blessings are “according to (kata – as pertaining to, in harmony with) the hope of eternal life.” The “hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2) speaks of the assurance we have of a future inheritance in Heaven and the focus of our



inheritance. Although we already possess eternal life (John 3:36) the “hope of eternal life” centers on the future blessings that we will experience throughout eternity with God.

Our future inheritance centers upon “hope” and this word when used in the New Testament speaks of confidence, assurance, and expectancy. Believers should possess the complete assurance and confident expectation of someday entering into their full inheritance (“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you - 1 Peter 1:4). We can possess “the hope of eternal life” or the confidence that we will enter into everything that God has planned for us in the future. What a story! We have the hope of eternal life! God saves us freely, fully, finally, and forever! For this reason, we know that we are an heir of God and will one day enter all the future blessings God has planned and prepared for us. The best is yet to come!

“A great day is coming;  
Heaven’s gates will open wide,  
And all who love the Lord will enter in.  
Then joined with our loved ones  
Who in Jesus Christ have died,  
We’ll stand before the Lord and here Him say:  
Welcome home children this is the place,  
I’ve prepared for you.  
Welcome home children, welcome home children.  
Here where I am you shall always be.  
Forever rejoicing with Me.”

This is our inheritance!

As we conclude this study, one must notice that the Bible text in Titus 3:5-7 explains the *work of God* (“saved,” “washing,” “regeneration,” “renewing,” “justified” – vv. 5, 7). It also explains the *basis of God’s work* (“kindness,” “love,” “mercy,” and “grace” – vs. 5), the *means of this work* (“the renewing of the Holy Ghost” - vs. 5), and also the *final goal of this work* (“hope of eternal life” – vs. 7).

What a story! This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long! Have you shared this wonderful story of love, grace, and salvation with anyone lately? The great masses of people are lost and going to hell (Matt. 7:14). People need the Lord. They need to hear and respond to the true story of salvation.

“Tell me the story of Jesus,  
Write on my heart every word.  
Tell me the story most precious,  
Sweetest that ever was heard.

Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,  
Writhing in anguish and pain.  
Tell of the grave where they laid Him,  
Tell how He liveth again.

Love in that story so tender,  
Clearer than ever I see.  
Stay, let me weep while you whisper,  
Love paid the ransom for me.

Tell me the story of Jesus,  
Write on my heart every word.  
Tell me the story most precious,  
Sweetest that ever was heard.”