

# The Condition of the Church Today

## A Warning About the Enemy Within

Examples of False Teaching - Part 3

May 8, 2011

### I. Review:

- A. Last Sunday we looked at false teaching within the church related to our understanding of salvation and God's grace.
  - 1. The essence of this false teaching regarding salvation is the minimizing of salvation to a single act on God's part, a single requirement on the sinner's part, and a single transaction between the sinner and God – with the promise of eternal life regardless of what you do with your salvation following the single transaction. The term “born again” is most often used to describe this view of salvation.
  - 2. In relation to God's grace, the essence of the false teaching is the expanding of God's grace to keep Christians in good standing with God who knowingly, willfully, and unrepentantly continue in any number of sinful practices.
- B. As a result of the teaching last Sunday, I was asked several questions – all of which were good questions needing an answer. In light of the questions, I thought it wise to use today's teaching to take a much closer, more comprehensive yet definitive look at what the Bible says about salvation.
  - 1. Though this is not a departure from our study on the Condition of the Church Today, it is an unplanned extra focus on salvation and the scriptures.
  - 2. We will be looking at many scriptures today, and I trust you will do your best to read and think along with me as we examine them in relation to salvation.
- C. Pray

### II. A broader yet more specific examination of salvation from the scriptures

- A. Words and phrases used when referencing salvation, describing salvation, or responding to the question of how to be saved:
  - 1. Repentance – 26 times
    - a. **Acts 2:36-41** . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified. [37] Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, **what shall we do?**" [38] Peter said to them, "**Repent,**

**and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** [39] For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." [40] And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "**Be saved** from this perverse generation!" [41] So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

2. Faith / Believe – 13 times
  - a. **John 3:16-18** . . . For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.** [17] For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. [18] **He who believes in Him is not judged;** he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
  - b. **John 3:36** . . . **He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life,** but the wrath of God abides on him.
3. Justification / Justified (describes God's side or the legal side of dealing with our sin debt and rebellion against God) – 8 times
  - a. **Romans 3:23-26** . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] **being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;** [25] whom God displayed publicly as **a propitiation in His blood through faith.** This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; [26] for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so **that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**
  - b. **Romans 5:6-9** . . . For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. [8] But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** [9] **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**

4. Born of God (a phrase describing a new life and therefore a new way of life, not just the promise of eternal life) – 8 times
  - a. **I John 2:28-29** . . . Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. [29] If you know that He is righteous, you know that **everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.**
  - b. **I John 3:7-10** . . . Little children, make sure no one deceives you; **the one who practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous; [8] **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. [9] **No one who is born of God practices sin**, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [10] By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: **anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who does not love his brother.
  - c. **I John 5:4** . . . For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world**; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.
5. Born again (a phrase describing a new life and therefore a new way of life, not just the promise of eternal life)– 4 times (2 in John, 2 in I Peter)
  - a. **John 3:3** . . . Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"
  - b. **I Peter 1:3-5** . . . Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] **who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**
6. Converted / Conversion (describes turning or changing from one state to another, such as from a state of sin to a state of holiness or a state of rebellion to a state of submission) – 4 times
  - a. **Matthew 18:1-3** . . . At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" [2] And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, [3] and said,

"Truly I say to you, **unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

7. Election / Predestination (describes God's part in our salvation, a part that takes place before we come to salvation) – 4 times
    - a. **Romans 8:28-30** . . . And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. [29] For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; [30] and **these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.**
  8. Reconciled / reconciliation (shows the relationship side) – 2 times
    - a. **Romans 5:10** . . . For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.** [11] And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
- B. Jesus' words concerning salvation beyond born again, believe, and repent. **Notice**, these statements by Jesus do not point to a single transaction or something only God does (graciously pay the penalty) but rather to us and our behavior in response to the call to salvation.
1. Eat Christ's body, drink His blood – 2 times
    - a. **John 6:53-58** . . . So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.** [54] **"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life,** and I will raise him up on the last day. [55] "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. [56] "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. [57] "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so **he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.** [58] "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; **he who eats this bread will live forever.**" (**Romans 8:29**)
  2. Born of water (cleansing/purification) and the Spirit (indwelling presence of God) – 1 time
    - a. **John 3:5** . . . Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

3. Drink the water Jesus gives (new way of thinking/living) – 1 time
  - a. **John 4:13-14** . . . Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; [14] but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but **the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.**"
4. Know God and Christ personally and intimately - 1 time
  - a. **John 17:3** . . . **This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**
5. When asked what we must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus answered, "Keep the commandments – including loving God supremely," and then added on one occasion, "sell all that you have, give to the poor, come and follow me." – 2 times
  - a. **Matthew 19:16-22** . . . And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, **what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?**" [17] And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, **keep the commandments.**" [18] Then he said\* to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery ; you shall not steal ; you shall not bear false witness; [19] honor your father and mother ; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself ." [20] The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" [21] Jesus said to him, "**If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**" [22] But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.
  - b. **Luke 10:25-28** . . . And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, **what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**" [26] And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" [27] And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul , and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." [28] And He said to him, "**You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.**"
6. Leaving all to follow Christ and loving Him above all receives the promise of eternal life. (To whom does God grant His gracious gift of salvation?)

- a. **Matthew 19:28-29** . . . And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] "**And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.**
    - b. **John 12:25** . . . He who loves his life loses it, and **he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.**
  - 7. Hear His voice and follow Him.
    - a. **John 10:27-28** . . . **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; [28] and I give eternal life to them,** and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.
  - 8. Enter through the narrow gate.
    - a. **Matthew 7:13-14** . . . **Enter through the narrow gate;** for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. [14] For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.
  - 9. Jesus confirms the necessity of a changed life in response to the call of salvation.
    - a. **Matthew 21:42-44** . . . Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? [43] "Therefore I say to you, **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.** [44] "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."
- C. Paul's words about salvation beyond faith, justification, grace, and not of works. **Notice**, these statements by Paul follow the same theme we just observed in Jesus' statements in that they do not point to a single transaction or something only God does (graciously pay the penalty) but rather to us and our behavior in response to the call to salvation.
  - 1. **Romans 2:4-8** . . . Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? [5] But because of your stubbornness and

unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, [6] who will render to each person according to his deeds: [7] **to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;** [8] but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

2. **Romans 6:20-23** . . . For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. [21] Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. [22] **But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.** [23] For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. **II Corinthians 5:18-19** . . . Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled us to Himself through Christ** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, [19] namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us **the word of reconciliation**.
4. **Galatians 6:7-9** . . . Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but **the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.** [9] Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.
5. **Philippians 3:10-14** . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; [11] in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [12] **Not that I have already obtained it** or have already become perfect, but **I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.** [13] Brethren, **I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;** but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
6. **II Thessalonians 2:13-15** . . . But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning **for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** [14] It was for this He called you

through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15] So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

- D. **I Peter 1:1-2** . . . Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, **to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood**: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

### III. Conclusion

- A. The question: When are we born again? The answer depends on whether you take a reduced view of salvation or a comprehensive view, or on whether you see being born again as a single transaction with guaranteed eternal consequences, or you see being born again as beginning with repentance from your old way of living (rebellion against God, going your own way, selfishness) and entering into a new life with a new way of living (obedience to God and supreme love of God) that continues on through the duration of this life into the glorious eternal kingdom of God.
- B. You see:
1. The true gospel does not separate being born again from the practical reality of repentance and becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.
  2. The true gospel does not separate faith in God from obedience to God, or a life of faith from a life of obedience. In other words, the true gospel makes no distinction between being born again and living the rest of your life keeping the commandments of God and doing the will of God.
  3. The true gospel does not separate the indwelling life of Christ and the divine nature from the willful practice of known sin – as if you could have the one and still do the other.
  4. In other words, it is the false gospel which separates salvation from sanctification, or being born again from living the rest of your life unto God, or abiding in the vine from bearing fruit according to the life of the vine – as if you could separate the act of gaining eternal life in heaven after you die from living for the Lord while yet alive. This is why church history and some even today speak of **being saved** rather than having been born again.

- C. I want to finish today with three scriptures:
1. **II Corinthians 5:17** . . . Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
    - a. **He is a new creature** – not he ought to be, but he is.
    - b. And how is he a new creature? The final phrase says it all: **Behold, new things have come** – that is, new thinking, new values, new purposes in life, new feelings in the heart, new desires, new uses of the body, new choices, and new behavior. all things in view of the mind.
  2. Paul affirms this truth in a number of places, but this one says it succinctly: “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (**Galatians 5:24**).
  3. And John affirms this truth when he says: “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (**I John 3:2-3**).
- D. Though we may work out our salvation imperfectly, those who are born of God work it out with fear and trembling rather than carelessly or grudgingly or as if they could serve two masters – and not just at the moment of repentance and faith in Christ, but for the duration of their lives after that beginning moment.