**At the moment a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (places his trust, reliance in Christ, *i.e.*, receives, by faith, that which Christ has done on his behalf), the Spirit not only *breathes life into that person* but the Spirit also *takes up His abode in the individual* (*cf.*** [**Genesis 1:2b**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2b&t=NKJV)**;** [**2:7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV)**;** [**Ezekiel 37:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1&t=NKJV)**;** [**1 Corinthians 6:19**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.19&t=NKJV)**).**

**Confusion about Salvation**

**By Arlen L. Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

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

*not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* ([Ephesians 2:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-10&t=NKJV))

The Church has entered a rather strange era during the past several decades. The clear, simple message of salvation by grace through faith has come under attack, not from without, but from within the ranks of what is looked upon as fundamental Christianity itself; and the distorted message being promulgated, rather than being rejected, is finding ready acceptance.

In essence, individuals are being told that more is required than simple belief. They are being told that a person must go beyond this and make Christ Lord of his life; he must possess saving faith, which will result in works; he must live after a certain fashion, bring forth fruit, etc.

And the converse of the preceding is often brought into the picture. Christians are being told that if works do not follow a person’s profession of faith, if that person doesn’t live a certain way, if he doesn’t bring forth fruit, then he has never possessed saving faith. That is to say, the person has never been saved.

Then, usually in connection with the preceding and to further complicate the matter, the expression “easy believism” is being thrown around. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is made to be something completely alien to that which Scripture teaches. That is, “believing” is made to be difficult, or the word “believe” is being redefined to make it mean something that it doesn’t mean at all.

Why do these problems exist within the ranks of that segment of Christianity where there should be a clear understanding and proclamation of the message surrounding salvation by grace through faith? The answer is really very simple, though it is an answer involving matters not understood at all by numerous Christians, allowing the problems to exist.

**By Grace through Faith**

At the outset of this study, before looking at the central problem, note that which Scripture teaches about salvation by grace through faith.

The clear gospel message, the good news, is:

*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*. ([1 Corinthians 15:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.3&t=NKJV))

And that which Christ has done on our behalf allows God, through His Spirit, to impart life to unredeemed man, who is “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)). It allows God, through His Spirit to breathe life into the one having no life, with the person then passing “*from death to life*” ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV)).

The Spirit breathes life into lifeless man solely on the basis of that which Christ has done on man’s behalf. And unsaved man can do no more than receive that which has already been done for him. *Nothing else enters into the matter.*

When Christ referred to His finished work immediately before His death on the Cross, He cried out in “*a loud voice*” — *Tetelestai* — one word, which has been translated in the English text, “*It is finished*” ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Matthew 27:50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.50&t=NKJV); [Mark 15:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+15.37&t=NKJV); [Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV)). *Tetelestai* is the perfect tense form of the Greek verb, *teleo*, which means “to bring something to an end or completion.” This word in the perfect tense could be more accurately expressed and translated, “It has been finished,” or “It has been completed.”

That to which Christ referred in [John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV) was His work of redemption. The perfect tense that He used refers to *a work completed in past time, with the results of that work extending into and existing during present time in a finished state*. At the moment Christ cried out, announcing that His work had been completed, there was then no reason for His death to be prolonged. The blood of the Passover Lamb had been shed, and God had “*laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” ([Isaiah 53:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.5-6&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.12&t=NKJV); *cf.* [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV)). Thus, at this time, He bowed his head and gave up His spirit [*lit*., comparing the other gospel accounts, ‘He breathed out,’ *i.e., He expired, willingly giving up His life*]” ([John 10:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+10.17-18&t=NKJV); [19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)).

Redeemed man has been saved by grace through faith solely on the basis of that which Christ referred to when He cried out from the Cross, “*Tetelestai*.” The words “*are you saved* [*lit*. ‘you have been saved’]” in [Ephesians 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8&t=NKJV) — “For by grace *you have been saved* . . . .” — are also the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text. The reference, as *tetelestai,* is to *a work completed in past time, with the results of this work extending into the present and existing in a finished state*.

At the moment a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (places his trust, reliance in Christ, *i.e.*, receives, by faith, that which Christ has done on his behalf), the Spirit not only *breathes life into that person* but the Spirit also *takes up His abode in the individual* (*cf.* [Genesis 1:2b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2b&t=NKJV); [2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 37:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 6:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.19&t=NKJV)). Through this means, the man passing “*from death to life*” becomes *a new creation “in Christ,”* a part of *the one new man* ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.15&t=NKJV)).

Redeemed man thus possesses a salvation wherein everything pertaining to works/actions is past. The work necessary to effect one’s salvation (Christ’s work) is past and complete, and the work effecting one’s salvation itself (the Spirit’s work) is past and complete. The latter (the Spirit’s work) is based on the former (Christ’s work). Thus, divine intervention on man’s behalf is *the only work seen throughout.*

Relative to one’s presently possessed eternal salvation, redeemed man did nothing in the past, nor can he do anything present or future. Salvation was and remains “*of the Lord*” ([Jonah 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+2.9&t=NKJV)).

Redeemed man possesses a present, completed salvation based on the past, completed work of Another. Both man’s present salvation and Christ’s past work exist in a finished state, and neither can ever be altered, changed, added to, taken from, etc. *One’s salvation is just as complete and secure as the work upon which it rests*.

(For divine intervention throughout the work surrounding Man’s presently possessed eternal salvation, along with the corresponding complete absence of any action on man’s part, refer to the original type in [Bible One - Salvation by Grace through Faith, Ch. 1, by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/SGF01.htm) [subtitle: “As Seen in the Earth’s Restoration”], which all subsequent types on the subject, along with the antitype, must follow.)

**Easy Believism**

“Easy Believism” is a rather strange expression, especially when one considers the manner in which it is used today. Scripture presents salvation after one fashion alone — by grace through faith (*i.e.*, through believing) — and no place in Scripture is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ ever presented as something difficult.

Man, in his perversion of the clear teaching of salvation by grace through faith, has sought to make believing difficult; and he has coined the expression, “easy believism,” which, in reality, reflects, in a negative way, on that which Scripture teaches in this realm.

Such is also part and parcel with what has come to be called, “Lordship Salvation.” This expression is actually a misnomer, for there is no such thing as “Lordship Salvation.” *Salvation* is one thing, and *Lordship* is another. Christ exercising control over one’s life, as the word “Lordship” portends, can *never* be used in conjunction with eternal salvation. Such must *always* be subsequent to one’s salvation experience.

An unsaved person is “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)). He is incapable of making Christ Lord of something that he doesn’t even possess. He must *first* pass “*from death to life*” ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV)). *Then*, and *only then*, can the matter of “Lordship” enter into the matter.

Nor would it be correct to say that unsaved man, in order to be saved, has to believe to the extent that Christ becomes, after some fashion, at the moment of belief or at some subsequent time, Lord of his life. That is, as it is sometimes expressed, “True belief will result in a salvation that cannot be separated from obedience.”

Such a thought would be absurd. *Life being brought into existence* on the one hand and *obedience* on the other (the one having been made alive following the leadership of the Lord as He exercises control over that life) are two different things entirely. Both could not possibly be brought to pass at the same time.

Scripturally, spiritual control of one’s life *always* appears in connection with maturity in the faith, not in connection with initially exercising faith, resulting in salvation. And a Christian may or may not experience spiritual growth in this respect, which can have nothing to do with a prior belief, which allowed him to pass “*from death to life*.”

A servant within a household in the world today may or may not submit to his master’s wishes, but such submission has nothing whatsoever to do with his being or not being a servant. It has to do with his being a faithful or an unfaithful servant.

And this is exactly the way Scripture presents the matter. *Becoming a servant in the Lord’s house* is one thing, but *submission as a servant in the house* is something entirely different. The latter is *always* subsequent to — *never* in connection with — the former.

There is nothing difficult about believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, becoming a Christian, entering into servitude. *Grace on God’s part* and *difficulty on man’s part* are incompatibles in the message pertaining to eternal salvation. Difficulty on man’s part arises only after he becomes a Christian, only after he possesses a life in which such difficulty can manifest itself.

How easy is it for an unsaved man to exercise faith, resulting in salvation? It’s just as easy as it was for the Israelites in Egypt during Moses’ day to apply the blood of a slain lamb to the door posts and lintel of the houses in which they dwelled ([Exodus 12:3-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.3-7&t=NKJV)); or it’s just as easy as it was for these same Israelites, later in the wilderness, to look upon the brazen serpent that had been raised up on a pole ([Numbers 21:5-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+21.5-9&t=NKJV)).

“*Christ our Passover*” has been “*sacrificed for us*” ([1 Corinthians 5:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+5.7&t=NKJV)), and the blood can be applied through a simple act of faith; or Christ, as the serpent in the wilderness, has been *lifted up*, “*That whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life*” ([John 3:14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.14-15&t=NKJV)).

How simple and easy is salvation? It was during Moses’ day and remains today, *Look and live*. It’s that simple and easy.

**Why Then the Problem?**

Becoming a Christian and growing spiritually in the Christian life is likened in Scripture to a child being born in the world and growing in the physical realm. There is a specific bringing forth as *a newborn baby,* which is to be followed by growth from immaturity to maturity in both instances ([John 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 5:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.12-14&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.1-2&t=NKJV); [1 John 2:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.12-14&t=NKJV)).

In the physical realm, a child grows from *a newborn baby to a mature adult* in order to fulfill a purpose in life. He grows physically through a proper diet and mentally through years of training — both within and without the home. He exercises his body and his mind as he receives a proper diet and training, growing after this fashion. Ideally, the better he is prepared both physically and mentally, the better he will be able to function in life.

In the spiritual realm, matters are identical. A newborn babe in Christ is to grow from immaturity to maturity for a purpose. His food for proper growth is spiritual, for it is a spiritual growth. It is the Manna from heaven, the Living Word of God. He is to begin with “milk” and progressively move to “meat” and “strong meat” (*cf.* [1 Peter 2:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.1-2&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 5:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.12-14&t=NKJV)).

Inseparably connected with the reception of the Word is training at the hands of the Father ([Hebrews 12:5-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-11&t=NKJV)). The words “chastening,” “chastens,” and “chastisement” (KJV) in these verses have to do with *a training process*, not with the Christian being *disciplined per se*, though the training process may involve *discipline* (*cf.* [Hebrews 12:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.7&t=NKJV)).

(The words “chastening,” “chastens,” and “chastisement (KJV),” in [Hebrews 12:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-8&t=NKJV) are translations of noun and verb forms of a word referring to young children [*paideia* and *paideuo*], and these words refer to *the instruction* or *training of children*. And, contextually, this is a training of those whom God views as “sons,” looking out ahead to *these sons one day being elevated into positions of power and authority with God’s Son in His kingdom.*

For additional information on [Hebrews 12:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-8&t=NKJV) and child-training, with a view to sonship in the preceding respect, refer to the author’s book, [God’s Firstborn Sons](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#God%E2%80%99s%20Firstborn%20Sons), Chapter 3, [The Church](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#The%20Church), in this site.)

The entire process allows the indwelling Holy Spirit to progressively work the transformation (Greek: *metamorphoo*, a metamorphosis) of [Romans 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+12.2&t=NKJV) in one’s life — a transforming work, beginning from within. And the more one progresses spiritually within the scope of the metamorphosis, the better prepared he will become, the better equipped he will be, to realize and fulfill his calling in life.

Every Christian is a servant in the Lord’s house, and every Christian has been called to exercise some particular sphere of responsibility therein ([Matthew 25:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14ff&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:13ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.13ff&t=NKJV)). Household servants have been placed in charge of their Lord’s goods, which are of a spiritual nature, not material. And the proper use of that which is spiritual within the house requires training in spiritual matters. This is why there must be a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life, effecting the metamorphosis. This is why there must be a progression from immaturity to maturity in the faith.

To achieve this end, God has placed pastor-teachers in His Church. They are the ones who have been commissioned to lead the household servants from immaturity to maturity in spiritual matters in order that the servants might properly function within the scope of their individual, particular callings.

*And He Himself gave some . . . pastors and teachers* [*lit.*, pastor-teachers];

*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

*till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge* [Greek, *epignosis*, mature knowledge] *of the Son of God, to a perfect* [‘a complete’] *man* . . . . ([Ephesians 4:11-13a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11-13a&t=NKJV)).

(The words “pastors and teachers” in [Ephesians 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11&t=NKJV) are structured in the Greek text in a manner that requires that the two nouns refer to the same individual — *pastors, who are teachers, i.e., pastor-teachers*.)

There though has been a breakdown within God’s order in Christendom; and this breakdown is of such a nature that, resultantly, gross error has supplanted biblical truth to the point that it has reached even into the very realm of soteriology itself (the doctrine of salvation). Pastor-teachers, over the years, have failed to fulfill their calling. The saints have not been led from immaturity to maturity. Household servants are in no position to handle that which is spiritual, for they lack the necessary spiritual training; and as a result, the house is in disarray. Churches today are filled with immature Christians who can be “*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine*” ([Ephesians 4:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.14&t=NKJV)). It is that period of Church history depicted by the church in Laodicea ([Revelation 3:14-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-21&t=NKJV)), the terminal period of the present dispensation.

This is not something that has occurred overnight, or even in the past few years or decades. It has been occurring ever since the woman in the parable in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) placed leaven in the three measures of meal, depicting an act of Satan, which could only have occurred very early in the dispensation; and the leaven has been doing its corrupting, damaging work since that time.

Leaven works best in a place where the temperature is not too hot or too cold. Note the “lukewarm” condition of the church in Laodicea in this respect ([Revelation 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.16&t=NKJV)). The leaven, after numerous centuries of deteriorating work, is being brought into the advanced stages of its action and is doing its most damaging work within the lukewarm confines of the church in Laodicea near the end of the present dispensation, during the very time in which we presently live.

The working of this leaven is going to be so complete by the end of the dispensation that the Lord, while upon earth, looking centuries ahead, asked a question concerning conditions on the earth at the time of His return:

*. . . when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith* [the faith] *on the earth?* ([Luke 18:8b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8b&t=NKJV))

The response to the question, designated by the wording of the Greek text, is *negative*. The Son of Man will not find “the faith” (an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom) on the earth when He returns. Rather, He will find conditions as depicted in [Revelation 3:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14ff&t=NKJV).

1) The Faith

The Master of the house has gone back to heaven in order to receive *a kingdom* from His Father ([Luke 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.12&t=NKJV)). God rules over all. He is the One who places and removes rulers within the kingdom ([Daniel 4:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.17&t=NKJV), [25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.25&t=NKJV)), and He will one day remove Satan from the position that he occupies ([Revelation 12:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.4&t=NKJV), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.9&t=NKJV); [20:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.1-3&t=NKJV)) and will place His Son in this position ([Daniel 7:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.14&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:11-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11-16&t=NKJV); [20:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4-6&t=NKJV)).

*During the time between the Son’s departure to receive* the kingdom and His return in possession of *the kingdom*, Christ has left His business to servants in charge of His household, for a particular purpose. And this purpose involves *the kingdom He has gone away to receive*.

*The coming kingdom of Christ* will require numerous regents and vice-regents to ascend the throne and to hold positions of power and authority with Christ as He reigns over the earth. And God has set aside an entire dispensation, lasting approximately 2,000 years, in order to acquire these rulers. God is presently dealing with household servants in relation to the kingdom that the Son has gone away to receive, with a view to their one day filling positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

*From a Scriptural standpoint, this should be the central purpose behind all activity in the Lord’s house today. But the working of the leaven has changed matters completely in this respect.*

(Note that the central purpose for the present dispensation, seen from God’s standpoint in the antitype of that which is foreshadowed through events in Genesis chapter twenty-four, would be the Spirit’s search for and procurement of a bride for God’s Son. And this search for and procurement of a bride for God’s Son is part and parcel with a search for and procurement of individuals to fill the numerous positions of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom, for Christ’s bride will be made up of individuals who will fill these positions, as the bride reigns as co-regent alongside the Son.

For additional information on Genesis chapter twenty-four, refer to the author’s book, [Bible One - Search for the Bride by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/SB.htm%20%29Bible).)

The Lord’s household servants have been promised remuneration commensurate with their faithfulness, and this remuneration has to do with their being elevated *from positions of servitude in the house to positions as co-rulers in the kingdom*. After Christ has returned, having received the kingdom, He will call His servants forth to reckon with them. A servant having been judged and shown faithful to previously delegated responsibility will hear his Lord say,

*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.* ([Matthew 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 25:19-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.19-23&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:15-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15-19&t=NKJV)).

(Note one of the laws of the harvest seen in the preceding — *always reaping more than was sown* — which can be seen in the following concerning the unfaithful servant as well.)

Servants in the house though have also been warned that unfaithfulness in the discharge of their assigned household duties will result in loss. Not only will they be denied positions in their Master’s kingdom, but they will also suffer rebuke and chastisement. Such a servant, having been judged and shown unfaithful to previously delegated responsibility, will hear his Lord say,

*You wicked and lazy servant . . .* . ([Matthew 25:26a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.26a&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Matthew 25:24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.24-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:20-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.20-26&t=NKJV)).

Within the scope of carrying out one’s responsibilities as a servant in the house, a spiritual warfare rages ([Ephesians 6:10ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.10ff&t=NKJV)). Satan and his angels have allied themselves together against the Lord and His household servants. Though the battle is the Lord’s ([1 Samuel 17:47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+17.47&t=NKJV)), He is physically absent today; and with the Lord absence in this respect, the attack centers on the Lord’s servants, those of His household.

The present spiritual battle is one involving *kingly power from the heavens over the earth*. Satan and his angels presently rule in the kingdom, and Christ, along with His co-heirs, will one day take the kingdom.

This warfare is *very real*. Christ is the One who is destined to one day replace Satan in the kingdom; and Christians are the ones destined to, at the same time, replace angels presently ruling with Satan. During the coming age, Christ will wear the crown presently worn by Satan, and Christians will wear crowns presently worn by other angels in Satan’s kingdom (*cf.* [2 Samuel 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Samuel+1.10&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5&t=NKJV); [Revelation 4:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10&t=NKJV); [19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.12&t=NKJV)).

Satan knows these things. He also knows that the primary mission of the Holy Spirit in the world today is to call out a bride from among the household servants to reign as consort queen with the Son after He receives the kingdom (*cf.* [Genesis 24:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.3-4&t=NKJV)). And, knowing all of this, he is presently doing everything within his power to thwart God’s plans and purposes by bringing about disruption within the house among household servants.

Christians engaged in the present warfare have been called upon to:

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also....called . . .* ([1 Timothy 6:12a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12a&t=NKJV))

Both textually and contextually, this verse could be better translated,

*Strive in the good contest of the faith; lay hold on life for the age, whereunto you are also called . . . .*

The word “strive” in the latter rendering is a translation of the Greek word *agonizomai*, from which we derive our English word, “agonize”; and the word “contest” is from the Greek word *agon*, the noun form of the verb *agonizomai.*

(Also, the change from “eternal life” to “life for the age” in the latter translation results from a contextual translation of the Greek word *aionios*, the word translated “eternal” in the verse.

The Greek language does not contain a word for “eternal.” The word *aionios* has to do with *a long period of time*, with the length of that time determined from the contextual usage of the word. The long period of time, to which *aionios* refers, can be understood as “eternal” if the context permits. However, the context of [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV) has to do with *an age, the coming Messianic Era* [*aionios* is often used referring to “an age”]. Thus, the preferred translation would be, “life for the age.”)

The same thought pertaining to “strive,” as seen in [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV), is also set forth in [Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV). Because of apostasy among servants in the Lord’s house, Christians are exhorted to:

*. . . contend earnestly for the faith . . . .*

The words “contend earnestly” are a translation of the Greek word *epagonizomai,* an intensified form of the word *agonizomai*. The passage could be better translated,

*. . . earnestly strive for the faith . . . .*

And understanding of this passage in the light of [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV), this is a striving, not to defend “*the faith*” as some expositors suggest, but a striving *with respect to the faith.* Such a striving has to do with remaining faithful to one’s calling within the house during a day of apostasy (see the author’s book, [Bible One - Jude, Ch. 2, by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/J_02.htm)).

The words, “*the faith*,” are an expression used in the New Testament referring to biblical teachings surrounding *the Word of the Kingdom*, the saving of the soul, not salvation by grace. This is the message that the Lord will not find being proclaimed in Christendom when He returns, as revealed in [Luke 18:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8&t=NKJV). Rather, He will find Christendom in a state of apostasy, which has to do with Christians occupying positions diametrically opposed to the exhortation, “*Strive in the good contest of the faith. .*”

(The English word “apostasy” is simply a transliterated form of the compound Greek word, *apostasia*, which means “to stand away from” [*apo* meaning “from,” and *stasis* meaning “to stand”]. True apostasy is a standing away from something previously held — a previously held truth, etc.

Note that apostasy in Scripture has to do with the saved, not with the unsaved. Only the saved can stand away from previously held truth, *i.e., apostatize* [*cf.* [1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV)].)

According to [Luke 18:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8&t=NKJV), along with related Scripture, when Christ returns, He will find Christians, *standing away from* “the faith” (or, *estranged from* “the faith” after another fashion), *not earnestly striving with respect to* “*the faith*.”

(*Standing away from* “*the faith,*” in the true sense of apostasy, would really not be possible for the vast majority of Christians today. Most Christians today know little to nothing about “*the faith*,” and they could not stand away from something with which they possessed no previous association. Thus, for most Christians today, the matter would have to be as stated in the parenthetical section of the preceding paragraph — *an estrangement from “the faith”* after another fashion.)

2) The Result

The result of Satan’s disruptive work in the Lord’s house during the present dispensation is evident on every hand. Striving with respect to the faith in relation to a kingdom is something that Christians don’t seem to know anything about; and the whole of Christendom is in such a state — described in [Revelation 3:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.15-17&t=NKJV) — that very few Christians even manifest the slightest interest when the subject is raised.

Christians, by large, see only *one issue* today — the issue dealing with eternal verities in relation to salvation or damnation. All Scripture is somehow pressed into this mold, and, resultantly, verses that have nothing whatsoever to do with eternal salvation or damnation are made to teach something other than what they deal with. They are made to teach issues concerning one’s eternal destiny.

Take, for example, the parable of the Sower ([Matthew 13:3-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.3-9&t=NKJV), [18-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.18-23&t=NKJV)), the parables of the talents and pounds ([Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:11-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.11-27&t=NKJV)), the Lord’s teaching about the vine and its branches in [John 15:1-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.1-8&t=NKJV), the warning passages in [Hebrews 2:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.1-5&t=NKJV), *et al*, that being taught about faith and works in [James 2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV), being born of God in [1 John 2-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2-5&t=NKJV)), or the overcomer’s promises in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV).

These sections of Scripture — along with numerous other similar sections — are not dealing with one’s eternal destiny at all. Rather, they are dealing with issues pertaining to those who are already saved; and these issues have to do with the coming kingdom. It is sections of Scripture such as these that are being taken out of the realm of teaching in which they belong by certain Christians today and brought over into a realm of teaching in which they do not belong.

Once this has been done — once passages pertaining to Christian living, with a view to the coming kingdom, have been removed from their contexts and made to apply to salvation by grace — the things that these passages deal with (Lordship, fruit-bearing, etc.) then appear to come into the salvation picture. And the end result is twofold:

a) The clear, simple message of salvation by grace through faith becomes corrupted.

b) The door is then closed to the truth of that which these misapplied passages actually do teach.

*In this respect, more is involved than just corrupting one message; in the process, another message is done away with.*

Thus, the “why” of a corrupted salvation message within the ranks of what is looked upon as fundamental Christianity today, and its wide acceptance, is no mystery. Scripture is being misinterpreted and misapplied. Individuals not understanding the message having to do with the salvation of the soul, the Word of the Kingdom, etc., are taking portions of Scripture dealing with these issues and bringing them over into the realm dealing with the salvation of the spirit, eternal life.

And the reason this is happening can be traced back to the failure of the shepherds to properly care for the sheep. Such a failure was not only caused by the leaven but it has allowed the leaven to do its deteriorating work, unchecked, resulting in the present chaos in the Lord’s house.

“A corrupted message” concerning *salvation by grace through faith* on the one hand and “the absence of a message” concerning *the Word of the Kingdom* on the other hand mark that which can be seen in certain quarters under the guise of fundamental Christianity today. This is how complete the leaven has done its deteriorating and damaging work.

(Carrying matters back even farther though, the underlying problem behind the whole of the matter, resulting in current conditions in Christendom among those called to be pastor-teachers, is given in chapter 1 of this book, [Bible One - Salvation by Grace through Faith, Ch. 1, by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/SGF01.htm). It is man’s failure to begin where God began [with Moses and the Prophets] and view Scripture after the manner in which God progressively revealed Himself, His plans, and His purposes [beginning with Old Testament history, which is highly typical in nature].

And man’s failure to do this has been occurring for decades extending into centuries of time, resulting in the current state of Christendom.)

**The Only Answer to the Problem**

The only possible means to effect correction where existing problems wrought by the working of the leaven manifest themselves is given in the message to the Church in Laodicea; and the means, revealed through this message, would be the same no matter what doctrinal errors or heresies surfaced in the Church.

This is as it should be, for the church in Laodicea depicts Christendom as a whole after the leaven has done its damaging work near the end of the dispensation, without regard to any particular group of individuals, erroneous doctrines, or heresies. Thus, those mishandling Scripture to the point of teaching a corrupted gospel — and, in the process, closing the door to the Word of the Kingdom — would have to be included, regardless of their purported association with fundamental Christianity.

After all, the Scribes and Pharisees (the fundamental legalists in Israel 2,000 years ago) sat “*in Moses’ seat*”; but they suffered *a far greater condemnatory rebuke* at the hands of Christ than any other religious group in Israel, even the Sadducees (the more liberal group of that day).

And the reason for this lay in the position that the scribes and Pharisees held and the attitude that they took toward both Christ and the message being proclaimed. The scribes and Pharisees formed the largest of the religious sects in Israel; and, because of their numbers, they exerted control over the religious life of the people. The scribes and Pharisees (along with the Sadducees at times) followed Christ about the country, seeking, at every turn, to both cast reproach upon the Messenger and counter the message being proclaimed. And by doing this, along with exerting control over the religious life of the people, they “*shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men* [‘before men,’ ‘in front of men’].” They had no interest in entering this kingdom themselves, and they did everything within their power to see that others didn’t enter the kingdom either ([Matthew 23:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.1ff&t=NKJV)).

The Lord described the church in Laodicea as being “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*” ([Revelation 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17&t=NKJV)). The thought behind this description, in the light of the Greek text and the next verse ([Revelation 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.18&t=NKJV)), is that those in this church, in a spiritual respect, were *miserable individuals who were to be pitied because of their poor, blind, and naked condition*. They had no understanding at all of that which Scripture taught on the matter at hand, which centered on the Word of the Kingdom.

Then in verse eighteen, the Lord took the three characteristics (“poor,” “blind,” and “naked”) marking those whom He had described *as miserable, pitiful individuals* and issued an exhortation:

Concerning their being *poor*, the Lord stated, *“I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich.”*

Concerning their being *naked*, the Lord stated, *“. . . and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.”*

Concerning their being *blind*, the Lord stated, *“. . . and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”*

The Lord then went on to state, *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”* ([Revelation 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.19&t=NKJV))

The word “*rebuke*” from the Greek text contextually has to do with exposing, *showing one his fault*; and the word “*chasten*” is the translation of the same Greek word used in [Hebrews 12:5-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-11&t=NKJV) (translated “chastening,” “chastens,” and “chastisement”), referring to *child-training, child-instruction*. The teaching from this verse reveals that the Lord, in a situation of this nature, *exposes that which is wrong and provides training in that which is right* (*cf.* [2 Timothy 3:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.16-17&t=NKJV)); and, in view of the fact that He would act after this fashion among the Christians in Laodicea, He exhorted those in this church to “*repent*” (*i.e*., in the light of the context, they were exhorted to realize their condition, change their minds, and submit to the truth that the Lord would provide).

Then the Lord pictured Himself as standing at the door of the church in Laodicea, knocking. If anyone in the church would hear His voice and open the door (hear and heed that which He had said in [Revelation 3:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.18-19&t=NKJV)), He would come in and fellowship with that person ([Revelation 3:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.20&t=NKJV)), for a Christian opening the door after this fashion would allow child-training, child-instruction, which would progressively deliver him from the described position of *poor, blind, and naked.*

(Note that [Revelation 3:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.20&t=NKJV) has nothing whatsoever to do with the message of salvation by grace through faith, as often taught. This verse has to do, *not* with Christ coming into the heart of an unsaved person, but with Christ coming inside the church in Laodicea to a saved individual.

This verse has to do with a Christian in the condition described in verse seventeen, who heeds the Lord’s exhortation in verses eighteen and nineteen, allowing fellowship to exist between himself and his Lord; and the entire matter is with a view to overcoming and one day being allowed to ascend the throne with Christ in His kingdom [[Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)].

Using [Revelation 3:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.20&t=NKJV) as a salvation text is a good example of why there is *mass confusion* concerning salvation by grace through faith on the one hand and *mass ignorance* concerning the Word of the Kingdom on the other hand in Christendom today. Such a use of this verse not only results in an erroneous view of salvation by grace through faith but it also closes the door to that which is actually taught in this passage, which concerns the Word of the Kingdom.)

The critical issue is thus *one’s reception of correct instruction from the Word of God.* And such instruction in [Revelation 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.19&t=NKJV), contextually, would have to center on a forward look to things of the kingdom, not a backward look to things surrounding salvation by grace through faith. The issue at hand is not eternal life but *overcoming with a view to ascending the throne with Christ* ([Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

In this respect, the heart of the matter actually centers around *one coming into an understanding of that which Scripture teaches about the purpose for our salvation, the coming kingdom, etc.*  And it is apparent that those in Laodicea had no concept of these things.

Once a Christian can look ahead and clearly understand that which Scripture teaches about the coming kingdom, he is in a much better position to also look back and clearly understand that which Scripture teaches about salvation by grace through faith. *Nothing* will clarify issues surrounding salvation by grace through faith more than having a clear understanding of that which Scripture teaches concerning the coming kingdom, for only through such an understanding can works, discipleship, fruit-bearing, etc. be seen in their correct perspective, occupying no place at all in the simple salvation message having to do with *unsaved man passing* “*from death to life*.”