**Within Christendom, most local churches, including those that are evangelical, do not emphasize (teach) the solid food (meat) of God’s Word; rather, it is the milk of the Word that is presented over and over again from the pulpits. Even in their various “Sunday school” and Bible classes, there is constant repetition of the rudimentary doctrines and almost never a presentation of the insightfulness and gravity contained in the boundless depths of God’s Word.**

**The Christian Experience — Its Initiation and Progression
By Charles Strong of** [**Bible One**](http://www.bibleone.net/)

In the beginning God created man (mankind) in His own (trichotomous) image for a specific purpose, to have “*dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth*” ([Genesis 1:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 1:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.28&t=NKJV)). But man’s act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden brought about dire consequences from the hand of God, the spiritual death (separation from God) of man and the degradation of earth’s impeccable animate and inanimate order.

And it is from this condition of spiritual death that man (on an individual bases) must emerge, *i.e.*, regain spiritual life, in order to recover/possess the purpose for which God created him.

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* ([Genesis 2:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.16-17&t=NKJV))

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* ([Genesis 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+3.6&t=NKJV))

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ* (by grace you have been saved). ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV))

**The Initiation**

The requisite purpose for Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, coming to earth was to be the *propitiation* (Gk. *hilasmos* – the means of covering and remitting, *i.e*., satisfying God) for the sins of mankind. Christ accomplished this purpose on the cross of Calvary by taking on and becoming man’s sin so man could obtain the righteousness of God. While on the cross Christ paid the penalty for all of sin by suffering the extreme punishment and judgment of God the Father (spiritual death, *i.e*., being separated from [forsaken by] God the Father) for a period (several hours) of time. Christ’s work on the cross was total, complete, and, in His own word, “*finished*.”

*And He* [Jesus Christ] *Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. . . . In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* ([1 John 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.2&t=NKJV); [4:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.10&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Romans 3:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+3.25&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.17&t=NKJV))

*For He* [God the Father] *made Him* [God the Son] *who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Isaiah 53:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.6&t=NKJV); [Romans 8:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.3&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.13&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.24&t=NKJV))

*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* ([Matthew 27:45- 46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.45-+46&t=NKJV))

*So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.* ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV))

And the *only way* a person may apply Christ’s substitutionary work on the cross for the benefit of his personal salvation (*i.e*., to regain spiritual life) is by making a conscience decision to receive it by faith (plus and/or minus anything else [*e.g*., self-works]), *i.e*., *placing his trust solely in Christ and His work on the cross* for his personal eternal salvation. This would be an instantaneous act (conscious decision) — not a prayer, a dedication, a promise, or any form of outward demonstration — that is taken when after hearing and understanding God’s grace-gift of salvation (the key to the restoration of eternal life), a person decides to place his faith completely and solely in Christ for his personal eternal salvation.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (*[John 3:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16-18&t=NKJV))

*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name*. ([John 20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+20.31&t=NKJV))

*And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . . .”* ([Acts 16:30-31a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31a&t=NKJV))

*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.* ([Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV))

The author of this document believes there are many throughout all levels of Christendom who have been informed that salvation is to be obtained by means of a series of steps, *i.e*., faith plus works (*e.g*., confession of/turning from sins, specifically worded prayers, administration of baptism, etc.), who are indeed saved, but would *only* be due to their *faith* in Jesus Christ — a decision made prior to the exercise of any other “proffered requirement.”

Please note the following from [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Salvation by Grace through Faith, Foreword](http://bibleone.net/SGF_F.htm):

Eternal salvation is *by grace* (that which God is able to do completely apart from human merit) *through faith* (*by believing* on God’s Son [[Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV)]), and it is based entirely upon *the finished work of Another* ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)). Nothing that man has done, is presently doing, or will ever do can have anything to do with his eternal destiny. Man can do no more than receive *by faith* that which has already been done on his behalf.

This is why Scripture states:

*“. . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . .* . .” ([Acts 16:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.31&t=NKJV))

This statement is in response to a question in the preceding verse:

*“. . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* ([Acts 16:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30&t=NKJV))

And within another frame of reference, the response to this question could only be, “*Nothing!*” This would have to be the response simply because there is not one single thing left for unsaved man to do (nor could he do anything if something were left, for, he is spiritually dead and incapable of acting in the spiritual realm [[Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV)]).

It is of interest to note that the question, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” and the answer, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved*,” only appear together one place in the entire Bible. Scripture is filled with information concerning redemption, but [Acts 16:30-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31&t=NKJV) is the *only place*, from Genesis to Revelation, where the question concerning eternal salvation is asked and answered in so many words\* [added: \*so precisely].

Thus, within *a completely biblical framework*, if the question in [Acts 16:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30&t=NKJV) is asked, there can be *only one answer*: “*Believe* . . . .” *Man’s ideas, thoughts, comments are of no moment*. *God has spoken, and that’s the end of the matter.*

[John 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16&t=NKJV) is often called “the gospel in a nutshell” by individuals seeking to draw attention to the overall salvation message stated in its simplest form in Scripture. God, because of His love for fallen man — who had been *created in His image*, after *His likeness, for a purpose* ([Genesis 1:26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-28&t=NKJV)) — “*gave His only begotten Son* [[1 Corinthians 15:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.3&t=NKJV)], that *whoever believes in Him* [[Acts 16:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.31&t=NKJV)] *should not perish but have everlasting life*.”

Everything, in its entirety, to procure man’s salvation was done by Another. It had to be accomplished by Another, for, as previously stated, the one being redeemed was “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)), *totally incapable* of acting on his own behalf.

Christ is the One who died, Christ is the One who performed the work to procure man’s salvation, and God is satisfied with His Son’s finished work.

When Christ cried out from the Cross in “*a loud voice*” near the ninth hour, “*It is finished*” ([Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV); [John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)), He used one word in the Greek text — *Tetelestai* — that could be better translated, “*It has been finished*.” *Tetelestai* is a perfect tense usage of *teleo*, which means “to bring to an end,” “to complete.” And the perfect tense refers to action completed in past time, with the results of that action extending into and existing during present time in *a finished state.*

*All of the work* surrounding man’s redemption that Christ had come to perform had, at that point in time, been *completed*. This was the announcement that Christ made, in “*a loud voice*”; and, because of that which was involved in the announcement, there was then no longer any need for Him to continue His sufferings on the Cross. Thus, immediately after He cried out, “*It has been finished*,” He “*gave up the ghost* [KJV, *lit*., ‘He breathed out’ (He expired, willingly relinquishing His life)]” ([Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV)).

The work of Christ at Calvary, from the point He cried out, “*It has been finished*,” has existed in *exactly the same finished state* in which He proclaimed it to exist at that time. It has existed as *a work completed in past time that extends into present time (in a finished state) and that will extend into all the ages comprising eternity ahead (in the same finished state).*

Nothing can ever be added, and nothing can ever be taken away. That is to say, *nothing can ever change* relative to Christ’s finished work at Calvary.

That’s the way God’s procurement of man’s salvation had to occur. Once Christ’s work had been finished, that’s the way His work had to always continue to exist — *in a finished state* — throughout both time and eternity.

*Because of Christ’s finished work*, salvation is extended to man “*without money and without price*” ([Isaiah 55:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+55.1&t=NKJV)); and *apart from Christ’s finished work*, there is no salvation.

*He who believes in him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already* [*lit*., ‘has already been condemned’ (a perfect tense — condemned in past time because of unbelief and presently living in that condemned state)], *because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. ([John 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.18&t=NKJV))

It is utterly impossible — and foolish to even consider — that finite man, “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” could add one thing to or take one thing from the finished work of the infinite God through His Son.

All man can possibly do is simply receive, by *believing on the Son*, that which has already been done on his behalf.

**The Progression**

Unfortunately, many, if not most individuals who have secured eternal life, never advance from their spiritually infantile status as “*babes in Christ*,” a condition that the apostle Paul faced with the Corinthian believers.

*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.* ([1 Corinthians 3:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.1-2&t=NKJV))

The human author of the book of Hebrews faced the same dilemma with those (Christians) to whom he wrote:

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* ([Hebrews 5:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.12-14&t=NKJV))

Within Christendom, most local churches, including those that are evangelical, do not emphasize (teach) the solid food (meat) of God’s Word; rather, it is the milk of the Word that is presented over and over again from the pulpits. Even in their various “Sunday school” and Bible classes, there is constant repetition of the rudimentary doctrines and almost never a presentation of the insightfulness and gravity contained in the boundless depths of God’s Word.

The very role of the pastor according to his Scripture-title (seen primarily in the original language of the text) is to be a *pastor-teacher* ([Ephesians 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11&t=NKJV)), one who will honor the instruction that Christ gave Peter, to feed (solid food) Christ’s sheep (followers), for this reveals a pastor’s love for Christ ([John 21:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+21.15-17&t=NKJV)); and, it is only by maturing in the Word of God that a Christian will be able to discern the reality of spiritual matters within and without, will be protected from the influence of Satan, and will be able to achieve spiritual sanctification (*i.e*., to be *set apart* to God).

*For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* ([Hebrews 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.12&t=NKJV))

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* ([Ephesians 6:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.17&t=NKJV))

*I* [Christ] *have given them* [Christ’s followers] *Your* [God’s] *Word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one* [Satan]. They *are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.* ([John 17:14-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+17.14-17&t=NKJV))

While most Christians relish complacency apart from the solid food (meat) of God’s Word, reflected by their lives of shallow spirituality, they apparently are unaware that such behavior will have dreadful consequences once they pass through the veil of physical death to eventually appear before their Creator.

No, they will *not* lose their “eternal salvation” (spirit-salvation); but, they will find that their temporal lives apart from the depth of God’s Word, resulting in a life of *unfaithfulness* and *few* or *no good works* ([Colossians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.6&t=NKJV); [2 Corinthians 5:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.7&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.10&t=NKJV)) has resulted in their failure to obtain soul-salvation ([Hebrews 10:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.39&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV)) when they stand before Jesus Christ at His Judgment Seat.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.* ([2 Corinthians 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.10&t=NKJV))

. . . *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.* ([Romans 14:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+14.10&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+14.12&t=NKJV) [10b])

*But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality*. ([Colossians 3:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.25&t=NKJV))

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation [faith in Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.* ([1 Corinthians 3:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV))

It is indeed most unfortunate that most Christians labor under the misconception that once they pass from this earth they will live an eternal life of bliss somewhere within the borders of heaven. They toil upon this earth with little to no understanding (due to their lack of interest and effort) of the coming Messianic Era, the thousand year reign of Christ over the earth, a period of time in which they could have occupied regal positions (*reward*) in Christ’s administration over His kingdom, but instead will be relegated (*suffer lose*) to an area outside of the light (*outer darkness*) — a thousand years of anguish and agony. This will be the result of their loss of soul-salvation, which will affect their participation in Christ’s coming kingdom — for 1,000 years.

(To understand God’s comprehensive plan of redemption for man — both spirit-salvation and soul-salvation — the reader is strongly advised to read the following works by Arlen L. Chitwood: [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php) and [So Great Salvation](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-four.php#So%20Great%20Salvation) in this site; Judgment Seat of Christ and Redeemed for a Purpose from [Bible One by Charles Strong](http://www.bibleone.net/).)

Bottom line, the “Christian Experience” is to have a beginning (spirit-salvation), a righteous continuation (progression) based on the Word of God (soul-salvation), and a glorious conclusion in regality (participation as part of the “Bride of Christ” during the Messianic Era) for one thousand years — before the beginning of the eternal ages that will follow when,

*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.* ([Revelation 21:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.4&t=NKJV))

And a Christian’s failure to achieve the full scope of all that is available, which has its basis in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary, is sad beyond reason.

*And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.* ([Revelation 22:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.12&t=NKJV))

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[Bible One - Charles Strong's The Christian Experience — Its Initiation and Progression](http://www.bibleone.net/The-Christian-Experience.htm)