

Evaluation of Lordship Salvation

Outline:

1. Introduction.
2. Definition.
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4. Evaluation of the Elements.
5. The Problem they are trying to resolve.

George Barna, a noted Christian analyst and researcher recently disclosed some of his current findings concerning Christianity in America. Four important themes were revealed:

Theme 1: Increasingly, Americans are more interested in faith and spirituality than in Christianity.

Theme 2: Faith, in the American context, is now individual and customized. Americans are comfortable with an altered spiritual experience as long as they can participate in the shaping of that faith experience.

Theme 3: Biblical literacy is neither a current reality nor a goal in the U.S.

Theme 4: Effective and periodic measurement of spirituality – conducted personally or through a church – is not common at this time and it is not likely to become common in the near future.

This means that people are becoming more religious but want to develop their own brand of spirituality. While the Bible calls individuals to participate in their own spiritual growth, it does not allow for each person “to do what is right in their own eyes.” (Deut 12:8; 21:9; Jdg 17:6; 21:25) When people are biblically illiterate there is no unchanging standard by which one may measure spiritual growth, so analyses of one’s own spiritual growth is based on emotion and subjectivity. Most pastors surveyed are appalled at the immaturity of Christians, but sadly, many have helped keep it that way.

While there is clearly a growing problem of people who claim to be Christian but do not believe the Bible to be the inerrant, inspired Word of God, there is also a growing problem among those who do. Many brothers and sisters in Christ have been led to believe the theology known as “Lordship Salvation.” Most are indeed part of the Family of God, so confrontation and correction should be done with grace. Sometimes even a simple presentation of facts, presented graciously, is not received graciously. In our age of political correctness any time the failures of another are pointed out those who unveil the truth are viewed as the bad guys. This can be said whether one is disclosing a terrorist, the sin of homosexuality, lies told or the truth manipulated. For a spiritual leader to

fail to point out a violation of truth is a rejection of his assignment (Acts 20:28-31) and is a mark of disobedience (Eph 5:11-12). Following our Lord's model, spiritual leaders are to seek to balance grace and truth (John 1:18), all the while remembering that failure to point out error is not a loving act. The purpose of this study is to accurately present the facts and evaluate the reasoning behind the movement known today as "Lordship Salvation."

The theological "catch phrase" used by the adherents is, "If He is not 'Lord of all,' then He is not 'Lord at all.'" The invitation is then given to make Jesus the "Lord of your life." This invitation often seems to be attached to the clear presentation of the gospel message to "believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved" (John 3:16; Acts 16:31), and that the basic parameters of the gospel are to believe that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and rose again on the third day (1 Cor 15:1-4). Truly, many have accepted that message and are saved by the grace of God given through faith (Rom 5:1-2). The problem arises when "Lordship Salvation" advocates do not stop there with the good news of eternal salvation but add to it, sometimes much later, that the evidence of one's salvation is the production of spiritual fruit and if this fruit is not produced then one is not really saved. In practical terms this means that real believers have conquered sin (Jesus is Lord of all their life and the fruit production has conquered sin) and are producing fruit that is visible and open to evaluation by others.

It is legitimate and reasonable to ask where this theological position comes from and if it is valid. Once a person arrives at a conclusion it should lead us to be ready and able to defend the position, giving a reason for the hope now in us (1 Pet 3:15), and thus minister to others. One of the best ways to get people to think is to ask questions for which you have solid biblical answers.

Why should this position be challenged? Should we simply be tolerant and move on or should we open up a discussion concerning important areas of theology?

My personal witness along with some close friends has noted that the Lordship adherents consider those who don't believe as they do are simply uninformed and unenlightened. Some of them find it difficult to believe that anyone can know their viewpoint and actually reject it. We have found that there are also those who know the underlying theology and then become fatalistic when they fail to measure up to the ecclesiological standards imposed by the various churches or individuals who dare to proclaim the foundation of this belief system. In many ways it is like theology that believes an individual's good works are their ticket to heaven.

The foundation of the Lordship position began in the Reformation and was a reaction to the decadence of Roman Catholicism in the 1500's. It seeks an answer to the age-old question, "Can a saved person still be involved in a life of sin?" A simple answer is found in the first letter to the church at Corinth which is written to people who were clearly carnal and without fruit, yet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit were still called "saints" (1 Cor 1:2). A quick overview of the rest of the New Testament epistles, written to gatherings of believers, recognizes most were written because of a problem with sin, false theology or a lack of "fruit" production.

A good question to begin a conversation with a person who holds to this position is to ask them to explain what they mean by the statement "If He is not 'Lord of all,' then He is not 'Lord at all?'" They may use another statement that is similar. This will let you know how much they know and the intensity with which they hold to this theology. Be prepared to listen. Sometimes it will not take much to lead them out, so let us not bury them with facts all at one time.

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Wikipedia defines the terms.

Lordship salvation is a teaching in Christian theology which maintains that good works are a necessary consequence of being declared righteous before God.^[1] In other words, Jesus cannot be considered a person's savior (that is, bringer of salvation) without simultaneously being lord of the person's life, which is demonstrated by the gradual purification from sin and the exercising of good works (for instance, caring for widows and orphans, James 1:27). This teaching is advocated in many of the creeds of Protestantism, but is not universally accepted. Advocates and opponents of the doctrine within Protestantism all agree that justification before God is through faith alone by grace alone, but they differ on whether true salvation can ever be followed by leading a worldly life or even apostasy.

The opposing position is called Free Grace theology which maintains that the Lordship salvation view is marked by legalism and a lack of graciousness.^[2] In particular, Free Grace theology claims that the Lordship position is "fixated" on the works-minded Gospel of Matthew while overlooking the Grace-minded Gospel of John. An in-between position also exists which asserts that the Lordship salvation view is legalist and Free Grace theology is antinomian (which means without any laws).

Question: What is the underlying theology of Lordship Salvation?

Some might try to say that it doesn't matter, but statements of theological fact need a solid foundation. My personal belief is that too many modern "scholars" spend too much time in their commentaries and too little time in the Scripture. Many of the quotations used to prove the presuppositions are from men and not the Word of God.

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Lordship Salvation is promoted by those whose foundational theology is Calvinistic, meaning it follows the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564). It is easily remembered by the acrostic T-U-L-I-P.

We will begin by defining what these letters represent.

1. T - Total Depravity means to them that mankind is so totally depraved that they cannot have even the faith to be saved apart from divine intervention. Rom 3:10-18,23; Eph 2:5
2. U - Unconditional Election means that salvation is made by the sovereign choice of God. 1 Thes 1:4; Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:5,11
3. L - Limited Atonement is the position that Jesus Christ only paid for the sins of the "elect." Matt 20:28
4. I - Irresistible Grace meaning that God's saving grace for the "elect" cannot be forever resisted. Rom 9:19
5. P - Perseverance of the Saints means that those who are truly saints will persevere to the end, producing visible fruit as evidence of their salvation. Rev 13:10; 14:12 (Fruit Inspectors)

If this were to be clearly stated in one paragraph it would sound something like this:

Mankind is so totally depraved that only by the Sovereign selection of God can anyone be saved since Jesus Christ died only for those selected in eternity past. So that man can have faith for salvation the Holy Spirit will make only those selected "alive." If one is selected as one of the "elect," then God's grace becomes irresistible and because it is impossible for the "elect" to resist. None of the "elect" will fail to believe. Simply put, mankind has no real choice on whether or not to accept the gift of salvation because God will force His selected ones to choose for Him and thus be saved. A person can only know if they are divinely selected as "elect" if a sanctified perseverance exists to the end of life. This perseverance

includes turning one's back on sin, while allowing for occasional mistakes, and producing fruit in accordance with their salvation.

The fruit must be defined by others who have decided that they themselves are “elect” because of their own personal fruit. It is amazing that many who hold this position will say in the next breath, “but who knows who the elect are?” Huh?

A couple of possible questions to ask those you are seeking to minister to are:

1. Do you know what TULIP refers to and what the letters mean?
2. Do you believe all of them?

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As we have noted the term “Lordship Salvation” is based on Calvinistic theology known by the acrostic T-U-L-I-P. It is usually recognized that if the definition of “Total Depravity” is found to be incorrect, then the model is incorrect, for each subsequent point is built on this foundation. As we will see, there is a correct biblical understanding of each point as proven by the Scripture itself. There will not be a lot of quotes from John Calvin, Martin Luther or other Reformers, because many theological positions have been almost entirely based on analyzing what previous scholars have said. While they were brilliant individuals who accomplished a great deal students must realize that they were coming out of 1000 years of the “dark ages” that was spiritually ruled by allegorists and mystics.

A. Total Depravity evaluation.

1. Introduction.

Wikipedia: Total depravity (also called total inability and total corruption) is a theological doctrine that derives from the Augustinian concept of original sin. It is the teaching that, as a consequence of the Fall of Man, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin and, apart from the efficacious or prevenient grace of God, is utterly unable to choose to follow God or choose to accept salvation as it is freely offered.

The Free Grace Position is that individuals cannot save themselves, but that all have the freedom to believe in the One who does save. John 8:24

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

“Total Depravity” thus means that mankind is so totally depraved that faith to be saved is impossible apart from divine intervention. Rom 3:10-18,23; Eph 2:5

The definition of Total Depravity is extracted from several passages but the primary ones are Romans 3:10-18; Romans 3:23 and Ephesians 2:5.

2. Comments on Romans 3:10-18.

In Romans 3:10-18, Paul begins by saying “There is none righteous, not even one.” In context he is speaking of both Jews and Gentiles, representing all mankind. The main verb of this Greek text is the present tense, Active voice, Indicative mood of the “to be” verb (EIMI). It is coupled with the negative OUK, translated “there does not exist one who is righteous.” It is clear that it is not speaking of the imputed righteousness (called Justification) that is received at salvation by faith (Rom 3:22) but rather the lack of righteousness due to the presence of sin (Rom 3:9). The main verb (OUK EIMI) governs the rest of the descriptions that are to follow which are all in present Participles (In Intermediate Greek 201 a student is taught that present Participles are contemporaneous action with the main verb. This means that the interpreter must seek to find the main verb and look at the participles in relation to it). If the present tenses are understood as “simple presents” (just taking them at face value which is known as the principle of “Occam’s Razor”), Paul is clearly teaching that no one fulfills all the comments all the time. No one (including the elect or Believers) acts righteously *all the time* just as no one understands everything or seeks God... *all the time*. The entire world is invited to “seek God” (Acts 15:17; 17:27 uses the same word), but none of them do *all the time*, even the saved.

A couple of ministerial questions might involve:

1. If a person begins to quote some Greek the question might involve asking for the simplest interpretation of the verse.
2. Would you seek to honestly exegete the verse without prior theological convictions.

Lordship Theology interprets this passage to say that no one is ever righteous apart from God’s election, having been made alive and grace irresistibly applied so that one has saving faith, that no one understands anything about God and that no one ever seeks God on their own. This interpretation uses the present tense of EIMI as though it were a perfect tense and in a sense would add the negative M8 (the “8” is used throughout to transliterate the Greek letter “eta,” to distinguish it from an

“epsilon”) to make it an “absolutely not, never, ever” statement. Had the “to be” verb (EIMI) been used in a perfect tense it would open the door to the Lordship Theology interpretation, but it is not.

The interpretation of Romans 3:10-18 is that no one does anything all the time, be it good or evil, not that no one ever does anything good.

3. Comments on Romans 3:23

Romans 3:23 taken in context is a clear statement that all humans have sinned and that the solution is faith in Christ. Rom 3:21-26

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 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.

4. Comments on Ephesians 2:1-5.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

The key issue here is the phrase “dead in your trespasses and sins” and its interpretation and application by the Lordship Theology adherents. Their claim is that man being spiritually dead cannot have saving faith so God must “make them alive” so they can try to resist His saving grace. Some divisions within this theology preach that the Holy Spirit then “believes” for those who are Unconditionally elected. They call this position “Sovereign Grace” but a better title might be, “Sovereign Faith.” There are other groups who believe that one doesn’t even have to believe, just be “elect.”

A possible question might be to ask if they are sure they have properly interpreted the word “dead?”

The Greek word for dead is NEKROS. It is also used in Ephesians 1:20; 2:1; and 5:14. There are several different types of death (some see 8,

others 9) including sexual death as in the case of Abraham (Heb 11:12). It is often used of physical death and in some cases used of spiritual and physical death in the same passage (Matt 8:22= let the dead bury their dead...). Ephesians 5:14 is a call to Believers to “awake from the dead (NEKROS),” indicating a temporal death lacking the “imitation of God” (5:1) and marked by no fruit and sin (Eph 5:2-13).

Paul in the same epistle refers to more than one type of death. To the Lordship Theology adherents a person who was immoral, impure and greedy would lack the “fruit” necessary to “prove” their salvation, so those who practice such things were not saved and clearly not “elect.” Ephesians 5:3-5 though are clearly addressed to the “saints.” Ephesians 5:14 says to “Awake, sleeper...” which is a Present Active Imperative calling the “sleeper” to “awaken” whenever the “sleeper” spiritually falls asleep, not to “be awakened” by an outside source. It is clearly a command to “saints” to “wake up.” If “election” as commonly proclaimed by the Lordship Theology adherents is based solely on the sovereign choice of God, then everyone who reads or hears of this will “wake up.”

Also, “Arise from the dead...” is an Aorist Active Imperative which is something that the individual is called to do at a point of time, not wait for it to be done to them. In any event, based on the Active Voices used in the verbs in 5:14, it proves the participation of the individual in the “wakening” and “arising.”

The word “dead” means “separated” and thus not functional in a particular area. It is clear that biological life has the ability to decide and from the evidence of multiple passages (John 1:12;3:16,18,36). It is clear that unbelievers being spiritually dead but biologically alive are called to saving faith, to make a decision for Christ (John 5:24,38,46; 6:28-29,35,36,40,47 et al). Thus the proposition that because man is spiritually dead they cannot have saving faith is not a reasonable conclusion based on the bulk of Scripture.

The phrase “made us alive” in Ephesians 2:5 is the Aorist tense, Active voice, Indicative mood of SUDZWPOIEW, meaning literally to “make alive.” Its only other use is in Col 2:13 (And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He **made you alive** together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.). **There is no question what the word “make alive” means, rather when it happens.**

One possible question is to ask for the sequence of events described in Eph 2:5.

The New American Standard translation reads, Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

If one were to consider a literal and expanded translation of Ephesians 2:5, it would read, “Even we being dead in the sins at a point of time He made us alive in the Christ, for by grace (Dative case of CHARIS = instrument of salvation), you all are (present Active Indicative of EIMI = you all are; elited is “made alive”), having been saved (Perfect Passive Participle SWDZW = completed action prior to main verb which is “you are” plus elited {not in text but contextually understood} “made alive,” which is Aorist Participle that precedes EIMI but not SWDZW).”

This reading of Ephesians 2:5 translates the Greek in its simplest form without reading in one’s theology. It is, “Even we being dead in the sins at a point of time He made us alive in the Christ, for by the instrument of grace, you all are, *having been made alive*, having been previously saved.”

If one were to take this verse by itself then it could support the position that one is saved by Sovereign choice alone apart from any kind of faith. The sequence here is: Dead-saved-made alive.

A pertinent question would be to ask how the salvation comes about.

To understand the theology the context must be considered so we must continue reading in Ephesians 2. Verses 6-10 say, “and raised us up with Him (Aorist Active Indicative of SUNEGEIRW = to raise with; used 3x; Col 2:12; 3:1; this is the second of three Aorist Active Indicatives, the first was “made alive” so the KAI connects the two verbs together after the parenthesis), and seated us with Him (Aorist Active Indicative SUGKATHIDZW = to seat with; used 2x; Luke 22:55; 3rd Aorist Active Indicative; this verse is teaching three things that happened as a result of salvation; made alive, raised up and seated with Him) in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Jesus is literally seated with the Father and we are in Christ positionally sharing His resurrection), 7 in order that in the ages (not the Church Age but when we literally receive our new bodies) to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Surpassing grace blessings of inheritance for eternity). 8 For (explains how we received the opportunity for “surpassing grace blessings”) by (“the” referring to that just mentioned in verse 5 which is saving grace) grace you (same construction as verse 5 = you all are; here “raised and seated with Christ” of verse 6) have (having) been saved through faith (Perfect Passive Participle SWDZW as in verse 5); and that (Demonstrative Pronoun, Neuter Singular Nominative; this word must be connected with either grace, salvation or faith; grace is Feminine, faith is Feminine, saved is a Masculine Plural Participle; the Neuter Demonstrative Pronoun can be

used to refer to previously discussed topics. Here it is probably salvation, faith and grace.) not (OUK + EK means out of) of yourselves, *it is* (words not in text) the gift of God (the Greek word order is reversed; “of God the gift.” Gift is the word DWROV in the Neuter which is used 19x but is not used of the gift of salvation, grace or faith so there is no interpretative assistance; this is the only place it is used of a gift from God; it is used of a gift given without hesitation to honor someone, give to the temple or support of the poor or out of pure joy; cf DWREA = used 11x; always used of a free spiritual gift from God concerning salvation or grace; DWREW = used 3x; Mark 15:45; 2 Pet 1:3,4 is a gift given from one’s power and authority; DWR8MA = used 2x; Rom 5:16; Jas 1:17 of a free gift given as a result of something; and CHARISMA = a gift given as a result of grace); 9 not as a result (EK = out) of works, that no one should boast. (10) For we (Believers) are (present Active Indicative EIMI = an established fact) His workmanship (POI8MA = a result of doing something; His “doings”), created (Aorist Passive Participle KTIDZW = having been created at a point of time) in Christ Jesus for (EPI = for or concerning) good (AGATHOS = dative neuter plural; that which becomes good) works, which (Dative Neuter Plural connects us to “good works”) (the) God prepared beforehand (Aorist Active Indicative PROETOIMADZW = to prepare beforehand, get it all organized; used 2x; Rom 9:23), (in order) that (in them) we should (might) walk (Aorist Active Subjunctive PERIPATEW = to walk about) in them.

Thus a simple, literal and expanded translation of Ephesians 2:8 would be, “For by the grace mentioned earlier, you all are (raised and seated with Christ), having been saved through faith and that not out of yourselves, *it is* of God the gift (9) not out of works lest any man might boast. (10) For we are His doings, having been created at a point of time in Christ Jesus for good works, which (good works) the God prepared beforehand in order that in them we might walk.

Is the “gift” referring to “the gift of grace,” or the “gift of salvation” or a “gift of faith?” No one really has an issue with understanding it to be of the first two. The issue is with the third. Only one place passage refers to a “gift of faith” and that is in conjunction with special spiritual gifts given to Holy Spirit selected members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:8-11), not to the entire body of Christ.

TULIP adherents choose “faith” and say “God gives the faith to the ‘unconditionally elect’ of eternity past to freely choose for Christ.” Some claim those not elect can have faith, just not saving faith. The previous analysis of Ephesians 2:5 has already disproved that God gives the faith.

Lordship Theology adherents claim that those not “elect” cannot have saving faith. This is easily refuted by the Apostle Paul whom they so frequently cite. Part of the problem is that the adherents are putting

together a model without all the pieces. It is like putting together a model car that is missing the wheels. If you just look at the top of the model you won't see that there are no wheels.

Paul in the Book of Romans (written 5-6 years before Ephesians) has previously defined "saving faith." The first chapter establishes man's responsibility for failure to accept Jesus Christ as savior (Rom 1:18-23). It is beyond any reasonable explanation of God's revealed truth of how His Justice could hold someone responsible for faith when it is impossible for them to have faith unless He gives it to them.

Paul in Romans teaches that Unbelieving Gentiles could obey the call to faith in Jesus Christ and thus be saved. (Rom 1:5-6 through whom (Jesus Christ our Lord) we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake,) **Paul also taught that the "ungodly" could have faith while "ungodly" to receive God's righteousness.** (Rom 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,)

Faith introduces us to saving grace and gives us hope. Rom 5:1-3

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

If God's "free gift" was indeed "faith" then it is easily understood to be the ability to decide. The merit is not in the ability to decide but rather in the object in which the faith is placed.

B. Unconditional Election.

Wikipedia: Unconditional election is the Calvinist teaching that before God created the world, he chose to save some people according to his own purposes and apart from any conditions related to those persons.

The Free Grace position is that God foreknew who would have faith and conditioned salvation solely upon the acceptance of the grace gift of His Son.

Some questions for us to answer. Why spend time in a study such as this? Why make such an issue with others who are part of the Body of Christ? What is important? Is this important?

One of the primary problems of modern man is that most people have not been taught how to rationally think. When one finally penetrates the "inner circle" of Calvinist teaching, whether by curiosity or invitation, they are then shown from the Scripture the doctrinal tenets called T-U-L-I-P. Sadly,

because the teachers seem to “know” their topic, others tend to accept the words without question. The people are usually good people who love the Lord so they are trusted without question and their message easily accepted. They are frequently the students of others who have been taught in the same way.

The Body has become so “biblically illiterate” due to its lack of interest in the Word of God and the substitutionary focus on feelings that most do not know how to determine God’s truth. People have become disillusioned with God and His Word in part because the leaders have not been able to identify the important things and for the most part have kept hidden what they really believe.

Those who hold this position have not properly reasoned through the statements of their doctrinal tenets. Adherents claim (rightfully) that there are some things that are “beyond reason.” These positions however are not “beyond reason” because the Scripture itself refutes them. This would almost be expected from people whose basic hermeneutical premise is allegorical. Allegorical teaching does not require literal, historical fact, but rather is free to read in meanings hidden to the Scripture. For example, to some who interpret the Bible allegorically, the Flood of Noah of Genesis 6-8 need not be literal, but rather this flood is a picture of the trials of life. The same thing is often done with the entire book of Revelation.

Their positions were primarily derived from the teachings of Augustine (354-430 A.D.), one of the early allegorists. After a stint in Manichaeism (Iranian Gnosticism), Augustine finally converted to Christianity. He was viewed as a saint by Roman Catholicism. The Reformers considered him to be one of the fathers of their teachings about salvation and divine grace. Both Catholics and Reformation Protestants have set aside June 15 as a feast day to honor him. The problem is not that their positions are beyond human reason but that they have failed to compare Scripture with Scripture, a primary hermeneutical principle. Augustine’s teachings were picked up by John Calvin and Martin Luther who used them as their theological grid while doing their commentaries and translations.

An important item to note is that Free Grace adherents do not have to hide any part of their soteriological belief system while giving the gospel to an unbeliever. In fact, most Lordship people probably use a Free Grace presentation of the gospel that they give to others because a literal understanding of Scripture demands it.

What would an honest “Lordship” gospel presentation sound like? What would need to be done with John 3:16? It would have to sound something like this,

“For God so (conditionally) loved the world (but really only some of those in it, whom He chose in eternity past), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever (the Holy Spirit makes alive) believes (but you can’t really do it if you are not chosen) in Him, will not perish (because you were already saved from eternity past if you were chosen) but have eternal life (which you will only know if you persevere to the end).”

God uses all of us, no matter how mistaken we might be, for He is God and even if we mean it for evil, He can turn it to good (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28-29). When much of a Believer’s “overt fruit” is recognizable, it is a tribute to the grace of God, not of the individual’s spiritual greatness or even accuracy. Both John Wesley and Martin Luther were used greatly by God, even though they were spiritually polarized. Both sought truth and thought they had found it.

If “Unconditional Election” is true then the requirement and invitation to multitudes of unbelievers by the Lord Himself to believe are nothing more than useless, empty words. Since “sound doctrine is built on the words of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 6:3), to make that claim borders blasphemy. In fact, adherents must redefine the word “faith” or “believe” by removing any importance of a decision in the selection of its object. They are essentially describing a blind faith, with an undefined object. This is a “leap of faith” rather than a “step of faith” which the Bible invites all people to make (John 5:39-47).

This tenet called “Unconditional Election” is built on the premise of the “Total Depravity” of man, as seen earlier. If biological man has the ability to have saving faith thus disproving “Total Depravity,” then “Unconditional Election” falls as a tenet as well. Some would argue that it stands on its own apart from the other four tenets. It is conceivable that one could believe “one-point” of T-U-L-I-P, and that point be “Unconditional Election.” Let us accept that premise for the sake of discussion. An analysis will show that it too is incorrect without being considered an outgrowth of “Total Depravity.”

Adherents to this position cite as proof the verses that deal with “predestination” and “election.” The word “Predestination” comes from the Greek word PROORIDZW, which means simply “to mark out a boundary beforehand.” The meaning “to mark out a boundary beforehand,” can be easily understood to include the Lord’s instructions on how to be saved and not just be a matter of His sovereign choice. The Greek words for “election” are the verb EKLEGW {used 22x}, and the noun EKLEKTOS {used 22x}, along with a couple of cognate words (derived from the Greek root words). These words are primarily translated “election” in the King James Version and “choose” in the New American Standard.

They are found in verses such as: Rom 8:29-30 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. **Eph 1:5** He **predestined** us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **Eph 1:11** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, **1 Thes 1:2-5** We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His **choice** of you; 5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

According to those who believe “Unconditional Election,” if one is not one of the “elect” then nothing they can do will make them “elect.” They will never make Jesus the “Lord of their life” for they cannot, thus invitations to make Him “Lord” by the proponents defy reason. If one can’t make Him Lord, they can’t, and if they can they will be forced to do so. There is really no need for evangelism other than obedience to the command of God.

There are some legitimate questions to ask those who hold this viewpoint, such as, “Can the unconditionally elect say “no?” If not, then how can a call to faith truly be an option that bears responsibility for the decision?

Another might be, “Since it is God’s stated desire that all be saved and come to a full knowledge of the truth, why won’t everyone be saved? How would you explain **1 Timothy 2:3-4** (This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.) and **2 Peter 3:9-10** (The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.)

Adherents of Calvinism often counter these questions with a question and ask, “do you believe that everyone is saved?” The answer is obviously, “no” but that of itself does not begin to explain the Scriptures which clearly state God’s will. Sadly, this answer is a debater’s technique for dodging a question rather than answering it.

A better explanation is that God knew who would believe based on which plan He chose to share His love (1 Pet 1:2; Rom 8:29). His plan was not simply to “glorify Himself” as many have stated and thus oversimplified the entirety of why man exists. His Plan included making a being who could

freely love Him in return and not just because He chose to make that creature that way.

Those who believe that the Holy Spirit makes the “unconditionally elect” alive so that they can believe, while they do not admit it, predestine by the power of God the unbeliever or “non-elect” to hell, which is clearly not His stated will. Adherents to this position argue that “the Bible doesn’t say that people are predestined to hell,” but fail to present other viable (translate Scriptural) options. If the answer is not “either-or” then there must be at least a third option. What is it?

Lordship Salvation adherents are quite selective in the verses used to prove their position. They fail to let Scripture interpret itself, taking the Bible to be a unified whole.

Adherents quote John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will (THEL8MA = used 62x; also used in John 7:17 if any man wills {THELW} to do His will, then...; which certainly implies that man can will to do God’s will and likewise in Matt 7:21; 12:50) of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Lordship adherents believe that if unregenerate man could exercise faith for salvation then it is the “will of man” and thus not saving faith. The “will of man” is saying that man’s will or desire alone to be saved will not save, for will alone is belief in oneself, not faith in another.

Also quoted is John 6:44, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him (Aorist Active Subjunctive ELKUW = used 8x; to draw, pull); and I will raise him up on the last day.” The claim is that the Father draws only the “elect” to the Son as evidenced by the use of the Subjunctive. Jesus uses the same word a few chapters later, to say that if He goes to the cross (which He did), He will draw all men to Himself. John 12:32 “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” The word “ELKUW” is used here in the Future Active Indicative meaning that it will indeed happen, not that it may happen. Thus, if it is a matter of “drawing” all men will be saved.

If a person were to look up all the usages of the words for “election” a number of reasonable questions would emerge. For example, was Judas Iscariot elect? Jesus said he was in John 6:70-71 which says, “Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you (Aorist Middle Indicative EKLEGW = this is the same word used in Eph 1:4, “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world), the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” 71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.”

If Judas was elect, was He saved? Jesus indicated he wasn't. John 17:12
 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

It is clear that if Judas was called "elect" by Jesus, then according to Calvinist theology he was "saved." His suicide though is a clearcut indication that he didn't endure to the end (Matt 27:5), and thus Judas "betrays" the Lordship position.

The problem comes from an initial misunderstanding of the interpretation of the words for "Election" which literally means to "call out." When one defines the word to refer to eternal salvation this is called "eisegesis" which is Greek meaning to "read into." The objective is "exegesis" which means to "read out" referring to the meaning of the original author. It is rather a "calling out" or choosing of an individual for a specific task. Israel was God's "chosen people" (Acts 13:17 et al), but obviously not all of them were saved.

Judas refutes the tenet of "Unconditional Election."

C. Limited Atonement.

Wikipedia: The doctrine states that Jesus Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross is limited in scope to those who are predestined unto salvation and its primary benefits are not given to all of humanity but rather just believers.

The Free Grace position is that Jesus Christ paid for the sins of all mankind, past, present and future. 1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole (HOLOS is used here. The word PAS, translated "all" can be used to refer to "all" of a part. This word is global or universal in its meaning.) world."

This tenet is the next progression from Total Depravity and Unconditional Election.

The key verse used by the adherents is Matthew 20:28 (and its parallel, Mark 10:45), "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom (LUTRON = used 2x; a payment for another held hostage) for many." This is the primary proof text to claim that Jesus Christ only ransomed the elect, not all mankind. The only other word for "ransom" in the New Testament is ANTILUTRON, used one time in 1 Tim 2:5-6 "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the

man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.“ which itself disproves this position.

It is true that only some of mankind accept the “ransom,” the payment for sins, but it is categorically not true that Jesus Christ paid only for the sins of the elect.

D. Irresistible Grace.

Wikipedia: Irresistible Grace (or efficacious grace) is a doctrine in Christian theology particularly associated with Calvinism, which teaches that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom He has determined to save (the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to faith in Christ.

The Free Grace position is that any human, since they have been given the perfect ability to decide, can resist God's saving grace.

A key proof text used is Romans 9:18-22. Let us take an analytical look.

“So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
 19 You will say to me then, " Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will? (BOUL8MA = used 3x; Acts 27:43; 1 Pet 4:3; a result of deliberate a exercise of volition; BOULOMAI = used 34x; cf 2 Pet 3:9; God is not “willing” that any perish... It is clear that His will is resistible.)" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? (Present Middle Participle ANTAPOKRINOMAI = to judge against; 2x; Luke 14:6; an arrogant person will) The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? (If it is a “thing” it has no say; 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel (SKEUOS = used 23x; consider this words used in 2 Tim 2:20-22 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Your “vessel” is honorable or dishonorable because of the presence or lack of sanctified decisions) for honorable use and another for common use? (yes the potter does have a right over clay; it may be designed for one thing or another but either through defilement or cleansing may be used for something else. For example, a spittoon that becomes a drinking flask.) 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared (Perfect Passive or Middle Participle KATARTIDZW = to be prepared or prepare oneself, which one? Both? The word indicates to make fit, sound or complete, to mend; a process.) for destruction?"

To properly analyze this passage requires considering preceding context found in Romans 9:10-18. Consider the following:

“And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." (He is quoting Exodus 33:19 where Moses had interceded for Israel and the Lord was about to show Himself to Moses) 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." (Exodus 4:21; 7:3,13; read Exodus 8-14; The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh hardened his own heart; Exo 8:15,32; 9:34. Both statements are true. How? It is not permissible to accept one truth at the expense of another. Wisdom seeks understanding of how they are both true. Compare Prov 1:6) 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.”

Proper analysis must not forget the intermediate context in which Paul established personal responsibility for decisions. In Chapter 1:18-24, it is clearly seen that one given authority to make decisions has the responsibility for them. Pharaoh was involved in the “hardening process” through his responses to the physical circumstances that God brought about. God knew how Pharaoh would respond but did not make him respond that way. To believe that God made Pharaoh (or anyone else for that matter) make decisions in opposition to Him is blasphemy for deems God responsible for sin. Israel was in fact known for hardening their hearts, just like Pharaoh (1 Sam 6:6; Psa 95:8; 2 Cor 3:14; Heb 3:8-14; 4:7).

The context immediately following Romans 9:18-22 points out Israel's “hardness of heart” that opened the door to the Gentiles. Romans 9:23-29 says, “And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand (Aorist Active Indicative PRO8TOIMADZW = used 2x; Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. The word itself indicates to prepare lodging or supper.) for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" 26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE

WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, ***IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;*** 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

The Gentiles, by faith, received Mercy and Grace which documents that no matter what kind of “vessel” we are in, salvation is still available through faith. Rom 9:30-33

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

One might legitimately ask why God would “harden” His chosen people?

E. Perseverance of the saints.

Analysis of this position should also be helpful for ministering to Southern Baptists who have adopted the attitude that those who are saved wouldn't do certain sinful things. Could a misguided Christian murder an abortion doctor? Can a Christian be immoral? Can a Christian get drunk? Be an alcoholic? Abuse drugs? There is a big confusion between deliverance for eternity and deliverance for time. God can do both. He does the first at a point of time and we spend the rest of the time “being cleansed from all unrighteousness.” Like King David, saved people can do a lot of very sinful things.

Wikipedia: Perseverance of the saints, as well as the corollary--though distinct--doctrine known as "Once Saved, Always Saved", is a Christian teaching taught in some branches of Protestantism which teaches that none who are truly saved can be condemned for their sins or finally fall away from the faith. The doctrine appears in two different forms: (1) the traditional Calvinist doctrine found in the Reformed Christian confessions of faith, and (2) the Free Grace or non-traditional Calvinist doctrine found in some Baptist and other evangelical churches. In a sense, both can describe Christian believers as "once saved, always saved", but the two forms attach a different meaning to the word *saved* — namely, whether or not it necessarily involves sanctification, the process of becoming holy by

rejecting sin and obeying God's commands. Because of this difference, traditional Calvinist Christians tend to prefer the historical term "perseverance of the saints", which is one of the five points of Calvinism, and advocates of the Free Grace doctrine usually prefer the less technical terms "eternal security", "unconditional assurance", and "once saved, always saved" to characterize their teaching.

The two views are similar and sometimes confused, and though they reach the same end (namely, eternal security in salvation), they reach it by different paths. Free Grace Advocates seek to moderate the perceived harshness of Calvinism as it is found in the Reformed confessions and to emphasize that salvation is not conditioned on performing good works. Traditional Calvinists maintain that the Free Grace doctrine ignores certain key Bible passages and would be rejected by Calvin and the Reformed churches, which have both firmly advocated the necessity of good works and with which Free Grace has sought to align itself historically to some degree. Other Christians such as Catholics and Orthodox reject both versions of the doctrine.

The theological tenet, "Perseverance of the saints," is derived from passages that are in a Tribulational context and therefore not for the Church Age. They include Revelation 13:10, "If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints," and Revelation 14:12, "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." The first passage is in a context of enduring the persecution of the Beast of the Sea, the Antichrist. The second concerns not taking the "mark of the beast" nor worshipping his image.

This position was established initially by those who were Reformed (also known as Covenant) in their theology and viewed Revelation as an extended allegory being fulfilled all the time in different ways and parts of the world. This is called the "Historicist" view of the book of Revelation. It is amazing that some who claim to be Literal, Dispensational Calvinists still hold to the "perseverance of the saints" tenet.

This theological position which claims that an elect person will persevere to the end with the production of fruit is deceptive because without an objective standard one will think either they have produced enough fruit only to become lazy and/or arrogant, or they will wonder if they have produced enough fruit, leading to unhealthy fear. This "fruit requirement" is either to prove to others or themselves that they are elect.

In any event, personal fruit is the marker of individual "election" and thus one's assurance of salvation is based on production of an unknown

quantity or quality of fruit. Legalism is the true “fruit” of this theology. “Legalism” is adding religious standards to the stated word of God. For example, we are to offer praise to God. There is no inspired musical score found in the Bible, only the lyrics. To claim that certain types of music are “Christian” or “unchristian” is legalism. The lyrics are the standard, not the tempo or beat.

People who claim to believe, “Lordship Salvation” but do not adhere to the five points of Calvinism simply do not know the foundation upon which the position is built. It is a high and holy sounding catch phrase that is attractive and yet even logically unsound. He is “Lord of all” whether or not we make Him that. Those who are selective in the points of belief in TULIP and yet still claim to believe in “Lordship Salvation” also possess an irrational faith, in that Scripture teaches other things.

The Armenian position would more reasonably attach to a position that professes that Jesus Christ “must be Lord of all to be Lord at all,” yet this is not being professed in Armenian theological circles. They would say, “He is Lord of all and if you don’t act accordingly then either you never were saved or have lost it.” Simply stated, this position believes that one’s eternal salvation is based on the amount of moral life changes that are made in one’s life in addition to faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, one’s salvation is based on one’s daily attachment to a subjective set of legalistic “to do’s.” Church of Christ, Methodists, Pentecostals are representative of Armenian theology. Legalism is also the “fruit” of their theology.

The fatal flaw occurs when personal fruit and not the object of one’s faith (John 3:16,18,36) become the proof and assurance of one’s salvation. Analysis of personal fruit is functionally salvation by works.

Some reasonable questions are “how much, what kind and for how long must a person produce fruit that is evidence of one’s election?”

The Free Grace position is that one should persevere to the end, producing fruit along the way to receive the rewards. Faith in the promises and truths of Scripture is the basis of assurance of salvation. A changed life is further evidence but is not the determining factor. Believers can and do sin. Free Grace people believe the fact that Jesus Christ is “Lord of all” whether or not an individual views Him as such. As Lord, He made the legitimate offer of salvation through faith in Him.

Another legitimate question concerns the topic of Dispensations. Dispensations are periods of history when God requires different things from the priesthood and thus establishes different laws (Heb 7:12). You might ask if they have considered the whole concept of Dispensations. If they do not believe in Dispensations, you might ask them if they are still

sacrificing animals to the Lord, or following the clean/unclean dietary code, or observing the prescribed feasts (some today are actually doing that). A discussion on dispensations might need to be part of the conversation. Hebrews 7:12 would be a good place to begin that topic.

Several more questions may be addressed to those who hold to “Lordship Salvation,” such as:

1. Should a believer produce fruit?
(It is good to also look for points of agreement. There is no argument about this answer, for both parties agree. Eph 2:10)
2. Will the believer produce fruit?
Lordship Theology adherents say “absolutely” while Free Grace people say “probably.” You might ask them about Judas.
3. Will the fruit be visible?
Officially, Lordship Theology adherents would say “not necessarily” but would question one’s election if the fruit was not verifiable. One must note that most of the items mentioned in the Fruit of the Spirit are more mental than visible.
4. Will the fruit be of a certain kind? If so, what?
5. What does the Scripture teach about how much and what kind of fruit is required to prove our election?
6. Can a person be a Believer and produce no fruit?
(Judas is a problem. Either he is “elect” and did not “persevere” or he was not “elect” and the definition of “election” must be reconsidered. Which one, or both?)
7. You might also ask them to explain the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:9-15. Doesn’t that show different types of growth? Was only the fourth type elect? How do they explain the second and third types of people?

The position of “Perseverance of the saints” is actually for an individual (and legalists within the church) to try to determine if they are elect or not. If one is not persevering as evidenced by fruit production, then they must not be elect. Those who hold this position recognize that sin will still exist in a person’s life (1 John 1:8-10). The only possible response to a determination that one is not “elect” is fatalism and despair. On the other hand if one judges themselves to be “elect” because they are producing fruit, then they must have the right to judge others who are not. This is manifested in elitism. It is clear that judgment is left to our Lord Jesus Christ. Could it be that the resistance to spiritual things presently found all over Europe is just the end result of Calvinism that was born there? Fatalism and thus despair and disinterest in the things of God, for it doesn’t really make any difference?

A fact worthy of consideration is that the Lord Himself said that the Apostle Paul was elect. (Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a *chosen* (EKLOG8) instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;). Since it is clear that the Apostle Paul was "elect," why would he be concerned about being disqualified from a lack of perseverance, and thus prove that he was not really "elect" after all? 1 Cor 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.)

Does the absence of sin(s) or the production of good prove one to be saved?

How much "fruit of the Spirit" is the marker of "election," namely how much and what quality? Gal 5:22-24 (But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.)

A corollary question would ask "how many manifestations of love during a person's life and at what degree of intensity would let one be certain they were saved?" 1 Cor 13:4-8a; Rom 12:9-21

There are some easy things to prove:

1. No saint perfectly perseveres, for all sin (fail to live righteously or produce fruit), thus judging another's fruit production is comparative spirituality with other humans. 1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin we are a liar and the truth is not in us.

2. There is a serious battle for Christians to set aside the fleshly pursuits of the Sin Nature and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Gal 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-

control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified (**Aorist Active Indicative STAUROW = at a point in time; at the cross**) the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

3. Sin, a lack of living righteously, personally costs the Believer in terms of quality of both their temporal and eternal life. It does not cost them the loss of it. 1 Cor 6:9-12

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. 12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

4. Christians, even though saved by grace through faith, can act like the world. Eph 5:3-6

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

5. Christians are called to put sin aside which means there is still a problem after they are eternally saved. Col 3:5-11

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

6. No matter the sin, if one has not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the end result is the lake of fire. Rev 21:8

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Why are Christians called to “Perseverance”?

1. Perseverance is designed to bring “hope,” not to be a marker of salvation. Rom 5:1-6

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2. Perseverance is intended to unify the Body. Rom 15:4-6

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; 6 that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Introduction.
2. Definition.
3. The Theological Foundation.
4. Evaluation of the Elements.
5. **The Problem they are trying to resolve.**

The issue involves the fact that the names of all the saved were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Rev 13:8 (All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.) **Rev 21:25-27** And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.)

If one's name is not in the Book, then that person will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. Rev 20:15 (And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.)

The unsaved will try to gain salvation by their works. Rev 20:12 (And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.)

The problem is that the Calvinism cannot understand how biological mankind could be given the ability to choose whether to refuse the offer of

salvation and the Lord accurately write in the Lamb's Book of Life the names of those who would believe before the foundation of the world. This view actually reduces God to requiring absolute control to bring about His plan. This view of absolute control would also lead to making God the author of sin, and arbitrarily unfair, which is blasphemy.

The solution to this dilemma is to recognize that there is more than one set of books.

There is the "Book of Life" that evidently contains the names of all who would live. Those who die in unbelief will be erased from that book. When the Lamb's Book is opened at the Great White Throne, the Book of Life will match it. Rev 3:5 ('He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.)

The True Gospel compared to TULIP:

Total Depravity:

Man, being a sinner cannot save himself. Romans 3:23

Unconditional Election:

Jesus Christ made that offer that whosoever believes in His death for sins, His burial and resurrection, shall be saved. John 3:16 cf 1 Cor 15:1-4 cf Matt 22:2-14

Limited Atonement:

Only some will accept His payment for sins, although the entire debt for all the sins of the entire world has been paid. 1 John 2:1-2

Irresistible Grace:

It is actually an Amazing Grace offered to even the most unworthy of human beings.

Perseverance of the Saints:

Those saved by faith in Christ are urged to persevere in order to spiritually mature and receive a crown. 2 Pet 1:5-8 (Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.) **Jas 1:2-4** (Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.) **Jas 1:12** (Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.)

Somewhere along one's spiritual journey a believer and hopefully student of the Word of God must realize that eternal salvation occurs at a point of time, but the Christian life is a lifelong process. Discipleship is not to be considered an optional part of the Believer's walk. Discipleship is God's desired result of salvation, not the means of, nor proof of one's salvation. Judas was one of the 12 *disciples*, "elected" by God, who was not saved.

Accurate understanding and thus wisdom from God's Word must come from seeing how possible "contradictions" actually do not contradict but rather harmonize (Prov 1:2-6). To leave theological positions a "contradiction," claiming it is beyond our ability to know, where Scripture does interpret itself is spiritually irresponsible.

There is a charge leveled by the Lordship group that Free Grace Believers are "Antinomian" meaning "lawless." This is often accompanied with the charge of having a "cheap grace." The truth is quite to the contrary. Free Grace people answer the question in Romans 6:1, "shall we sin so grace can abound?" with an emphatic "no." Sin has an eternal cost in terms of rewards and a temporal cost in terms of misery. No crowns are given for a life of sin, but crowns and rewards are given for fruit production which the Believer is to pursue. Not all will "win" them.

It is Martin Luther, a staunch Calvinist, who said, "when you sin, sin boldly."

"If you are a preacher of Grace, then preach a true, not a fictitious grace; if grace is true, you must bear a true and not a fictitious sin. God does not save people who are only fictitious sinners. Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly. For he is victorious over sin, death, and the world. As long as we are here we have to sin. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness but, as Peter says, we look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. . . . Pray boldly-you too are a mighty sinner." (Weimar ed. vol. 2, p. 371; Letters I, "Luther's Works," American Ed., Vol 48. p. 281- 282)

Who are the real promoters of "Antinomianism?" Fatalism has no true day of accounting, but one day we will give an account (2 Cor 5:10).