

12. The Gospel According to Scripture (Alone)

Some Selected Passages

John 3:16. [Jesus:] “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

5:24. [Jesus:] “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

20:31. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 16:30-31. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

Romans 1:16-17. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

3:23-4. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

3:28. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

4:5. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

5:1. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

6:23. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

9:16. It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.

10:8-13. But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

11:6. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Galatians 2:15-16. We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

2:21. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

3:1-3. You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

3:10-11. All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because “The righteous will live by faith.”

3:24-26. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

5:4. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Ephesians 1:13-14. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.

2:8-9. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Philippians 3:9. And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Titus 3:5. He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

1 John 5:13. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

What would a chart look like of the various formulations of the gospel as found in Scripture?

Perhaps this:

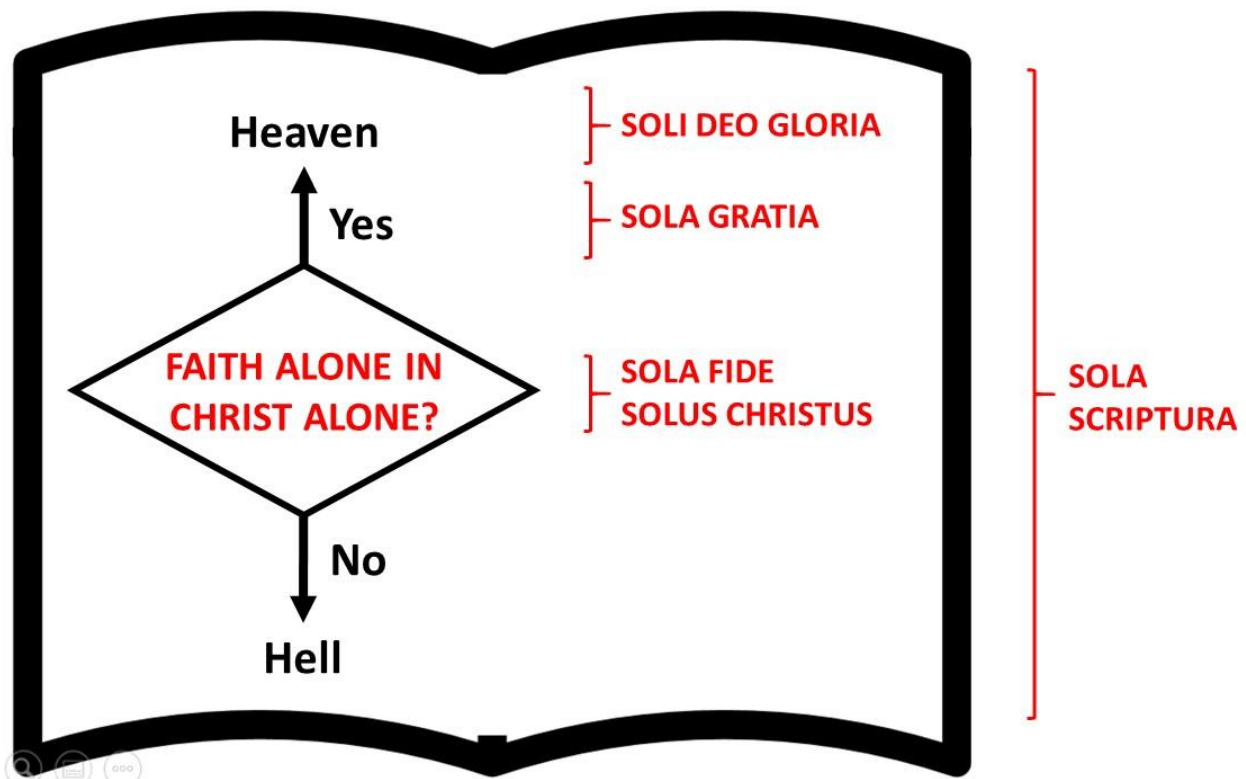
Acts 16:31	►	Believe	→	Saved
John 3:16, 6:40	►	Believe	→	Eternal Life
John 20:31	►	Believe	→	Have life
John 1:12	►	Believe	→	Become children of God
Ephesians 2:8-10	►	Faith	→	Good works
Romans 5:1	►	Faith	→	Peace with God
Romans 4:3, 4:5	►	Trust God	→	Credited with righteousness
Mark 1:15	►	Repent	→	Believe the gospel
Acts 3:19	►	Repent of your sins	→	Turn to God → Sins wiped away
Romans 8:30	►	Predestined	→	Called → Justified → Glorified
Romans 10:17	►	Bible	→	Faith → Sanctification → Heaven
Ephesians 1:11-14	►	Chosen	→	Included → Sealed → Guaranteed → Redeemed
1 John 5:13	►	Believe	→	Know you have eternal life

Is any of this very complex? Taken all together, isn't it very consistent and compelling? Isn't it wonderful that salvation is offered freely to all of us, and that we don't have to be smart, rich, good-looking, of the right social strata, etc.? Isn't it wonderful that our peace with God doesn't depend on our own efforts?

- 2 Timothy 2:13. If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.
- 2 Corinthians 9:15. **Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!**

13. The Biblical Gospel in a Simple Diagram

This is a simple diagram summarizing the biblical gospel, with the 5 principles of the Protestant Reformation noted:



IF:

- you have placed your **faith alone** (repented of trusting in your own efforts) in **Christ alone** (recognized the complete sufficiency of his life and death, and you have stopped trusting in the church, its sacraments, or its saints)

THEN:

- because of God's **grace alone**, you will go directly to heaven after you die (forever to be with the Lord, giving all the **glory to him alone**) where there will be pleasures forevermore, and you will inherit everything as a co-heir with Christ to reign with him forever

ELSE:

- you will go directly to hell, away from God's presence, and be tormented there forever.

WE KNOW ALL THIS TO BE TRUE:

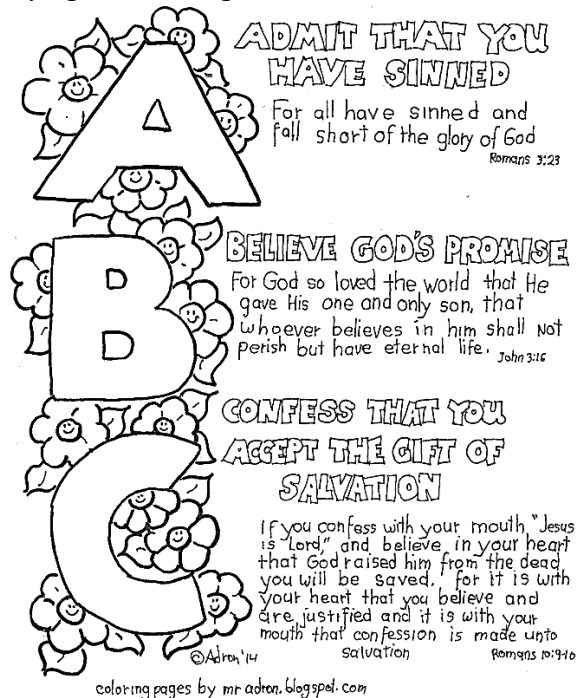
- because it is what **Scripture alone** says; because God cannot lie; and because his Word is sure and settled forever in heaven.

14. Another Formulation of the Gospel

BEFORE YOU WERE BORN	▶ Chosen/Predestined/Included/Called/Your days were ordained
INITIATION	▶ Hear the Bible
EVALUATION	▶ Count the Cost
RESPONSE	▶ Repent (change your mind about God)
COMMIT	▶ Believe the gospel/Trust Christ/Saved/Sins wiped away/Justified/Become God's Child/Credited with Righteousness/Sealed by the Holy Spirit/Redeemed/New Creation/Born again/Born from above/Indwelt by God/Etc. [See "At the Moment of Salvation..." below]
IMMEDIATE RESULTS	▶ Peace with God/Know you have eternal life/Sanctified/Good works [See "Every Spiritual Blessing..." below]
FUTURE	▶ Glorified

This page is venturing into the complex question that theologians call *ordo salutis*—the order of salvation. I'm not an expert on this, but I do have these thoughts:

- I think we often 'truncate' the gospel message, and jump too quickly to eliciting a response such as the sinner's prayer, or over-simplifying the message to the common ABC formula:



- I think we often forget Jesus' warning (in Luke 14) to count the cost of discipleship before deciding to become his follower. Doesn't '*following him*' mean we have to give up following our own thinking? Doesn't '*losing our life*' mean giving up our own desires? Doesn't '*taking up our cross*' mean accepting the fact that we will face persecution and suffering for his sake? Doesn't '*taking his yoke upon you*' mean committing to his direction and plans? When we don't warn people of the costs of being a Christian, are we not presenting the gospel in a bait-and-switch kind of way?

15. “At the Moment of Salvation ...”

(from <http://www.churchofhopeontheweb.org/salvation.htm>)

The Christian life begins the moment a person believes the Gospel, putting his complete confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. At that moment, God provides the new believer with a great number of unique and permanent blessings. “...and hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. 1:3) These blessings are a part of the inheritance of the believer, those useful doctrines and promises upon which the Christian may draw during the remainder of his lifetime on earth.

You could use this list with people who don’t believe in eternal security. You see, in order for God to take salvation away from anyone, He would have to reverse every one of these processes. Item #18, for example, shows that a Christian is a gift from God the Father to His Son. Loss of salvation would mean that God would take back His gift to His own Son. Or, in #35, we see that the believer receives a Human Spirit as part of the salvation package. Losing salvation would mean that the Human Spirit would have to be killed, or removed in some way. In a similar way you can argue in favor of eternal security from every one of these items.

1. A believer is in the Eternal Plan of God, sharing the destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such the believer is:
 - Foreknown: Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2
 - Elect: Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2
 - Predestined: Rom. 8:29,30; Eph. 1:5,11
 - Chosen in Christ: Matt. 22:14; 1 Pet. 2:4
 - Called: 1 Thess. 5:24
2. The believer is Reconciled:
 - By God, 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:20
 - To God, Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 2:14f.
3. The believer is Redeemed (purchased from the slave market of sin): Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18; Eph. 1:7.
4. The believer is Removed from Condemnation: John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1.
5. The believer is under Grace and not under Judgment (doctrine of Propitiation): Rom. 3:24-28; 1 John 2:2.
6. The believer’s sins are judged by the spiritual death of Christ on the Cross: Rom. 4:25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:24.
7. The believer is made dead to the old life and alive unto God. He is:
 - Crucified with Christ: Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20
 - Dead with Christ: Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:24
 - Buried with Christ: Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12
 - Risen with Christ: Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1
8. The believer is free from the law: Rom. 6:14; 7:4,6; 2 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 3:25.
9. The believer is adopted (placed as an adult heir in the family of God): Rom. 8:15; 8:23; Eph. 1:5.
10. The believer is justified (declared righteous): Rom. 3:24; 5:1,9; 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:7.
11. The believer is regenerated (born spiritually into the family of God): John 13:10; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5. In regeneration the believers are:
 - Born Again: John 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:23
 - Children of God: Gal. 3:26
 - Sons of God: John 1:12; 2 Cor. 6:18; 1 John 3:2
 - New Creations: 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10
12. The believer is made acceptable to God: Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5. To make a believer acceptable to Himself, God sees to it that the believer is:
 - Made righteous: Rom. 3:22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9
 - Sanctified positionally: 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11
 - Perfected forever: Heb. 10:14
 - Made qualified: Col. 1:12
13. The believer is forgiven all trespasses: Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 2:13; 3:13

14. The believer is made nigh (heavenly citizenship based on Reconciliation): Luke 10:20; Eph. 2:13,19; Phil. 3:20
15. The believer is delivered from the kingdom of Satan: Col. 1:13; 2:15
16. The believer is transferred into God's Kingdom: Col. 1:13
17. The believer is placed on a secure foundation: 1 Cor. 3:11; 10:4; Eph. 2:20
18. The believer is a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ: John 10:20; 17:2,6,9,11,12,24
19. The believer is delivered from the power of the Sin Nature; Rom. 2:29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11
20. The believer is appointed as a priest unto God: 1 Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6
21. The believer is under the care of God as a chosen generation and a protected people: Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9
22. The believer is given access to God: Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:14,16; 10:19,20
23. The believer is within the much more care of God; as such we are:
 - Objects of His love: Eph. 2:4; 5:2
 - Objects of His Grace: for salvation, Eph. 2:8,9; for keeping, Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 1:5; for service, John 17:18; Eph. 4:7; for instruction, Titus 2:12
 - Objects of His power: Eph. 1:19; Phil. 2:13
 - Objects of His faithfulness: Phil. 1:6; Heb. 13:5
 - Objects of His peace: John 14:27
 - Objects of His consolation: 2 Th. 2:16
 - Objects of His intercession: Rom. 8:34; 7:25; 9:24
24. The believer is part of Christ's inheritance: Eph. 1:18
25. The believer is a beneficiary of the inheritance from God (an heir of God and a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ): Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:14; Col. 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4
26. The believer has a new position in Christ: Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 1:9; 3:9; 2 Cor. 3:3,6; 5:20; 6:1,4 (See the section on Positional Truth following this listing.)
27. The believer is the recipient of eternal life: John 3:15; 10:28; 20:31; 1 John 5:11,12
28. The believer is a member of the family of God: Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19
29. The believer is Light in the Lord: Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:4
30. The believer is united with the Father: 1 Thess. 1:1, cf. Eph. 4:6
 - He is united with Christ: John 14:20, cf. Col. 1:27
 - A member of His Body: 1 Cor. 12:13
 - A Branch in the Vine: John 15:5
 - A Stone in the Building: Eph. 2:21,22
 - A Sheep in the Flock: Eph. 2:21,22
 - A part of His Bride: Eph. 5:25-27
 - A Priest in His Kingdom: 1 Pet. 2:9
 - A Saint of the new species: 2 Cor. 5:17
 - He is united with the Holy Spirit Rom. 8:9; 8:29
31. The believer is the recipient of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - Born of the Spirit: John 3:6
 - Baptized by the Spirit: 1 Cor. 12:13
 - Indwelt by the Spirit: John 7:39; Rom. 5:5; 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 3:24
 - Sealed by the Spirit: 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30
 - Recipient of Spiritual Gifts: 1 Cor. 12:11; 12:27-31; 13:1,2
32. The believer is glorified in Christ: Rom. 3:20
33. The believer is made complete in Christ: Col. 2:10
34. The believer is the possessor of every spiritual blessing: Eph. 1:3
35. The believer is the recipient of a human spirit: Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 7:13; 1 Thess. 5:23; Eph. 2:5
36. The believer has access to all Bible truth through the Grace system for Bible understanding and Christian growth: Col. 2 and Eph. 4

16. “Every Spiritual Blessing...”

An unpacking of Ephesians 1:3 — some of the spiritual blessings that come with our salvation.

Ephesians 1:3 • “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” — A few of the blessings...

Blessings to you at your conversion	Blessings to you for the rest of your time on Earth	Blessings to you that you will receive in Eternity
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elected from eternity past 2. Chosen from the foundation of the world 3. Drawn by God unto Himself 4. Faith given to believe 5. Forgiven of all trespasses & sins 6. Born of the Holy Spirit 7. Baptized by the Spirit 8. Crucified, buried and risen with Christ 9. Made acceptable to God 10. Justified before God 11. Removed from condemnation 12. Christ's righteousness applied to your account 13. Delivered from the kingdom of Satan 14. Transferred into God's Kingdom 15. No longer an enemy, but a friend of Christ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Empowered by the Spirit 17. Dead to sin 18. Freed from the law 19. Appointed & qualified as a priest of his new covenant 20. Gifted to serve the church 21. Loved & supported by the church 22. Noble purpose: Fisher of men 23. Salt & light to the world 24. Protected from Satanic attacks 25. Trials promised to be limited with a way of escape 26. Joy comes in the morning 27. Cup overflows 28. He who began a good work in you will perfect it 29. Victorious in Christ; more than a conqueror 30. Overcome the world 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 31. Eternal life 32. Always together with the Lord 33. Home of God to be among men 34. 'Mansion' prepared by Christ 35. Citizen of heaven 36. Beauty of heaven 37. Reign with Christ 38. Joint-heir with Christ 39. Joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand 40. Heavenly rewards 41. Crown of righteousness 42. Crown of life 43. Crown of glory 44. Victor's crown 45. Crown of rejoicing

Blessings to you both now & forever

46. Eternal Word of God, forever settled in heaven
47. Reconciled to God
48. Peace with God
49. New creation
50. Perfected forever
51. Given as a gift from the Father to Christ
52. Are a child of God
53. A member of God's family
54. New brothers & sisters
55. Communion of the saints
56. Bold access to the Father
57. Loved and cared for by God
58. Placed on a secure foundation
59. New position in Christ
60. Glorified in Christ
61. Indwelt by the Spirit
62. Sealed by the Spirit
63. Slave to righteousness
64. Object of his grace, power, faithfulness, peace, consolation, intercession
65. Claim the precious promises of God
66. Possessor of every spiritual blessing

17. Twenty Benefits of a Salvation that Comes by Faith Alone

What are the most valuable things that you have, as one who trusts in Christ alone for your salvation, and which a person trusting in his own works does not have? You have:

A proper understanding of God

1. an understanding that neither God nor Christ are stern judges eager to punish you; that God delights in us, gives us all good things to enjoy; that he invites us to spend time with him, to bring him our requests, and to pray without ceasing; that he's never too busy to spend time with us.
2. freedom from the Old Testament laws, knowing that you live in grace by faith, following the Spirit's specific leading of your life.
3. an opportunity to confess your sins directly and immediately to God, to restore fellowship and intimacy with him at any moment; the invitation to put your past behind you, knowing that God removes our sins as far as the east is from the west.

A personal relationship with God

4. a personal relationship with the almighty God, whom you can call on at any time, who loves to hear from you, to help you and meet your needs, to grant you the desires of your heart; You are a beloved child of the king who owns all things.
5. a personal relationship with Christ, the only one who rose from the dead, and who calls you his friend, who loves you more than a brother, who gave his life for you, and who constantly prays for you.
6. the indwelling presence of the all-knowing, ever-present Spirit, who teaches and leads you, who empowers you live as you ought, and who also prays constantly for you. This gives you the ability to overcome temptations and adversity and to become all you can be.

Peace with God, peace in life, and peace at death

7. true forgiveness for anything you've done in the past, and a certainty that you'll be forgiven for anything you might do in the future.
8. genuine, lasting peace with God, and a certainty that to die is gain, with eternal pleasures forever more in the presence of your loving father.
9. courage and confidence in the face of death, for either yourself, or for saved loved ones.

A reliable source of wisdom & truth

10. a place to go—the written Scriptures—for comfort, wisdom, and guidance for all of life.
11. a certainty that you can understand and use the Scriptures with the Spirit's guidance.
12. a confidence that the Bible is sufficient; there won't be new additions to God's Word.

A new family for community and support

13. a place to go—the church—for growth and interpersonal support for all areas of life.
14. a simple faith, a "yoke easy and light," without numerous church-imposed rules.
15. an opportunity and responsibility to change and improve the church.

A new purpose

16. a meaning and significance in life, with unique spiritual giftedness to fulfill a calling and a destiny larger than your own self.
17. an understanding that whatever vocation God calls you to can be lived for his glory, that no one is holier or closer to God just by being in full-time religious service.
18. an exciting opportunity to introduce others to Christ and lead them onto maturity.
19. a responsibility to build the culture for his glory, and to be good citizens, especially in a democratic country; freedom from historically problematic church-state ties.

A healthy view of pleasure

20. an understanding that God gives us all things to enjoy, although requiring moderation; an understanding that even our sexuality is a gift intended for pleasure; although restricted to marriage, the Bible does not restrict sex for procreative purposes only.

Psalm 103:2 says: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." **So, Praise the Lord!**

18. What Does Salvation Really Mean?

• **INTRODUCTION.** In Matthew 12 Jesus categorized all of humanity into 2 camps when he said "Whoever is not with me is against me." In John 8 he told a group of religious leaders that they were of their father, the devil. In Colossians 1, we are told that "he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son."

We are either "saved" or we are not, and we need to be clear what it means to be saved. This document defines what Grace Bible Church believes, based on orthodox, biblical teaching. The evangelical branch of Christianity was birthed on this teaching, but unfortunately has drifted from its moorings. It is no longer safe to assume that evangelical leaders believe and teach this foundational doctrine. Many evangelical churches do not emphasize historic Christian creeds, but even if they did there are no creeds that clearly address this issue: the doctrine of soteriology, or salvation.

• **REFORMATION ROOTS.** Martin Luther re-discovered the central, biblical principle of salvation, that is "in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" Many other verses make that clear, e.g. Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Coming out of the struggles of the Reformation came a sort of creedal statement summarizing the Protestant's view of biblical salvation, specifically that we are saved "by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, in Christ Alone." GBC holds to that formulation, and this paper will explain each key word in it. For each term, we'll define what it means and what it doesn't mean. In doing this, we will refute common errors that we find in the church around us, including among evangelical leaders who we think are not being faithful to the Word, or to the historic Protestant tradition.

First, we'll look at the 3 *Alones*.

• **GRACE ALONE.** Among many similar verses, Romans 11:6 clearly states that salvation is given to us freely by God's grace, that we do not need to earn our salvation: "And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace." Romans 6:23 says: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." When the Galatians were being taught wrongly about salvation, Paul wrote in scathing terms to counter the idea that one needs to do certain things to be saved, such as being circumcised. In fact he wrote that if they were adding works to their faith in Christ, their faith would be nullified: Galatians 5:2-4 states: "Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." We must rely completely on the sufficiency of Christ, or we are left to save ourselves by living a perfect life.

Some Evangelicals have missed this critical point. They have put an undue emphasis on man's part in the conversion process. They may have equated conversion with saying a sinner's prayer, walking an aisle, or repenting with genuine sorrow for sin. The new birth is to be born from above (John 3:3); it is not the result of a human decision because "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." (John 3:6). Like Jesus calling a dead Lazarus to "Come forth," new life comes from God. While it is true that we must be born again, we don't give birth to ourselves—God does that.

By point of reference, official Roman Catholic teaching does not hold to the view of grace *alone*. Anathemas condemning this view were clearly invoked against this Protestant teaching, and have never been rescinded. Nor would they be rescinded, since many fundamental doctrines of Catholicism are based on this. The denial of the sufficiency of Christ's death and resurrection are evident in Catholicism's repeated sacrifice of the mass, masses held for departed loved ones, the doctrines of mortal sin, purgatory, and indulgences which are still granted for good works. This view leads to practices such as extreme self-denial such as monasticism and extreme self-punishment such as flagellation.

• **FAITH ALONE**. Hebrews 12:14 says "without holiness no one will see the Lord." Jesus said in Matthew 5:20 that "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." Clearly, we sinners need to have our sin dealt with and we somehow need to obtain perfect holiness. Again Scripture is clear how this is done. Romans 4:4-5 says "Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness." And 2 Corinthians 5:21 states: "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."

This transfer of our sin to Christ and his righteousness to us, is called in theological terms, "imputed" righteousness ...Christ's perfect righteousness credited to our account through our faith. It is a wonderful truth, one that is fully consistent with "grace alone."

By reference, the official theology of the Catholic Church is that righteousness is not "imputed" but "infused." This position can be stated like this: through participation in the church's sacraments, one becomes more and more righteous. A person may obtain the needed righteousness by his own good deeds or by having those of other people applied to his life. Individuals whom the Catholic Church has declared to be 'saints' may have more good works than they needed to get to heaven and those works can be applied to others (the doctrine of 'super-abundant' works). If one has not built up enough righteousness by the end of his life, he will need to go to purgatory. We do not believe this position recognizes the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness. We believe that Galatians 5:2-4 would apply, making one's belief in Christ to be of no effect: "Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."

• **CHRIST ALONE**. 1 Timothy 2:5 states: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus." In many Scriptures we are invited to come to God, to enter into a personal relationship with him; to pour out our hearts to him; to listen to him; to taste and see that he is good. We are invited into intimate, personal relationship, not a third-party relationship (through a priest).

We are his children. 1 John 3:1 says: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" As children of the King, Hebrews 4:16 says we can "approach God's throne of grace with confidence."

The book of Hebrews stresses repeatedly that our great high priest has come, has completed his work, and sits at the right hand of God. His sacrifice was better than the sacrifice of animals because his sacrifice is once and for all. It does not need to be repeated. Christ has done it all. He exclaimed "It is finished!" By its sacerdotal system of priests and rites, Catholicism denies the tenets of Hebrews, and denigrates the work of Christ. The only mention of priests after Christ is that all Christians are priests and we are to teach, serve and pray for one another.

Generally, evangelicals state their agreement with “Christ alone.” Yet some deny it by their actions in assuming that the Catholic Church’s plan of salvation is a biblically valid way to peace with God. Yet 1 John 5:11-12 says our new life is found in Christ, not the sacraments of the church, or in infused righteousness: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

In our tolerant society, it is politically correct to assume that all religions lead to God. But it doesn’t happen to be true. It is unpleasant to think that a religion with a billion adherents could be a counterfeit religion, and leading many to hell. Yet, Jesus said in Matthew 7:13: “For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction.”

Many evangelical leaders and authors hesitate to say that anyone who claims to be a Christian is lost. But Christ warned many who named the name of Christ would be lost. Mormons claim to be Christians, as do many other cults. As shepherds of the flock, we need to warn our people of counterfeit religion, even (especially) counterfeit Christian religions.

We have shown above how the Roman Catholic Church rejects the 3 ALONEs. For the record, let’s examine the 3 nouns: Grace, Faith & Christ. We’ll see how the Catholic Church does not even use these 3 terms with biblical definitions, as we do. This is what has allowed ecumenical agreements between Protestants and Catholics to be crafted that sound clear but mean different things to different readers.

- **GRACE.** Biblically, grace is the disposition and action of God toward us that has no basis in our own goodness or merit. Romans 5:8 says: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Grace is rooted in God’s love and goodness. It includes his merciful forgiveness, his incarnation, death, burial and resurrection, as well as every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 1). To those of us he has called to be his own, it results in our eternal salvation.

Scripture makes clear that grace is God’s unmerited favor. It is not something we have earned or we deserve.

When a sacramental religion such as Catholicism teaches that one is ‘*saved by grace*,’ it is not the same use of the term *grace* as we have just described it. Digging deeper, it defines 2 kinds of grace: sanctifying and actual grace. As these graces work themselves out in a person’s life, he will discover that some sins will cause you to lose your salvation. And depending on the state of your soul at the moment of death, no one ever be absolutely certain of eternal life.

This is not the grace that we know, which results in true peace with God (Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”) and certainty of heaven (Romans 8:1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” and 1 John 5:13 “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”)

Further, salvation is initiated by being baptized, and maintained by being confirmed, receiving the Eucharist, confessing to a duly-authorized priest, and performing the prescribed penance. This is not being saved by grace, in the way the Bible defines grace.

• **FAITH.** Hebrews 11:1 defines faith: “Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” 1 Corinthians 15:19 says “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” When we place our faith in Christ, we trust in him *alone* and we don’t try to add anything to it. (Galatians 5:2: “If you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.”) When we really trust in Christ alone, if his sacrifice alone fails to placate a God angry at our sin, then we will perish in our sins. It could be a risky proposition, but we are promised we will not be put to shame.

Faith, as defined in Catholicism, is faith in a church. It is defined to be a mental agreement with all that the church teaches. Christ denounced this kind of religion in Matthew 15:8, saying: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

• **CHRIST.** Colossians 2:9 tells us that “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” 1 John 2:2 adds: “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” And in John 14:9, “Jesus answered: ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.’” Hebrews 10:12 adds: “But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” GBC holds to this biblical, exalted view of Christ.

Catholicism teaches a different Christ, one whose sacrifice on the cross needs to be repeated perpetually on the altar. It’s one whose “body, soul and divinity” becomes a wafer, and becomes wine, without changing its external form. It’s one whose death needs to be supplemented by our sufferings, and whose righteousness needs to be supplemented by the good works of other saints on our behalf.

Further the Catechism teaches that Christ is incomplete without us, and that we make him whole: paragraph 795 states: “Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God's grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we together are the whole man.”

CAUTIONS. Given the above discussion, here are some practical implications:

1. **First and foremost.** 2 Corinthians 13:5 urges us to “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.” If you are not certain that you are “saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone” then seek God earnestly while he may be found. Romans 8:14 says: “those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.” If you are not being led by God’s Spirit, then let today be the day of salvation for you.

If you are not confident of your eternal security, seek the Lord. The pastors and leaders of GBC always stand ready to help you search the Scriptures and find peace with God.

2. **Validate what evangelical leaders teach.** Paul commended those who compared even his teaching against the Scriptures (Acts 17:11 “Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”)

Unfortunately a very common assumption among leading evangelicals today is that Catholicism is a valid expression of biblical Christianity, an assumption this document disputes. As a few examples of this:

- Wheaton College has held a number of seminars basically promoting the orthodoxy of Catholicism.
- Charles Colson, the Evangelicals & Catholics Together (ECT) movement, Breakpoint hold this view.
- Summit Ministries, David Noebel’s *Understanding the Times* book.
- Norm Geisler & Ron Rhodes’ book *Conviction Without Compromise*.
- C. S. Lewis, as an Anglican (British Episcopalian), shares a number of Catholic beliefs: purgatory, etc. His views on the substitutionary atonement surprise some people when they look into it deeply enough.

19. What Does it Mean to be Saved? Biblical Steps to Faith

1. I recognize that I am a sinner in God's eyes.

Rom 3:10. There is no one righteous, not even one.

Matt 22:37-38. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matt 5: 27-28. You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

James 2:10. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Rom 3:23. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

2. I understand that God is angry at me for my sin. The punishment which God has established for sin is spiritual death (or separation from God for all eternity). I stand in judgment of hell for my sins.

Rom 5:12. Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Rom 6:23. The wages of sin is death.

John 3:18. Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 3:36. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

3. I admit my helplessness to save myself—that I cannot be good enough to earn God's favor.

Gal 2:16. Know that a man is not justified by observing the law...by observing the law no one will be justified.

Isa 64:6. All our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Rom 7:18. I know that nothing good lives in me.

4. I repent & seek the Lord earnestly.

Deut 4:29. But if you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Mark 1:15. Repent & believe the gospel.

Acts 3:19. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.

1 Pet 3:18. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

5. I stop trusting in my own goodness.

Gal 5:4. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Rom 11:6. It is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Rom 3:28. A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Titus 3:5. He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

Rom 4:5. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Gal 2:21. If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

6. I believe in Jesus Christ & put my trust in him alone.

John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 20:31. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 16:30-31. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

Romans 10:9-10. If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

John 6:40. Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life.

Romans 4:3. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

7. I accept his free gift of forgiveness & eternal life.

Rom 6:23. The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Eph 2:8-9. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

John 1:12. To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Isaiah 55:1. Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Revelation 21:6. He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.

Matthew 10:8. Freely you have received; freely give.

8. I rest in the confidence that I am totally forgiven by God, at peace with him, & I am his child forever.

Eph 1:7. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Rom 4:7-8. Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.

Rom 5:1. Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:1. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Eph 3:12. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

John 8:34-36. Jesus replied "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

1 John 5:11-13. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

20. “Micro-Decisions of Faith”

fullyanchored.wordpress.com/2014/06/24/micro-decisions-of-faith/

This chart may help you assess where someone you want to explain your faith to is at:

Disciple	Chooses to live by faith	+ 5	Multiplying	<p>Speaks to: The Whole Person Addresses: Social Barriers To Overcome: Isolation By: Participation in the Body Goal: Growth Answers: Will I live for Christ? Examples: Jerusalem Church (Acts 2:41-47) The Church at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26)</p>
	Chooses to share faith	+ 4		
	Makes Christlike choices	+ 3		
	Joins in community life	+ 2		
	Assimilates God's Word	+ 1		
Believer	Trusts in Christ	0	Harvesting	<p>Speaks to: The Will Addresses: Volitional Barriers To Overcome: Indecision & Unwillingness to Change By: Prayer & Persuasion Goal: Trust Christ Answers: Will I trust Christ? Examples: Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-29)</p>
	Turns from self-trust	- 1		
	Sees Christ as the answer	- 2		
	Recognizes spiritual need	- 3		
Seeker	Considers the truth of the gospel	- 4	Planting	<p>Speaks to: The Mind Addresses: Intellectual Barriers To Overcome: Ignorance, Misconceptions, & Error By: Presentation Goal: Understanding Answers: Who is Jesus? What does he want from me? Examples: Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)</p>
	Understands the implications	- 5		
	Aware of the gospel	- 6		
	Recognizes the relevance of the Bible	- 7		
Spectator	Looks positively at the Bible	- 8	Cultivating	<p>Speaks to: The Emotions Addresses: Emotional Barriers To Overcome: Denial, Indifference, Fear, & Antagonism By: Your Presence Goal: Attraction, Trust You Answers: What's in it for me? Examples: Woman at the Well (John 4:4-30) Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) Matthew 13:1-23</p>
	Recognizes difference in the messenger	- 9		
	Aware of the messenger	- 10		
Skeptic	Going his/her own way	- 11		
	Avoids the truth	- 12		
Cynic				

21. Song: “In Christ Alone” By Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

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In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied -
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Comments

I love this song, especially the lines What depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!;
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied; Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
No guilt in life, no fear in death; and No power of hell, no scheme of man, Can ever pluck me from His hand.
These sound so 'Protestant' to me.

I'd love for someone to now write songs for **Grace Alone**, **Faith Alone**, and **Scripture Alone** (we may already have a number of songs about **Glory to God Alone**, e.g. *The Hallelujah Chorus*).