

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things whereby
we may edify
one another.



John 8:32 and
ye shall know
the truth, and
the truth
shall make
you free.

February
13
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CAN WE FALL FROM GRACE?

by Jim Stauffer

“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4) In this text Paul is making the argument that anyone who has obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ and then reverts to the Old Law (Law of Moses) has been separated from Christ and fallen from grace. Because the prophet tells us sin separates us from God (**Isa. 59:1,2**) and Ezekiel tells us the person who sins is the one responsible and therefore is the one who dies (**Ezek. 18:20**), we logically conclude it is sin that Paul speaks of as severing us from Christ. John tells us we sin when we transgress the law (**1 John 3:4**).

Why does Paul say they are seeking to be justified by the law? Because they were attempting to bind circumcision upon those who had obeyed Christ (**Gal. 6:12**), and had accepted the new covenant He mediated (**Heb. 9:15**). This teaching is what led Paul to open his letter to them expressing his outrage over their having deserted the gospel he had preached to them. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 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.” (Gal. 1:6–9)*

It is universally accepted we are saved by the grace of God. The grace of God is identified clearly in Scripture as being personified in Jesus as He came to die for our sins (**Eph. 2:4,5; Rom. 5:1,2**).

Paul’s argument becomes very effective when we go to **Chapter 3:26-29**. *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Here he tells us we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. He then says those sons have put on Christ in baptism and that they are all one in Christ. This concept of being in Christ is carried out in descriptions of the church. We are told in **Acts 2:47** the saved are added to the church. Then Paul tells us in **Eph. 1:22,23** the church is His body. In **Eph. 1:3** we learn the spiritual blessings needed for salvation are in Christ Jesus. The apostle tells the Romans that as children of God, *we are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ... (Rom. 8:17)*.

There simply is no avoiding the necessity of being in Christ to inherit eternal life or the conclusion that sin separates us from Him.

So, when we read in the Westminster Confession of Faith a statement such as this:

“They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”, we must acknowledge this was written by men, not God. This doctrine is identified as a necessary part of the Calvinistic system of theology. Notice, it is not a part of Scripture.

We can see one cannot be saved apart from Jesus Christ. The Calvinistic system of theology says we cannot fall from grace. The Bible says we can and when we do we are severed from Christ. Which do you believe?

One final point to be made. You and I wish to spend eternity in heaven. One question. Who has the authority to grant the heavenly reward promised through Christ? Is it the God of the Scriptures or is it the Calvinistic system of theology?

continued on page 2

Did Jesus Put YOU Second?

By Wayne Goff

Consider this article in light of the statement Jesus made about *“seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33).

- ✓ *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”* ~ 2 Corinthians 8:9
- ✓ *“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* ~ Matthew 20:27–28
- ✓ *“For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”* ~ Luke 22:27
- ✓ *“Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”* ~ 1 Peter 2:24

No, dear reader, Jesus did not put you and me **second** in His life. Shame on us when we do not put Him and His kingdom (church) **first** in our lives! Can you imagine facing Jesus on the Judgment Day with the multitude of excuses you make today for why you didn't make it to Bible Class, to Worship, or to carry out your duties as a Christian? Too tired? Dark brown taste in your mouth? You didn't feel well? You had to work (when you could have gotten off)? Something tells me that you will be **too ashamed** to use those flimsy excuses when facing Jesus, the One who put you first, who gave His life for you, Who suffered on the cruel cross of Calvary the worst of deaths. Somehow your “reasons”(?) will seem mighty small then.

CORINTH: THE CHURCH OF GOD

Paul's work in Athens was not entirely profitable; still, some were favorably inclined to his message about the Unknown God. The notion of a final judgment and resurrection from the dead caused some to mock; others wanted to hear more. Paul's work in larger, urban cities of the first century is interesting. It has only been

in the last two hundred years or so that the world has been populated with cities of over one million citizens; rural cultures have given way to large metropolitan centers of influence. Corinth was one of the larger cities in New Testament times; in first century population is hard to determine; 200,000 would be a good guess. Volumes have been written about Corinth. Its history, influence, commercial appeal, and debauchery provide clues as to its prominence. The hosting of the Isthmian Games every two years made Corinth a center of attraction.

Paul had been hounded out of city after city. Still, he continued his quest for souls. We are not surprised to find him reasoning *“in the synagogue every Sabbath”* and persuading *“both Jews and Greeks”* (Acts 18:4). Paul met a couple, Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had recently left Rome. The association of these three Christians now becomes a frequent aspect of Luke's history. Paul was glad when Timothy and Silas arrived from Macedonia; they had stayed behind to work with the Christians in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:2). Paul's preaching produced some good results.

Paul challenged the intellectual climate of Corinth with his message about Jesus. Later, he wrote to the Corinthians saying: *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* (1 Corinthians 2:1,2). The collective wisdom of the ages, the sage teachings of Greek philosophers, and the supposed ability of “man” to know more than God, stood in stark contrast to the *“foolishness of God.”* Yet it is this message that fell into the good and honest hearts.

“Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). First in the synagogue and then in private homes, Paul spread the word. Crispus, a Jew along with his household (those who could understand and needed to respond to the gospel) *“believed.”* That is, they accepted by faith the gospel of Christ and obeyed the Savior. *“Many Corinthians”* did the same. This surely would have included Gentiles.

First Corinthians begins this way: *“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”* (1:1,2). What is the church of God? It is people who hear, believe, and obey God's word. The Lord told Paul

to be bold in preaching; there were many in Corinth who would accept the message of salvation. He continued working for eighteen months. If Paul did what he did in Corinth, could the same thing be done in the city where you live?

Randy Harshbarger

Self Control

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age (Titus 2:11-12 ESV)

One of the great challenges we face as we seek to adhere to the will of God and live in a way that will please and honor Him is that of self-control. Have you ever heard someone say "I just can't control myself." Self control is one of the fruits of the Spirit found in **Gal. 5:22-23**. Self control is one the things that Peter tells us to add to our faith in **2 Pet. 1:6-8**. Self control was a part of the inspiring message Paul preached to Felix (**Acts 24:25**).

The present age in which we live is one in which we are surrounded with all manner of unrighteousness, wickedness and immorality. It is a time in which we see so many people running wild, putting little or no restraint on their words or deeds.. In fact many are the people doing whatever is right in their own eyes regardless of what is right in the eyes of God. Self control centers around the ability to keep emotions under control. We see and feel the results of a failure to control emotions unfold before us in the unrest socially and politically occurring daily all around us.

Proverbs 16:32: *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."* These words were spoken in a time when one of the greatest accomplishments for a man was the taking or capture of a city. But even in that time long ago, Solomon teaches us that the greatest accomplishment of all is to conquer self --self control!

Conquering of self will engage us in one of most severe conflicts we will ever face on this journey through life. On the other hand, learning self control is one of the sweetest victories of this life. Losing self control will put us on a downward path that lets emotion and passion turn our faith into a shipwreck (**1 Tim. 1:19**). It will take a lot of self control to keep our heart as it should be kept (**Prov. 4:23; Prov. 23:7; 1 Cor. 9:27**)

Exercising self control will enable us to follow some good advice from Solomon: *"Let your eyes look directly*

ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you."

To God be the glory both now and until the day of eternity (2 Peter 3:18).

Charles Hicks, White House Tennessee
swabbie5256@gmail.com

"God has not been trying an experiment on my faith or love in order to find out their quality. He knew it already. It was I who didn't. In this trial He makes us occupy the dock, the witness box, and the bench all at once. He always knew that my temple was a house of cards. His only way of making me realize the fact was to knock it down" (**C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed**).

Looking for the Flaw

When some fellow yields to temptation,
and breaks a conventional law,
We don't look for the good in his make-up,
but Lord, how we look for the flaw!
No one asks who did the tempting,
or allows for the battles he's fought;
His name becomes food for the jackals-
the saints who have never been caught!
I'm a sinner, Oh Lord, and I know it;
I'm weak, and I blunder and fail,
I am tossed on life's stormy oceans,
like a ship that is caught in a gale.
I am willing to trust in Your mercy,
to keep the commandments You taught,
But deliver me, Lord, from the judgement
of the saints who have never been caught!

author unknown

We offer either in home studies in person or by way of Correspondence Courses.

Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563, Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ.

We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Things not taught in the Bible that people believe, and foster false teaching as a result

That water baptism is for the remission of sins? Read: Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38).

Please call us to study the Bible. It is refreshing.

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-620-0563

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10