

The background of the entire page is a deep black space filled with numerous small white stars. In the lower half, the blue and white horizon of the Earth is visible, with a bright sun or star shining from the right, creating a lens flare effect. On the left side, the grey and white surface of the Moon is partially visible.

This is the Work OF GOD

Mark W. Fenison, ThM.

**For God, who commanded the light to shine out
of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the
light of the knowledge of the glory of God in
the face of Jesus Christ. - 2 Cor. 4:6**

The Work of God

*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work
of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. –*

John 6:29

By

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Introduction

Much of modern evangelism functions on the assumption that all human beings have inherent ability to come to Christ by faith. They claim all humans have faith and they use it every day. They exercise faith when they sit down on a chair believing it will hold their weight. They exercise faith in friends and family to do what they promise. They exercise faith in government to protect their rights. They exercise faith in many of the things they do every day. Therefore, they assume they are also equally capable of coming to Christ by faith. They argue, why else preach the gospel unless it is assumed that man has ability to respond to it? These are persuasive arguments.

However, natural faith is only possible where there is willingness to exercise faith in such things. It is equally true that people choose not to exercise faith in many things every day. Many do not choose to place their trust in government, politicians or in certain other people and things simply because they are not willing to do so.

Willingness is always determined by how a person thinks or how a person feels toward a certain person or thing. If we don't like someone or something, or have reason to be suspicious of someone or something, we will never be inclined to place our trust in that something or someone until our mind and/or feelings are positively disposed toward that someone or something. Therefore, inability to trust is due to the inward disposition of thought and feelings toward someone or something.

The position of natural faith assumes that nothing affects the natural inclination of fallen men toward God, and therefore fallen man has no dispositional problems with God which would prevent willing trust in the gospel or God. However, if the fallen nature is

naturally disposed against God, then that would prevent willingness to trust or submit to either God or the gospel.

There is sufficient Biblical evidence to demonstrate that the heart of fallen man is naturally disposed against God (Jn. 3:19-20; Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14). The emotional (Jn. 3:19-20) and intellectual (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14) dispositions of fallen man are in opposition to God, so that he will not come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:40). Indeed, the Scriptures demand that this internal opposition to God is irreversible by man but can only be changed by a supernatural work of God.

This must be the case with all fallen men or why else would Christ say, “*No man can come to me*” (Jn. 6:44)? Christ did not say “some” men cannot come to me, but “*no man*” can. That is at minimal, an assertion of universal unwillingness to come to Christ. It is this unwillingness that is the root of man’s inability to come to Christ. He said no man “*can*.” The Greek term translated “*can*” is *dunamis* or the common Greek term translated “power” or ability. Jesus is saying in the clearest possible language that “*no man IS ABLE to come to me.*” If that were not true, then why would the exception clause immediately follow - “*except the Father draw him*”? This exception clause demands that only a supernatural work of God can change that natural inability to come to Christ by faith. Therefore, this proves that natural faith is not sufficient for men to come to Christ or else there would be no exception clause at all.

Furthermore, in response to, why preach the gospel if men were not inherently able to come to Christ by faith, it may be equally argued that the gospel may be the chosen means (2 Thes. 2:13) through which God may choose to empower (1 Thes. 1:4-5) to change that inward disposition against God to a willingness to

come to Christ by faith and that is why we are to preach the gospel. Therefore, God hath “chosen” the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe! And who are they? As the following pages will demonstrate it is only those who have first been given by the Father to come to the Son in faith.

There are four primary purposes for writing this book. The purpose of this book is to first to show why coming to Christ by faith is “*the work of God*” (Jn. 6:29) and what that work includes (choosing, giving, and drawing). They were chosen to come to Christ through faith (2 Thes.2:13). They were given to come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:37). They were drawn to come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:44). Second, to defend Christ’s assertion that “*no man can*” come to him naturally and why that is true. Third, it is the purpose of this book to reveal the means God has provided to change that natural negative disposition which would prohibit any man from coming to Christ willingly by faith. Fourth, it is the purpose of this book to distinguish saving faith from other types of faith. Fifth and last, it is the purpose of this book to deal with the metaphors of faith in John 6 that are abused by Roman Catholicism in their doctrine of transubstantiation.

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The Contextual Design of John 6

People come to Christ, or believe in Christ for many different reasons and for many different things other than for eternal life. For example, in John 6 many came to Christ because he did miracles:

And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on those who were diseased. – Jn. 6:2

Another class of people came to Christ because they wanted to usher in the kingdom and share in power over Rome:

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus had done, said, "This is in truth that Prophet who is coming into the world!" When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king, He departed again onto a mountain alone. – Jn. 6:14-15

A third class of people came to Christ because they wanted temporal necessities of life:

Jesus answered them and said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. – Jn. 6:25

A fourth class of people came to Jesus with a false profession of faith:

But there are some of you that believe not." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who believed not and who should betray Him. And He said, "Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto Me, unless it were given unto him by My Father." From that time many of

His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. –
Jn. 6:64-66

The contextual design behind John 6 is to define and explain the true causes that bring people to Christ by faith for eternal life.

Saving Faith is a Work

Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God: that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." – Jn. 6:29

Therefore, faith is explicitly called a “*work*” by Christ. Now, if it is the “*work*” of men it is not of grace. However, if it is the “*work*” of God, as in a **creative** work of God, then it is of grace (Rom. 4:16). However, one way or the other it is defined by Christ as a “*work*.”

His audience understood him to mean it is a “*work*” that man does as Christ’s response was to their question:

Then said they to him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? – Jn. 6:28

They immediately assume they are capable of producing faith if Christ provides them a visible miraculous manifestation in order to provide them a basis to believe in him.

They said therefore unto Him, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?" – Jn. 6:30

They thought if they were simply exposed to a display of miracles that would be a sufficient to produce faith in Christ. However, notice Christ denied that assumption, as they already had been exposed to miracles and yet that did not produce faith in him.

But I said unto you that ye also have seen Me, and believe not. – Jn. 6:36

Immediately after denying that even exposure to the miraculous produces faith in Christ, Christ describes how faith in him does originate:

All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will who hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the Last Day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me: that every one who seeth the Son and believeth in Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the Last Day." – Jn. 6:37-40

Jesus claims that coming to him in faith is the work of God. All who come to Christ have first been given by God to the Son. Not “all” people come to Christ in faith, but “all” whom the Father gives to the Son do come to him in faith. In this text, the giving work of God is the preceding stated contextual cause from all who come to Christ by faith for eternal life.

In the following pages the causes for coming to Christ by faith for eternal life are going to be examined very carefully and thoroughly. It will be contextual demonstrated that all who come to Christ by faith for eternal life, do so because before the world began God chose and gave a particular people to Christ and that in time God effectually draws them to Christ creating saving faith within them.

Saving Faith cannot be Self-induced

In the beginning of chapter six the audience Jesus addresses first asserts that they are able to believe, and that saving faith can be self-induced if they are simply exposed to the right kind of external evidences:

They said therefore unto Him, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?".....— Jn. 6:30

They asserted this in direct contradiction to what Christ had previously told them. He told them that true faith in Christ was the work of God (Jn. 6:29) is not something that originates with them but is “*given*” by God.

*.....which the Son of man shall **give** to you:... - v.27*

Jesus claimed they had already seen him to do miracles and yet they remained in unbelief:

*But I said to you, That you also have seen me, and **believe not.** – Jn. 6:36*

Later on Jesus bluntly denies saving faith is self-induced when he says:

***No man can come to me EXCEPT the Father Draw Him**
– Jn. 6:44*

The word translated “*can*” is the Greek term *dunamis* and means “power...ability.” Jesus says “no man can.” That is a declaration of universal inability to come to Christ by faith. That must be true or else the exception clause is meaningless “*except the Father draw him.*” In other words, coming to Christ is the work of God; God must first draw men before they can come to Christ.

In verse 35 Christ has already established the definition of coming to Christ to mean believing in him or coming to him by faith:

And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst. – Jn. 6:35

Therefore, there is a universal vacuum of faith in this world due to the fall of man into sin and death. As a consequence of the fall, the nature of man is irreversibly negatively inclined “*against God*” (Rom.8:7a) because he is in love with sin (“*loves darkness...hateth the light and neither cometh to the light*”) (Jn. 3:19-20) and is not volitionally inclined or able to submit himself to God by faith – “*is not subject to the Law of God and neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7b).

Therefore, if any fallen man comes to Christ in faith it is “*wrought of God*” as the “*work of God.*”

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. – Jn. 3:22

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works... - Eph. 2:10a

However, many claim that God draws all men without exception based on their interpretation of John 12:32 and explain drawing as merely enablement of their natural heart to embrace Christ by faith in order to obtain a new heart. We will deal with these objections later after we have given an exegetical and expository analysis of the present text. However, for the present moment we simply want to establish that saving faith is not self-induced but man must be enabled to believe by the work of God (“*no man can except the*

father draw him” (Jn. 6:44). Therefore, coming to Christ by faith is “*the work of God*.”

However, that is not the only work of God involved with coming to Christ by faith. In context, another work of God precedes drawing and that is God’s work of choosing and giving to Christ all that come to him by true saving faith.

A. They Must first be Given To Christ by God – Jn. 6:36-40

Jn. 6:36 - *But I said unto you, That **ye also have seen me, and believe not.***

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I would point your attention to the words placed in bold text in verse 36 in contrast to the words placed in bold text in verse 40. Self-induced faith cannot bring anyone to Christ for eternal life. All who come to Christ by faith must first be given to Christ for that purpose. Those in verse 36 saw him but did not believe, while those in verse 40 saw him and did believe. **The cause for that difference is stated in verses 37-39.**

Those Christ was speaking unto in verses 25-36, saw him and believed not, but “**all**” whom the Father gives to the Son do come

to Christ by faith and none “*of all*” which are given fail to come or are lost. Hence, those in verse 36 were not part “*of all*” those given by the Father or else they would have seen and come to him by faith. Thus the difference is that those in verse 40 were “*of all*” those which had been given by the Father to the Son in verse 39, but those in verse 36 were not. Who is it that sees and believes on him? They “*all*” those first given to the Son by the Father.

Many want to read verse 37 exactly opposite to what it says. Many wish to read and preach it as though it said, “all who are coming to the Son shall be given to him by the Father.” It does not say or mean that and a proper exegesis of the text proves that.

Grammatically the act of being given by the Father is the stated contextual cause while coming is the stated contextual consequence. The word “*giveth*” is in the present tense, while “*shall come*” is found in the future tense proving that giving precedes coming. They do not come in order to be given, but they are given in order to come to Christ. Moreover, in verse 39 “*given*” is found in the perfect tense showing it was a completed or perfected action in the past that continues completed right to the present, thus explaining the present tense in verse 37. The precise point of time when this completed action occurred was prior to the incarnation.

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. – Jn. 6:38-39

Therefore, the stated purpose of the incarnation according to Christ is to accomplish the will of the Father. The Father's will which Christ came to do was to secure the salvation “*of all which*

he hath given me.” This demands that the Father had given these to the Son before the incarnation, because his coming to earth was in obedient response to accomplish the security of all whom the Father had already given him (“given” perfect tense – v. 39). So the act of giving preceded the actual coming of Christ to earth, and thus preceded all who actual come to Christ, in both time and space.

Moreover, God did not give all mankind to Christ, as all do not come to Christ. But “all” that he does give to Christ do come to him for eternal life and “of all” given none are lost (v. 39). Therefore, this is a select group of mankind previously chosen by the Father before time and space and specifically given to the Son for him to come to earth in order to actually and effectively save. Therefore, these can be none other than all who were “*chosen in him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Therefore, God’s work of election and giving (Jn. 6:37-40) precedes God’s work of drawing (Jn. 6:44-45) in both time and space.

There can be no question that “*of all*” that has been chosen and given to the Son before the world began will be saved. Therefore “*all*” given equals “*all*” saved. The same is true with regard to drawing. All who are drawn equal all who are eventually saved as all who were chosen and given are the same “all” who are drawn and this can be easily demonstrated by sound exegesis of the text and context.

B. They must be “all” Drawn by God

No man can come to me except the Father Draw Him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes to me. – Jn. 6:44

These words by Christ make it abundantly clear that universal inability exists among all men, which inability, prevents them from coming to Christ by faith as he explicitly states “*no man can.*” It is equally clear, that the only exception to this fact, are only those drawn to the Son by the Father. Hence, again it is proven that saving faith originates with the work of God (giving and drawing).

Since it is only those given to Christ that actually come to him by faith (Jn. 6:37-40), it would appear that they are the same ones whom the Father draws. This is demonstrated by several contextual based reasons.

First, the repetitive phrase that is first associated with all who are given is also associated with all who are drawn demonstrating the same people who were given are still under consideration:

And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. – v. 39

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. – v. 40

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. – v. 44

This phrase is first introduced by Christ, and first associated with those the Father gives to Christ. This phrase is introduced in verse 39 to explain why “*of all*” given “*none shall be lost*” because all given shall be raised up which has reference to the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) as all in the second resurrection shall perish eternally (Rev. 20:12-17).

In all other three cases where this phrase is found, it is exclusively used by Christ to declare final security for “*all*” given by the Father (v. 39), “*everyone*” believing on him (v. 40) or “*whoso*” eateth...drinketh of him (v. 54). In each of these three other cases none others are mentioned in the text but those who will be raised up at the last day. In every case, the nearest antecedent for “*it*” or “*him*” in this phrase always refers to the previous pronoun “*all*” (v. 39) or “*everyone*” (v. 40) or “*whoso*” (v. 54).

Second, in John 6:44, not only is “*draw him*” the nearest antecedent that agrees in case and number with “*him*” being raised up, but it is the only possible subject that this last phrase can possibly refer to and obtain final salvation, because the phrase “*no man can come to me except*” rules out any other application to anyone else “*except....him*” that is drawn. Therefore, “*him*” drawn equals “*him*” raised up (v. 44), just as “*all*” given equal “*it*” raised (v. 39) as does “*everyone*” that believeth equals “*him*” raised (v. 40) and “*whoso*” eateth and drinketh equals “*him*” raised up (v. 54). This means all verses containing this phrase are speaking of the very same people given to the Son before the world began. All who are given (v. 39) are also drawn (v. 44) and partake of Christ by faith (vv. 40,54)

Third, John 6:45 is given to support what has been said in John 6:44. Jesus quotes “*prophets*” plural when he says;

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.

Jesus is quoting two Old Testament prophets in support of what he just said in verse 44. Here, “*teach*” is being used synonymously with “*draw*.” The two Prophetic scriptures referred to are:

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. – Isa. 54:13

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. – Jer. 31:33-34

These two texts are extremely important in correctly understanding what Jesus means by “*draw*” in verse 44.

First, both of these texts refer only to the people of the New Covenant or the elect. Jeremiah 31:34 is quoted by the writer of Hebrews as the terms of the New Covenant:

*Heb. 8:10 For this is **the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

*13 In that he saith, A **new covenant**, he hath made the first old.*

Heb. 10:15 *Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,*

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Significantly, the writer of Hebrews applies this to the New Covenant for **both Jews and Gentiles**. This covenant shall be applied to Israel as a nation in the future (Rom. 11:25-28) but the New Covenant is being applied to Gentiles presently.

Second, these prophetic texts demonstrate that this teaching by God is internally performed within the people of the New Covenant.

.....I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts... – Jer. 31:33

Third, this internal teaching is not the product of human instrumentality but the direct work of God inside of His covenant people:

*And they shall **not** teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, **saying, Know the Lord:** - Jer. 31:34*

This instruction is not by men and not to the external ear, but is the direct work of God within all he teaches.

This does not mean that God does not use human instrumentality to bring the gospel **unto** them **externally**, but it does mean that it is God alone that performs the work of teaching/drawing **internally**. Paul refers to this internal **creative** work of God in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 in regard to the elect, and in 2 Corinthians 4:6. More will be said about the nature of this internal creative work later.

More evidence that this is an internal instruction by God rather than external instruction by a preacher of the gospel is found in verse 46 where Jesus denies that those having been taught by God had externally seen or audibly heard God:

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. – Jn. 6:46

This demonstrates the instruction by the Father was not due to visibly seeing and audibly hearing God, but was the work of God performed unseen internally within them just as it is described in “prophets” Jesus refers to (Isa.54:13; Jer. 31:33-34).

Fourth, this internal work is effectual in “*all*” that God performs this work:

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.... for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. – Jer. 31:33,34

Moreover, the “*all*” in John 6:45a is the “*every man*” of John 6:45b, as in the Greek text it is the very same word *pas*. All who have been taught by God have “*heard*” and have “*learned*” of God or else they have never been “*taught*” of God, as you cannot be “*taught*” by any teacher you have neither heard or learned from. All who are thus taught come to Christ:

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all [Gr. pas] taught of God. **Every man** [Gr. pas] therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. – Jn. 6:45

Fifth, Jesus denies that all men without exception are drawn to him by the Father:

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I to you, that no man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father.

The explanation Jesus gives for the unbelief among his own disciples (which will be manifested by leaving him) was not that he was ignorant of their unbelief (“For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were...”). His explanation for their unbelief is that the Father never drew them to him but they had come out of other motives as those in the former part of this chapter:

Therefore said I to you, that no man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father.

Notice that Christ is directly referring to what he previously said in verse 44 but he exchanges the term “*the Father draw*” in verse 44 for the words “*were given to him of my Father.*” What was not given to them, these unbelievers? The ability to come to Christ by faith was not given, as that is the effect of the drawing work of the Father.

Therefore, God does not draw “*all men*” without exception but only draws all who were first chosen and given as the people of the

New Covenant, which include “*all men*” without distinction of race, gender or class (Rev. 5:8), rather than “*all men*” without exception.

The Biblical Usage and Meaning of “draw” (*elkuo*)

Logically it is impossible to draw something without it coming at the same time or else it is not being drawn.

However, some insist that the term “*draw*” is not to be defined by its relationship to “*cometh*” in this text, but according to them, drawing in this text merely means being *potentially attracted* to the Son without actually coming to the Son, but merely enabled if so they so choose to come but equally may not choose to come. However, the idea of mere *attraction* that may or may not result in actual coming is repudiated by the consistent Biblical use of this term, and by its immediate contextual usage.

1. Other Biblical Usages

The Greek term *elkuo* translated “draw” must be defined by its scriptural use. It is only found eight times in the Greek New Testament. Its use in John 6:44 and John 12:32 are the subject of this debate so we will ignore those two instances for the present. John uses this term three other times for a total of five times. Do the other three uses by John have one consistent meaning or variable meanings?

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. – Jn. 21:6

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. – Jn. 21:11

A net was thrown overboard into the water and then drawn into the ship. Here drawing equals coming, as what is drawn is actually coming as it is being drawn. The only issue in John 21:6 is insufficient human strength to draw in the net, and the insufficient strength of the net to hold the fish. However, in our texts it is God doing the drawing, and so, no such deficiency of strength exists with God. Another text this term is found in:

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. – Jn. 18:10

The sword was not drawing itself. So the power that effectually draws is not found in the thing being drawn, but in the one doing the drawing. Moreover, the action of coming is simultaneous with the action of drawing, showing they are inseparable actions.

Therefore, in all three other uses by John there is but one consistent meaning. The object being drawn is actually coming as it is being drawn, and it is coming not by its own power, but by the power of whoever is drawing it.

James uses this term for the forceful drawing of a lawbreaker before the court to receive justice:

*But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and **draw** you before the judgment seats?* – James 2:6

The power of the law is behind this drawing. One cannot be drawn before Judges without at the same time coming before the Judges. So drawing is inseparable from coming.

*And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he **drew** out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.* – Acts 16:27

Again, it is impossible to “draw out” his sword without the sword coming out of the scabbard. Again, the power for drawing is not found in the sword but in the one drawing. This is effectual drawing.

*And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and **drew** him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.* – Acts 21:30

In Acts 21:30 there can be no question that drawing equals coming, as Paul was being forcefully drawn out of the temple by power outside of himself.

Therefore in all other uses by John and other Biblical writers there is but one consistent usage for the Greek term *elkuo*. In every single case the three following characteristics are inseparable from this term:

1. Whatever is being drawn is coming as it is being drawn.
2. The drawing power is external to what is being drawn.
3. The thing being drawn is passive rather than providing any

drawing action.

4. What is drawn is always effectual in coming except where the power is insufficient in the one drawing.

3. John 6:64-65

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I to you, that no man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father.

Another problem for those who define “*draw*” as merely attraction joined with enablement for potential coming to Christ is this passage.

For ease of understanding, the words of Christ are in red while the explanation of John is put in black.

John’s explanation shows that Christ knew from the beginning specifically what disciples, including Judas were never true believers, but false professors. The reason given for them remaining in unbelief is explicitly stated in verse 65. Christ is quoting his words in verse 44 but has replaced the word “draw” with the words “*it were given to him.*” He is denying that these specific disciples, including Judas, were ever drawn by the Father and he is interpreting the term “*draw*” to mean “*it*” or the ability to come to him by faith was ever given unto them. Here is absolutely proof that God does not draw all men without exception in the sense that Christ understood the word “*draw.*” There is no doubt the Father draws “*all men*” without distinction of race, gender or social standing as that is repeated throughout the New Testament in such phrases as “in Christ there is neither Jew or gentile, male or female, or bond or free”

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. – Gal. 3:28

And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; -
Rev. 5:9

3. John 12:32

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. – Jn. 12:32

This is often quoted to overturn and contradict all the contextual factors that already have been established by Christ in the previous, fuller exposition in John 6:44-65.

However, if the words “*all men*” simply mean *all humans without distinction of race, gender or class* then there is no contradiction at all. However, if it is interpreted to mean *all human beings without exception from Adam to the last man born* then there are many contradictory problems. Jesus has already specifically identified “*some*” which were never drawn by the Father in John 6:64-65. Hence, it cannot mean all humans without exception.

Moreover, the immediate context favors *all humans without distinction* as this statement is found in a response to the request by certain “*Greeks*” that wanted to see him:

John 12:20 ¶ *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:*

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

*23 And Jesus answered them, saying,32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw **all men** unto me.*

. The Jews regarded “*Greeks*” and other Gentiles to be unclean, and even the Samaritan woman reacted in surprise that Jesus would even speak to her, not only because she was a woman but because she was a Samaritan:

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. – John 4:9

Even after Pentecost, when the church was commissioned into the whole world, this ceremonial taboo is even expressed by Peter to Cornelius:

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. – Acts 10:28

Therefore, this request by the Greeks to have a personal meeting with Jesus would have been contrary to the whole Jewish culture which Judaism was not prepared to accept, even redeemed Post-Pentecost Jews struggled with this to the extent that God had to send persecution upon them to motivate them to go beyond Jews (Acts 8:1-11:22) and call a special apostle to go to the Gentiles

(Acts 9:15) while the other Jewish apostles chose to go to the “circumcision” (Gal. 2:9).

Therefore, “*all*” in John 12:32 refers to “*all*” the Father gave to Christ in John 6:37-39. It refers to “*all*” the covenant people drawn by Christ in John 6:45. It refers to “*all*” or the “*world*” without distinction of race, gender or class, thus inclusive of the “*Greeks*” who wished to see him.

C. They must be Quickened by God’s Command

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. – Jn. 6:62-63

Christ’s literal body of “*flesh*” will be removed from earth into heaven out of their reach (v. 62) after his resurrection. Hence, eternal life is not by partaking of his literal *flesh*, as his audience and “*some*” of his disciples imagined that he was saying.

Jesus claims that “*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*,” but he says this in direct connection with the quickening creative work of the Holy Spirit (“*it is the Spirit that quickeneth*”). His meaning is that in the context of the quickening action of the Holy Spirit, it is his words that the Spirit uses and empowers to bestow eternal life.

The Greek term translated “*words*” is the term *rhema* rather than the common term *logos*. This is the term used to describe the words coming out of God’s mouth which are accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish their purpose (Mt. 4:4; Heb. 1:3; 11:3). Greek scholars tell us that “*In grammar rhema*

means a verb as distinct from an *onoma*, a noun” (Brown, Colin, Ed. **The New International Dictionary of New Testament Words**, Vol. 3, p. 1119). Thus it is a term that implies action. What Jesus is saying, is that the Holy Spirit is what quickens or gives life, not material flesh, and the words I have spoken are the words the Holy Spirit uses in the action of conveying eternal life.

James teaches the very same thing when he says:

*Of his own will **begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* – James 1:18

Paul demands the same combination in the effectual work of the Spirit in obtaining salvation for those chosen from the beginning by God “to” salvation. Not only the persons but the means have been chosen as well to save them:

*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth**:* - 2 Thes. 2:13

Peter also joins the quickening work of the Spirit with “*the word*” of the gospel:

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And **this is the word [rhema] which by the gospel is preached unto you.*** – 1 Pet. 1:23,25

This is what Paul means when he says that the “*gospel is the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:17) when it is empowered by the Spirit of God as a creative word.

Significantly, it is the Greek term *rhema* that is also used by Paul in Romans 10:17;

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word [rhema] of God. – Rom. 10:17

Faith is the product of the quickening command of God at work in the elect. Paul immediately denies that merely hearing the audible “*sound*” of God’s word saves anyone (Rom. 10:17-21), but rather salvation is obtained only in accompaniment with God’s elective grace:

*Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to **the election of grace**. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; **but the election hath obtained it**....* – Rom. 11:5-8

Paul informs the Thessalonians that they can know they are of God’s elect by the very way the gospel comes to them with this kind of power rather than “*in word only*.”

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. – 1 Thes. 1:4-5

Remember, that in John 6:37-39 that all those given by the Father, were given to him before the incarnation, as Christ came to earth for the express purpose to secure those given to him. Thus, they were given to the Son prior to the incarnation before the world

began as the “elect” or chosen of God (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2 Thes. 2:13).

Throughout, the preceding context he has repeatedly proven that coming to Christ by faith is the work of God (Jn. 6:29), due to giving (Jn. 6:37-39) and drawing (Jn. 6:44-45) so that “all” (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44-45) of those given and drawn come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:35, 37, 40, 47).

1. The Creative Act of God

Paul writing to the Corinthians compares this effectual internal saving work of God in connection with the gospel to the creative act of God in Genesis 1:3:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

– 2 Cor. 4:6-7



The new birth/quickenning/regeneration by the Holy Spirit is a creative work of God. Just as God spoke light into existence in Genesis 1:3, He empowers the gospel as His creative word to speak “*in our hearts, to give light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

Hence, regeneration is the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart of the person being saved.

When Jesus asked his disciples whom do they think He is, Peter responded that he was the Christ the Son of the Living God. In response Jesus said:

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. – Mt. 16:17

It is not only a **revelation** from God concerning Jesus Christ but it is the **effectual call** by God out of darkness into the marvelous “light of knowledge” of his dear Son:

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, **To reveal his Son in me**, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: - Gal. 1:15-16*

The empowerment of the gospel by the Holy Spirit in the heart of Paul created “*light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” or it was the revelation of who Jesus Christ is, as professed by Peter, as revealed in the gospel. This “*light of knowledge*” is the “*substance*” (Heb. 11:1) or basis of saving faith which is not only produced by the empowered gospel, but has for its object the very content of the revelation of that gospel – Jesus Christ. As such, it also constitutes the “*evidence*” of our “*hope*” of

salvation (Heb. 11:1), as this empowered gospel revelation of Christ provides the promise of eternal life.

In other words, quickening is the creation of saving faith in the heart that effectually calls us out of darkness into the light, just as God effectually called light into existence out of the darkness in Genesis 1:2-3:

*And the earth was without form, and void; and **darkness was upon the face of the deep**. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. **And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.** – Gen. 1:2-3*

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. – 2 Cor. 4:6-7

This is the creation of a new believing heart through the empowered gospel which reverses the condition of an unregenerate heart described by Paul in Ephesians 4:18:

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: - Eph. 4:18

This is what Ezekiel means when he said that God would give them a “new heart and a new spirit” concerning the New Covenant work of God:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my

statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. – Ezek. 36:26-27

This is what God meant when he told Jeremiah concerning the new Covenant work of God:

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;** and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. – Jer. 31:33-34*

This is what the writer of Hebrews calls the “new” covenant for both Jews and Gentiles:

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:** and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, **A new covenant**, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. – Heb. 8:10-13*

*Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, **This is the covenant** that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, **I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write***

them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. – Heb. 10:15-18

This is the new covenant that Paul describes to the Corinthians:

*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, **written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.** And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of **the new testament**; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, **but the spirit giveth life.*** – 2 Cor. 3:3-6

When the Holy Spirit empowers the Gospel inside of the heart of His elect it becomes His creative word. What it creates or effectually calls into existence is “*the light of knowledge...of Jesus Christ.*” It is this created revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart that is the very **substance** and **evidence** which constitutes saving faith in the heart. It is this created light of knowledge that removes the “*darkened*” understanding, removes “*the ignorance that is in them*” and removes “*the blindness of their hearts*” just as the light in Genesis 1:3 removed the darkness in Genesis 1:2 by the effectual call of light into existence by God’s word.

Therefore, quickening by the Spirit of God is the creation of saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul previously told the Ephesians that they had been “*quickened*” (Eph. 2:1) and then described quickening as being “*saved by grace*” (Eph. 2:6) and then further describe it as “*by grace are ye saved through faith*” (Eph. 2:8). This whole

quickenings work of God is then described as being “*not of yourself but it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Eph. 2:8b-9). Finally, he describes it as a creative work of God:

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.... – Eph. 2:10a

Just as God effectually called light out of darkness in Genesis 1;2-3 , so does God effectually call His people out of the internal spiritual kingdom/rule of darkness in their hearts into the light of His dear Son by the Spirit empowered Gospel. This is what Paul meant when he said, “*The gospel is the power of God unto salvation*”. This is what Jesus meant when he said,

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. – Jn. 6:63

This is what Jesus meant when he said,

...this is the work of God that ye believe on him – Jn. 6:29

2. Which comes first – quickening or faith?

One of the primary objections to what has been previously taught is that scriptures present eternal life as a consequence of faith in the gospel (Jn. 3:16). Therefore, it is asked “how can quickening (being made spiritually alive) precede faith? Some argue that one must first have a believing heart before they can have the promise of eternal life.

The answer is quite simple. There are different types of eternal life. For example, our corrupt physical bodies have yet to attain the promise of eternal life, and will not until the resurrection when this

mortal shall put on immortality = eternal life. The gospel promises a yet future tense eternal life for our bodies, which are presently dying.

Also, there is the promise of the legal position of eternal life by justification before the Law of God obtained by faith. The sinner is under legal condemnation by the Law of God. He is legally condemned to eternal death as the just penalty of the Law. By faith in Christ he is legally removed from under the legal penalty of the Law and placed under the legal approval of the Law or justified for eternal life instead of eternal condemnation by the Law. This is a legal and positional life obtained through the substitutionary representative work of Christ. This refers to our position as legal “sons” (Gr. *huios*).

However, spiritual quickening has to do with us as “*children*” (Gr. *teknia*) of God in regard to our own person, rather than our legal position as “*sons*” (Gr. *huios*). We are made “*children*” (Gr. *teknia*) by new birth, but made legal “*sons*” (Gr. *huios*) by justification by faith.

In the act of new birth, faith is created in the new heart of the child of God and the new birth is consummated by gospel conversion wherein the “*child*” (*tekna*) of God is then justified by faith or becomes a legal heir, or “*son*” (*huios*) of God. We obtain spiritual life by quickening but legal life by justification. We become “*children*” of God by spiritual life but we become “*sons*” of God by justification or legal life.

There is no such thing as an unbelieving regenerated person or a believing unregenerate person. In regard to time, regeneration and conversion are inseparable from each other.

John addresses the **logical** order between quickening and faith in 1 John 5:1:

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. – 1 Jn. 5:1

The word “*believeth*” translates a present tense participle, while the words “*is born*” translate a perfect tense verb. The perfect tense demands a completed action at some point in the past that continues as a completed action right up to the time of speaking. Hence, we are not in a process of being born again, but were born again at a specific point in the past as completed action and this perfected action continues to the present time. However, the present participle translated “*believeth*” or “the believing one” is an ongoing uncompleted action.

In Greek grammar the relationship of a participle to the main verb is indicated by its tense. If the participle was a past tense it would indicate its action occurred before the action of the verb. For example, if John had used a completed tense participle for faith, it would have demanded that faith **preceded** the new birth. This is the position of those called *hardshells*. If the action of the participle was found in the future tense it would have demanded that faith occurred **after** the new birth. This is the position of those called *Arminians*. However, if the participle is found in the present tense, as is the case in 1 John 5:1, it would demand that faith occurred at the **same point** in time as the new birth. John used the present tense participle translated “*believeth*” and that is why the King James translators also translated the perfect tense verb in the present tense “**IS born**” to show the identical or simultaneous action of faith with the new birth.

This is the very same grammatical construction used by John in the following verses found also in the epistle of first John:

1Jo 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

1Jo 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

What this means grammatically, is that it is impossible to love God without new birth as they are inseparable simultaneous actions. It is impossible to do righteousness without new birth as they are inseparable simultaneous actions. This is true because we were “*created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24) and so righteousness is inseparable from the new birth.

Moreover, love like faith are both the “*fruit*” of the Spirit rather than the Spirit being the fruit of love or faith (Gal. 5:22).

So, in summary, there are different types of eternal life. The eternal life promised by faith in the gospel includes eternal life obtained yet future in the bodily resurrection. It includes justification of life or the legal position “*in Christ*.” Moreover, since spiritual life is inseparable from the creation of faith in the heart there is no contradiction at all.

Furthermore, the Scriptures provide two different perspectives. Salvation is revealed from God’s perspective (Rom. 8:28-31), as well as revealed from the **experiential perspective** of man.

There is the divine perspective from the creative work of God which views quickening as the inseparable cause of faith. There is the human perspective from the experience of regenerative conversion that views faith as the inseparable cause of judicial

eternal life. Both are equally true depending on which perspective is in view by the Biblical context. It is true from the human perspective that one must repent and believe the gospel (gospel conversion) in order to have eternal life (judicial life). It is equally true from the divine perspective that regeneration is the creation of faith or the divine cause of gospel conversion.

The harmonization of both perspectives is found in the Biblical doctrine of gospel repentance. The Old Testament prophet said,

Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned... – Lam. 5:21

The divine cause and experiential effect are found in the very same text. Notice that God is the cause of this turning and our turning is the consequence.

If we are turned around it is God doing it. However, if we are turned around we are also doing it experientially.

This is the essence of true repentance. The Greek term translated “*repent*” is *metanoia* which literally means “*change of mind.*” Repentance is a change of direction or turning from one state of mind to another.

The lost man’s mind is in unbelief and will remain in unbelief until it is turned or changed from unbelief to belief. The lost man’s heart loves darkness and will remain in love with darkness until it is turned or changed to love light. The lost man’s will is resistant to God and will remain resistant until it is turned or changed to being willing and submissive to God. Repentance is the change of direction of the mind, heart and will of the lost man from sin to God.

Now the question is, can man change his own heart, mind and will by his own power? The Bible emphatically and repeatedly denies he can:

*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? **not one**.*
– Job. 14:4

*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? **then** may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* – Jer. 13:21

*Yet the LORD hath **not given** you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.* – Deut. 29:4

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: - Jn. 10:26-27

*He that is of God heareth God's words: **ye therefore hear them not, because** ye are not of God.* – Jn.8:47

No man can come unto me except the Father draw him, and him will I raise up in the last day – Jn. 6:44

However, the more important question is **why** is it that man can't change his own heart, mind by his own will? Is it because he does not have the power of choice? No! Is it because God won't allow him? No! The problem is because his own heart is in love with darkness and his will is merely the servant expression of that heart:

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. – Jn. 3:19-20

His inability is found in his own love for darkness. In addition his inability is found in his “enmity” against God:

*Because the carnal mind **is enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh **cannot please God**. – Rom. 8:7-8*

Therefore, his heart is positively inclined to love darkness while negatively inclined to hate light or God. This is why his will is not “*subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*”

In addition, he comes into this world in an intellectual state of unbelief. Therefore, his will is nothing more than a servant of choosing what he loves and resisting what he hates. Interestingly, the two Greek words translated “will” in scripture reflect the control of the will by either the love of the heart (*thelema*) or the intellectual determinations of the mind (*boulomai*). The will is the slave of his heart and mind. He cannot choose what he either hates or intellectually rejects. The only way he will desire or determine to choose to repent and believe is for love of darkness to be changed to love for light and his enmity against God to be changed to faith in and submission to God.

Therefore his love for darkness must be changed first as his will is nothing more than the servant of his heart and only by changing his heart to love light is his will freed from inclination to serve evil. If any lover of darkness comes to the Light it is proof that such ability was “wrought” by God and not by that man (Jn. 3:21).

*But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are **wrought in God**. – Jn. 3:21*

So nothing keeps the worst of sinners from repenting and coming to Christ for salvation except for their own depraved condition that loves darkness and is at “*enmity against God.*” The lost man simply will not repent or love God, and won’t until that love for sin and enmity against God is changed from hate and resistance to love and submission by the power of God.

Repentance is God turning a person’s heart from the love of darkness to the love of light. Repentance is God turning a person’s mind from a state of darkness or unbelief to a state of faith in the gospel. Thus repentance is inseparable from saving faith, as repentance turns the mind from unbelief to belief. Repentance is due to God creating in the heart the “*light of the knowledge of the glory of God.*” That light removes darkness by its very presence. That light is metaphorical knowledge that comes by a divine act of creation. That knowledge is of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ, or the revelation of the glory of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is that revelatory knowledge created by God in the heart that is the “substance” of saving faith, as well as the only “hope” of salvation (Heb. 11:1). This is the work of God in the human heart whereby the gospel is empowered to remove darkness (ignorance of unbelief) thus producing faith in Christ as the only hope of salvation.

Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned... – Lam. 5:21

That is why “*This is the work of God that ye believe*” (Jn. 6:29).

Therefore, there is no eternal life without repentance and faith, but there is no repentance and faith without regeneration, as regeneration is manifested by repentance and faith in Christ.

The Universal Vacuum of Saving Faith

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.....But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. – Jn. 6:44,64-65

A. Universal in Scope – Jn. 6:44

There are no infant children of Adam that enter this world as believers. That is generally recognized by all, or else there would be no reason to give the Great Commission.

However, the issue is not that they come into the world as unbelievers, but do unbelievers have the inherent natural ability to come to Christ by faith?

Jesus answers this question in the negative – “***no man can come to me...***” He did not say *some* men cannot come to me, but “***no man can.***” The English term “*can*” is used to translate the Greek term *dunamis* which is commonly translated “*power*” or “*able*”. No man has the power or is able to come to Christ by faith. If they had such inherent ability there would be no reason for the exception clause “***except the Father draw him.***” This exception clause loudly denies that any unbeliever has inherent ability to come to Christ by faith by themselves. Therefore, it is false that all men have inherent ability to come to Christ by faith. The phrase, “***no man can come to me***” asserts in the clearest possible terms the fact of universal inability to believe in Christ, and therefore there is a universal vacuum of faith.

B. Universal in Origin – Rom. 5:12-19

This universal vacuum of faith is explained by two Biblical facts. (1) Inherent ability to believe was lost in the fall of man; (2) Universal inherent enmity against God by the fall of man prevents faith in God.

1. The Fall and Its Consequences is a Race Sin:

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through **the offence of one many be dead**, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was **by one that sinned**, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as **by the offence of one** judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as **by one man's disobedience** many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In the above passage, Paul clearly teaches that the singular act of one man brought sin, death, condemnation and judgment upon all mankind. This is clearly seen by the repetitious phrase found throughout this passage:

By one man sin entered and death by sin, so death passed upon all men.... – v. 12

The offence of one many be dead – v. 15

By one that sinned – v. 16

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one – v. 17

*By the offence of one judgment came upon all men – v.
18*

*By one man's disobedience many were made sinners – v.
19*

Moreover, this same passage clearly contrasts the disobedience by one man (Adam) to the obedience of one other man (Jesus Christ) with both having impact upon mankind (vv. 15-19).

Therefore, the universal impact of Adam's singular offence upon mankind cannot be denied without, at the same time denying that Christ's obedience had impact upon mankind.

Although the similarities are not identical (vv .15-16), humanity is represented by the actions of these two men. Paul gathers all humanity into two possible classifications at the end of the world:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. – 1 Cor. 15:22

All humans born of Adam without exception were created "*in Adam*", as all mankind come by procreation (physical birth) from the same initial created human nature existing in Adam.

Likewise, all who are "*in Christ*" were "*created in Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:10) by re-creation (new birth).

Although "*all*" who are **created** "*in Christ*" were **procreated** in Adam, but not "*all*" **procreated** in Adam are **created** "*in Christ*."

Moreover, all who are in Christ are those who actually "*receive*" the grace of God (v. 17).

However, the whole undivided human race existed in the person of Adam when God created him, and the whole human race acted together when the pre-fallen Adam sinned. This was not a test for one man, but a test for the whole pre-fallen human race. The whole of the humanity actually and literally existed in, and acted in one man – Adam.¹ You are simply a subdivision of the same human nature that existed as one indivisible human nature in Adam. When Adam acted, we acted, as we were indivisibly one in nature within him.

There could be no better representative for mankind, because Adam was unhindered by a fallen nature. There could have been no better environment/circumstances for man to be tested, as it was in a sinless world without sickness, troubles, hatred, war or sorrow.

When Adam sinned the whole race sinned in him. For example, Paul consistently uses the Aorist punctiliar completed action tense when he says “*death passed upon all men for all have sinned*” and “*by the offence of one many be dead*” and “*by one man’s offence many were made sinners*” demonstrating that when Adam sinned, the whole human race acted with him as one indivisible human nature committing that sin. Therefore, all mankind received the consequences of that sin (condemnation and death).

The proof for this is in the fact that Paul did **not** say “*death passes upon all men whenever all men sin*” or “*by the offences by many men many be dead and many be made sinners.*” However, that would be necessary if men only become sinners or suffer the consequences of sin (condemnation, judgment, death) due to their own individual sins.

¹ After the fall, the fallen human nature was subdivided through procreation.

This was a race sin committed by the entire race existing as one indivisible human nature in Adam. This doctrine is called by theologians Original Sin. This is taught clearly by Paul in Romans 5:12-19 and a closer look will prove this to be true.

2. Universal Violation of Genesis 2:17

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

The “*death*” that came into the world by the singular “*sin*” of one man is what “*passed upon all men*” which is death due to violating Genesis 2:17 by the human nature existing in Adam.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. – Gen. 2:17

It is spiritual death (separation from God) that occurred “*in the day*” he ate, or the principle of “*corruption*” (1 Cor. 15:53-55) that eventually wrought the physical death of Adam 930 years later.

However, not only did Adam physically die, but so did all human beings coming from his loins, thus death “*passed upon all men.*” Indeed, it is the violation of this singular law (Gen. 2:17) that is the only possible cause for universal death between Adam and Moses. The deaths of infants between Adam and Moses prove that the whole human race sinned when Adam sinned, as there is no other possible explanation for infants coming under the condemnation of sin. Paul proves this in verses 13-14:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Between Adam and Moses death reigned universally. However, universal death cannot be the consequence of violating the Law of Moses during that time, simply because the Mosaic Law had not yet been given. But some universal law had to exist, and had to have been violated or neither sin nor death could occur, as Paul says sin is not imputed where there is no law, and where there is no sin there can be no condemnation (death). However, death reigned universally during that period and we have the Biblical genealogical records throughout the book of Genesis to prove that death (Gen. 5, 10-11, 25, 36, 37) was universal between Adam and Moses.

Neither can universal death be attributed to the violation of the law of conscience as some insist.² Why? Because infants still die within and outside of the womb without the mental ability to discern and violate conscience. This is what Paul means when he says “*even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*” What does Paul mean by “similitude” (lit. likeness) of Adam's transgression? Paul tells us that the nature of Adam's sin was different than Eve's:

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. – 1 Tim. 2:14

² Some quote John 1:9 to prove that God provides spiritual light to every man coming into the world. However, this “light” by context is defined as “life” (v. 4) given them by God when coming into the world. The Word is the author of **physical** “light/life” as He is the creator (Jn. 1:1-3). The Word is the author of **spiritual** “light/life” by new birth (Jn. 1:13). He is also the author of the “light” of conscience given every man as they come into the world.

All procreated humans who come of age consciously discern right from wrong, and willingly and knowingly violate their conscience. That is the “*similitude*” (likeness) of Adam’s transgression – willful conscious sin. However, individualized infants through procreation cannot be charged with willful violation of their conscience. Wherefore, violation of conscience cannot be the universal cause of sin and death during this period or any other period.

Therefore, the only possible solution for the explanation of universal death between Adam and Moses is that all mankind existed and acted in Adam when Adam “*sinned*” or violated Genesis 2:17. All of humanity existed as one indivisible human nature, which willfully sinned as one man – Adam. That is the only possible Law which could have been violated, whereby death “*passed*” upon all mankind, and that is the only possible way that all mankind living between Adam and Moses could have justly suffered death just as Paul says “*by one man’s offence many were made sinners*”:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:..... For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;.....For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, - Rom. 5:12,17,18,19

So, every human coming into this world as an infant, has already sinned in Adam, and is a sinner by nature when born.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.....Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. – Job 14:1,4

What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? - Job 15:14

How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? - Job 25:4

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. – Psa. 51:5

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. – Psa. 58:3

All human's at birth can be called "*the wicked*" because they have violated Genesis 2:17 when they existed as one indivisible human nature in Adam. Therefore "*all in Adam die*" (1 Cor. 15:22).

Death is the principle of "*corruption*" at work in the physical human body, as soon as they are conceived, as disease and death attack the conceived infant in the womb as well as the maturing human in the world.

This principle of corruption is called the "*law of sin*" that resides in every human coming into this world. The lost man is completely dominated by this indwelling law of sin and death, and even the saved man is dominated by it apart from living under the power of the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 7:14-8:13). It is this "*law*" of sin at work in the lost man that makes him incapable of faith in Christ.

Indwelling "*law of sin*" and death is only removed from the "*spirit*" of man by new birth when they are "*created in Christ*" and only removed from the body of the elect by glorification or resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54-56).

Therefore, mankind lost their ability to believe when they sinned in Adam.

C. Universal in Nature – Rom. 8:7

Paul provides only two possible classifications for all mankind. You are either “*in the flesh*” or “*in the Spirit*” as there is no third category according to Paul (Rom. 8:8-9). If you are not “*in the Spirit*” you are “*none of his*” and “*in the flesh*” according to Paul. Therefore, to be classified as “*in the flesh*” is to be classified as “*none of his*.”

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. – Romans 8:8-9

Those “*in the flesh*” have a fallen condition previously described in verse 7 that provides the basis for why fallen man is incapable of coming to Christ by faith and the reason for saying those “*in the flesh cannot please God*.”

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. – Rom. 8:7-8

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. – Heb. 11:6

This is why Paul formerly declared “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*.” – Rom. 3:10-11

This is why Jesus described the lost man in the following words:

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men **loved** darkness **rather than** light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil **hateth** the light, **neither cometh** to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* – Jn. 3:19-20

The fallen human nature of man is in an **intellectually** state of unbelief even as it comes into this world. It is **emotionally** in love with darkness and hates light. **Volitionally** it “*neither cometh to the light*” and therefore, “*there is none that seeketh after God.*” Seeking after God is the act of the will. No lost person is willing to seek after God.³

Thus, the lost carnal mindset is irreversibly fixed (“*not subject...neither indeed can be*” – Rom. 8:7b) in a state of “**enmity against God**” (Rom. 8:7a) or in a state of war against God. In Romans 8:7 the word “can” translates the Greek term *dunamis* which is commonly translated “power” or “able.” Thus, the fallen nature has no ability to come to Christ by faith. This inability is not due to the lack of the power of volitional choice, but due to enmity against God that directs the will against God and the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

Thus the fallen nature makes it impossible for man to come to Christ by faith. Jesus said “*no man can come to me*” (Jn. 6:44a). No kind of persuasion can bring a lost man to come to Christ by faith:

³ Those involved in false religions think they are seeking God, when in fact they are in rebellion against God. Being religious is not seeking God. Seeking God means coming to God by faith in the true gospel of Christ (Heb. 11:6).

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. – Psa. 58:3-5

All come into this world “*in the flesh*” or in a lost unbelieving resistant condition. Hence, inability to come to Christ by faith is universal in scope.

This is why coming to Christ in genuine saving faith is “*the work of God*” (Jn. 6:29); a creative quickening work of God (Eph. 2:1,5,10) which only occurs in those “given” (Jn. 6:37-39) by the Father to the Son and drawn by the Father to the Son (Jn. 6:44-65). Apart from this supernatural work of God, the lost man will “*always resist the Holy Spirit*” by rejecting the preaching of the gospel through the prophets and preachers of God (Acts 7:51).

They Are Chosen to be Given

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. – Jn. 6:38-39

Jesus defines why he came down from heaven to assume a human nature in the incarnation. He came down to obey the will of the Father.⁴ Hence this will of the Father predated the incarnation and is the cause for the incarnation. What is the will of the Father that predated and is the cause of the incarnation?

The will of the Father that predated the incarnation is that prior to the coming of Christ to earth the Father had already “*given*” all

⁴ The “*will of the Father*” has nothing to do with our obedience to it, but the obedience of the Son. Hence, it makes no difference if some argue that this is merely the revealed will, rather than the sovereign will of God, because disobedience of either by the Son would make him a sinner. It is obvious that it is the sovereign will of God because it occurred prior to the incarnation, and it is effectually obeyed by the Son so that none are lost.

who would come to him by faith. The Greek term translated “*given*” is found in the perfect tense demanding an already completed action sometime in the past that stands completed at the time Jesus spoke these words. The past time of completion was before the incarnation as it is the cause of the incarnation. In other words, prior to the coming of Christ to earth, the Father had already given him “*all*” who would come to him and his responsibility was to make sure that “*of all*” whom the Father had given him “*I shall lose nothing.*”

Why do people come to Christ? They come, because they have been chosen by the Father to be given to come to Christ before the incarnation. There is only one possible kind of people already given to the Son by the Father prior to the incarnation for the purpose to come to Christ, and that people is called the “elect” in Scripture.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: - Eph. 1:4

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: - 2 Thes. 2:13

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, - 2 Tim. 1:9

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did

predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. – Rom. 8:28-33

Take note that those “*chosen*” in him before the world were also chosen “*to salvation.....through belief of the truth.*” Hence, they were chosen to believe or to come to Christ by faith.

They come to Christ because they have been drawn by the Father. They are drawn by the Father because they have been given by the Father to come to Christ. They have been given by the Father to the Son because they have been chosen “*in him*” before the world began “*according to his purpose.*”

It is impossible for God to “*give*” what he has not first **chosen** to give. Furthermore, since “*all*” given by the Father do in fact come to Christ so that none are lost, therefore, it is obvious not all human beings without exception were chosen, given or drawn by the Father or else no human beings will ever be lost.

The Father gives him power over “*all flesh*” but only those given to him by the Father to come to him are those that he gives eternal life unto:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. – Jn. 17:2

A. Is Election Just?

Many question the justness of election of some and not of others.

However, being “*chosen....to salvation*” presupposes the fall of man prior to this choice. Furthermore, we are said to have been saved according to “*mercy*” (Tit. 3:5). The elect are called “*vessels of mercy*” (Rom. 9:16, 18, and 21). Mercy has no relevance where there is not already a just sentence of guilt already been enacted. Mercy is something that justness cannot demand but is only something that has relationship to those already justly condemned by their sins.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? - Rom. 9:18-21

Paul’s argument is very simple. Why is it unjust for God to do what he wills with the same lump of fallen mankind? They are already justly condemned unto eternal death due to their own sins. Election is unto salvation and is an act of mercy. Why can’t God choose to save some and allow others to continue in their own willful rebellion? Nowhere does the Bible teach “election to damnation” because that is unnecessary because all are already condemned by their sin.

When Adam sinned, the whole human nature, thus the whole potential human race sinned and God could have justly sent Adam and Eve, thus the whole race in them, into hell instantly and been perfectly just.

The real question is why would God choose to have mercy and not administer swift justice?

The truth is that nothing prevents the worst of sinners from coming to Christ for salvation but their own depraved willful resistance (Rom. 8:7) and therefore their condemnation. The non-elect simply continue on freely hating God in keeping with their own fallen nature. God is perfectly just in allowing them to continue in their hardening and ultimate condemnation.

On the other hand nothing can account for anyone coming to Christ or the salvation of any fallen human being but God's mercy. It is God's mercy, rather than His justness that is the cause of the salvation of any depraved God-hating sinner.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. – Rom. 8:32-34

B. Is election to Damnation

Nowhere in Scripture do we ever read of “election...to damnation.” Why? It is unnecessary, because all human beings come into this world “*already condemned*” (Jn. 3:18) due to their fall “*in Adam*” (Rom. 5:12-19).

The temporal salvation of the non-elect is a necessary act of God in order to secure the eternal salvation of His elect. God uses their

sinful nature to accomplish his eternal purpose and whatever they might imagine to do that will not ultimately bring glory to God is overruled by God:

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. – Psa. 76:10

In the mean time, God uses them as “*vessels of wrath*” to accomplish His purposes, even in the death of His own Son:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: -Acts 2:23

God did not make them do it. He simply took their natural depravity which hated Christ which permitted would result in killing Christ.

He puts such within His congregations in order to accomplish his purposes, test His people and make them stronger:

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve. – Jn. 6:70-71

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. – 1 Cor. 11:19

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. – 2 Pet. 2:1

C. Is Election Contrary to “whosoever will”

The gospel never calls “*whosoever won’t*”! The gospel is for only “*whosoever will*” and there is not one fallen man who is willing. That is why they must be chosen, given and drawn to “*come to Christ*” by faith.

We preach the gospel in order to know who are the elect, as God has chosen the means as well as the people and the means of calling out the elect is through the preaching of the Gospel:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: - 2 Thes. 2:13

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. – Acts 18:9-10

Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. – 2 Tim. 2:10

Notice that Paul did not say for the “lost” or for the “world’s sake” but “*for the elect’s sake*” they might be saved.

The gospel comes to them differently than the rest of the world who hears it. Indeed, that is precisely how you can know your own election is how the gospel comes to you:

Knowing, brethren beloved, **your election** of God. For our gospel **came not unto you in word only, but also in**

power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. – 1 Thes. 1:4-5

D. Is Election contrary to God loving “the world” – Jn. 3:16?

The greatest problem within the all Jewish congregation within the gospels and Acts is their refusal to preach the gospel to the gentiles. The first conference between churches was whether one must become a Jew by circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses in order to be saved. God had to reveal the vision to Peter three times in order to convince him to even set foot in a gentile house and then the very first words out of his mouth were:

*And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or *unclean*. – Acts 2:28*

He took six Jewish church members with him in order to be witnesses and then when he returned to the church at Jerusalem he was called on the carpet by the Jewish members for baptizing them into membership into the all Jewish church (Acts 11).

In John 3:16 Jesus is speaking directly to such a Jew with this Jewish concept that salvation is restricted to the Jews. The epistles of John are directed toward Jewish congregations in Palestine (Gal. 2:9) with the same mindset that Gentiles are sub class Christians.

It is in this first century contextual problem that New Testament writers use the terms “world” “whole world” and “all.” There are two possible ways to interpret these terms:

1. “*world...all*” = all human beings that have lived from Adam to the last person without exceptions.
2. “*world...all*” = all nations without distinction of race, class or gender

We believe that definition number “2” is the correct Biblical understanding of the terms “world...whole world...all” in the context of scripture.

E. Is Election contrary to God’s Love and Hate?

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;).....As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. – Rom. 9:13-14

Many would say that God would be unrighteous to love one and hate the other. Others would interpret “Jacob...Esau” to mean the nations of Israel and Edom. However, since nations are nothing but a mass of people with defined borders and characteristics, they would have God hating not merely one person (Esau) but a whole nation of individuals.

Still others claim that God does not hate anyone but merely hates their sins. However, that is simply not true:

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. – Psa. 5:5

Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. –Psa. 139:22

Furthermore, all men come into this world under the condemnation and wrath of God.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. – Jn. 3:18

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. – Jn. 3:36

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. – Eph. 2:3

The love of God is found only “*in Christ*” because outside of Christ “*the wrath of God abideth*” on all unbelievers. The elect have been “*chosen in him*” before the world began (Eph. 1:4). Therefore, according to God’s purpose of salvation they are the objects of God special redemptive love. However, until His purpose becomes actual in time and space they are “*the children of wrath even as others.*”

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

⁵ – Isa. 46:9-11

So yes, God hates all workers of iniquity justly. Indeed, that is precisely what he calls all the lost who are cast into hell:

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. – Mt. 7:

Election is the merciful act of God in saving some who are willful God haters by nature and who continue willfully in sin and love it so. God's is just in the condemnation of the non-elect and God is merciful in the salvation of the elect. Whenever we preach the gospel the two are made manifest:

We are always victorious when we preach the gospel whether it is rejected or accepted. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. – 2 Cor. 2:16-17

⁵ No one is already called, justified, glorified, and thus saved before the world began except by purpose. Actual calling, justifying, glorifying and salvation occur in time and space. The elect come into this world with exactly the same fallen nature, under the wrath of God “even as others.” They are “sheep” by purpose but they are goats by nature until they experience new birth and become a new creature.

Remember, salvation is “*by grace*” and grace means *unmerited favor* and election is “*of grace*” (Rom. 11:6), and is thus without a cause in you or “freely” obtained (Rom. 3:24).

F. Is Election According to Mere Divine Foresight?

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. – 1 Pet. 1:2

Many believe that election is simply God looking ahead to see who will believe and then choosing them because of what they are going to do anyway. Hence, according to them, election is merely a divine rubber seal.

This idea demands that what happens in the future in regard to salvation is mere unguided fate that God merely sees in advance. However, in regard to salvation, the Bible says that God works all things according to His divine purpose instead of mere fate. It is because He has chosen, given and drawn a people that they come to Christ by faith rather than by mere unguided fate.

Romans 8:28-32 makes it clear that the foreknowledge of God is based upon God’s knowledge of His eternal purpose according to which he works all aspects of salvation:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he

justified, then he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. – Rom. 8:28-33

All things work for the good of the elect because God works all things for their good according to His purpose rather than mere fate.

Notice that God's "*purpose*" for his elect ("*them....whom...us...elect*") precedes both predestination and foreknowledge in Romans 8:28-29. All things work for the good of "the called" because He has predestinated all things to work for their good according to His divine purpose. He foreknows these things because He purposed those things.

Notice that predestination follows His "purpose" and precedes foreknowledge. Paul tells us that predestination is merely the working out of God's eternal purpose:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: -

Eph. 1:11

Therefore, if predestination is merely working out of His eternal purpose in time, then foreknowledge which follow predestination is simply the knowledge of that purpose before it is worked out in time.

For example, a builder of a house has a blue print from which all aspects of a house or building is predetermined, and therefore he

knows in advance where every aspect will be because he has purposed where every aspect will be found in his blueprint. Likewise, God foreknows the elect because He purposed to choose, give and draw them to His Son before the world began.

Saving Faith is of Grace

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, - Rom. 4:16

Saving faith is not inherent in fallen man because grace is not inherent in fallen man. Grace comes from God not from men. Thus saving faith comes from God:

*Looking unto Jesus **the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.- Heb. 12:2*

Jesus is the **author** of our faith as it is the “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” that originates faith in the heart of God’s elect. Man is not the author of saving faith.

All men have common faith, but not all men have saving faith:

*And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: **for all men have not faith**. – 2 Thes. 3:2*

Faith is the fruit of the Spirit which is not found among the characteristics of the flesh:

*But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith**, - Gal. 5:22*

Faith is something given to God's elect, just as it is given only to God's elect to suffer for his name sake:

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; - Philip. 1:29

Indeed, faith is the product of God working in the believer both to will and to do of His good pleasure:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. - Philip. 2:13

Faith is the good work that God began in us at the new birth:

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: - Philip. 1:6

Indeed, we are kept by the power of God “*through faith*” until the day of redemption:

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. - 1 Pet. 1:5

“*It is of faith, that it might be of grace*” (Rom. 4:16) as that is how the grace of God saves us:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, - Eph. 2:8-10

The antecedent for “*that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God*” is the whole phrase “*by grace are ye saved through faith.*”

Remember, in a former chapter we demonstrated that saving faith is a product of divine revelation (Mt. 16:17; Gal. 1:15-16) or the creative power of God effectually calling “*the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” into existence within the darkened heart of man – 2 Cor. 4:6. Therefore, it is the divine creative act of God whereby the “darkened” understanding of unbelief in the human heart is changed to a believing heart. It is this same phrase “for by grace are ye saved through faith” that is the contextual antecedent “*for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works...*”

Although common faith is inherent in fallen man, saving faith which is “*by grace*” and “*of grace*” is not inherent in fallen man. Neither is it given to all men without exception, as it has been previously demonstrated that the giving of faith is inseparable from creating within the heart “*the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor 4:6) which by its very nature removes darkness just as light removed the darkness upon the face of the deep in Genesis 1:2-3.

If justifying faith is a “*gift*” of God’s grace, then it should be obvious there is no such thing as foreseen faith. Indeed, the Scripture plainly says that God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that either understood or did seek God and he found none (Psa. 14:2-3). Hence, faith “*according to the foreknowledge of God*” (1 Pet. 1:3) is faith that is foreknown by God “*according to His purpose*” of election (Rom. 8:28-32). Just as a builder foreknows where every door and window is going to be located before he builds it, so God has a blueprint or divine purpose he works all things according to (Eph. 1:11).

Saving Faith is not Faithfulness

Faithfulness is the product of justifying faith, but it is not justifying faith. Justifying faith is faith that has for its sole object the faithfulness performed in the person of Jesus Christ “*for us*” which justifies us before God. The faithfulness that justifies us before God is found only in the person of Jesus Christ whose whole life from birth to death is wholly without sin.

In contrast, our faithfulness is not performed in a person whose life from birth to death is without sin. However, that is precisely what God’s standard of righteousness demands to be justified before God and enter heaven and miss hell.

A. The Price Tag for Entrance into Heaven

Jesus told his audience that the righteousness/faithfulness that obtains entrance into heaven must “exceed” the best righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees:

*For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*** – Mt. 5:20

Notice this is necessary “*to enter....heaven.*” This means their interpretation of righteousness to enter heaven as defined by the Law must also “*exceed*” the interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:21-45).

In Matthew 5:21-45, Jesus contrasts “*you have heard it said*” or the traditional interpretations of the elders that defined the standard of righteousness by the Law observed by the scribes and Pharisees, contrasted with “*but I say unto you*” or the interpretation of the Law and righteousness demanded by Christ “*to enter into....heaven.*”

According to Christ’s interpretation of God’s standard of righteousness “*to enter into....heaven*” you come short if you are “*angry without a cause*” against another fellow human (v. 22). You come short of that righteousness if you have but the “*look*” of “*lust*” in your heart toward a woman (v. 28).

Indeed, the only righteousness that will justify you to “*enter into...heaven*” is to “*be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect*” (v.46) as the righteousness of the Law is to reveal God’s own righteousness as the standard:

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
- Rom. 3:20

Apart from the Old Testament scripture, which is the witness “*by the law and the prophets*” or written revelation of the “*righteousness of God*”, the only other revelation of God’s righteousness is found in the life and person of Jesus Christ. He was God in the flesh, and his entire preexistence was entirely without sin, and his entire existence between incarnation and death was entirely without sin. That is the standard of God’s righteousness required to “*enter into....heaven.*”

Sin is coming short of the righteousness of God, which is the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). And as James demands, to sin in but one point of the Law is to fail in all points of the Law (James 2:10-

11). Why? Because the law requires the perfect obedience to all points in order to be regarded righteous, as to fail in one point brings you under the condemnation and penalty of the law rather than justification by the law.

Justifying faith, is faith that has for its sole object the sinless righteousness of Christ (his faithfulness), as the only qualified basis for justification before God.

This standard cannot be provided in, through or by your own personal life on earth because you have already violated that standard. Progressive sanctification by the Spirit of God in and through you does not obtain that standard.

Spiritual union with Christ does not obtain that standard in your own life. Justification is of the “*ungodly*” without works (Rom. 4:5) rather than the “*godly*” through spiritual union. Spiritual union with Christ does not make your own life sinless.

That standard requires a “*spotless lamb*” or a sinless life from birth to death or a sinless existence like unto God – “*therefore be ye perfect even as God is perfect.*” That alone is God’s sole standard “*to enter into....heaven.*”

That standard is only obtained through imputation of Christ’s righteousness by faith provided “*for us*” as a free gift.

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is a gift of God, not of works..... – Eph. 2:8-9a

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.
– 2 Cor. 5:21

Christ was **not** “*made....to be sin*” by becoming an actual sinner. No, he was legally put in the position and “*made....to be sin*” by having our sins IMPUTED to him as our legal representative or standing in our place as the second Adam. Neither are we “*made the righteousness of God*” by becoming actually sinless in our own personal life. His righteousness is IMPUTED to us by faith.

Just as the sin he bore was FOREIGN to his personal life, so the righteousness made to us is FOREIGN to our own personal life. Our sins were imputed to him legally as one who willingly took our place before God as the second Adam. His righteousness was imputed legally to us by faith.

We are justified by faith without works before God (Rom. 4) but we are not justified without works (faithfulness) before men (James 2:14-21).

Faithfulness is the product of justifying faith in Christ. Our faith in Christ is inseparable from regeneration, but faithfulness is the product of that creative work.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus UNTO good works.... – Eph. 2:10a

Justifying faith is inseparably involved in God’s work of regenerative creation, but faithfulness to God is a product of that creative work.

B. The Nature of the Works of the Law

The majority of Christendom claims that the phrases “*the works of the Law*” or “*faith without works*” or “*deeds of the law*” refer only to what God requires to become a Jew under the Law of Moses and has nothing to do with becoming a Christian.

Therefore, they interpret all the texts that assert that justification is “*without works*” to mean only that one does not have to become a Jew under the Law of Moses in order to be a Christian. However, they demand the scriptures teach one must be obedient to God’s moral laws/commandments to be justified before Him on judgment day, as those justified on judgment day are called “*the righteous*” versus those not justified are called “*the wicked*” or “*unrighteous.*”

However, the basis for this interpretation is a failure to understand why the Law was given to Israel, as well, as a failure to understand the nature of “*works.*”

1. The Law was given to distinguish the righteousness of God from sin.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God.....for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God – Rom. 3:20-22,23

Paul says the Law serves two purposes. (1) “*by the law is the knowledge of sin*” and by the law (2) “*the righteousness of God....is manifested*” or “*the glory of God.*”

The Mosaic Law was special written revelation given to Israel that provided a comprehensive knowledge between right and wrong. However, it was not the only revelation to serve that purpose. God gave all men, including the gentiles a simple and general revelation of right and wrong in the conscience which was designed to do “*the work of the Law*” on a much more simple level

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) – Rom. 2:14-15

Both laws were designed by the very same God for the very same purpose – to reveal the knowledge of sin and thus the complex written revelation to Israel was the same law of the simplex written on conscience. Therefore, Paul could say in regard to both Jews and Gentiles:

*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles**, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. – Rom. 3:9-12*

That is why he could go on to say that the “*whole world*” are condemned under “*the law*” and not merely Jews, and that “*no flesh*” (Jew or Gentile) could be justified by the law.

*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith **to them who are under the law**: that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there **shall no flesh** be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. – Rom. 3:19-20*

Notice in verse 9 that “**both Jews and Gentiles...are all under sin.**” However, only those under the Law can be under its condemnation of sin. Therefore, Paul goes on to say, “*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith **to them who***

are under the law.” This is the same “law” that he goes on to speak of in the very next verse that reveals the righteousness of God is manifest “*in the law and the prophets*” or the written Law of God. It is this Law, that “*every mouth*” and “*all the world*” that “*no flesh*” can be justified by observing.

These are universal terms that embrace more than just Israel but “*every mouth*” in “*all the world*” including “*both Jews and Gentiles.*”

Therefore, “*the law*” of Moses is merely the more comprehensive law that is inclusive of the law written on the conscience of every man, serving the very same purpose for every man. The law written on the conscience is the very same law in simplex form that is revealed in a more complex and comprehensive form to Israel. Both have the very same purpose and that is (1) to reveal the knowledge of sin and (2) the righteousness of God which is the standard for justification before God.

Therefore, for Paul to assert that “*no flesh*” can be justified by the deeds of the Law is to assert in the most comprehensive way possible that no human being can be justified by keeping any lesser standard of righteousness whether it is doing what conscience or written revelation reveals to be good and right. Not because of any weakness in the Law but due to the weakness in the fallen nature of man.

2. The Nature of Works

Not only does this interpretation of “*the deeds*” or “*works*” of the Law fail to properly understand why the law was given, but it fails to understand the nature of works.

“*Works*” are those things you do in your body whether good or bad that will be rewarded accordingly on judgment day:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. – 2 Cor. 5:10

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. – Eccl. 12:14

To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
– Jude 1:15

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. – Rev. 20:12

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. – Mat. 16:27

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: – Rom. 2:6

In all the above texts, the phrases “*the things done in his body*” and “*every work*” and “*according to their works*” and “*ungodly deeds*” and “*according to their deeds*” are all synonymous phrases. Notice the interchangeable use of “*things*” “*works*” and “*deeds*”.

All of these are “*things done in his body*” that fall into only two possible classifications “*whether it be good*” or “*whether it be bad.*” There is no third qualification. That is the definition of “works” and “deeds” of the Law.

These “*deeds*” or “*works*” done in your body include good or bad “*thoughts*” “*words*” and external actions of the body.

Works done in the body include everything done from a wrong motive or attitude including words and actions. Notice that the source of all works done in the body originate with the heart of man:

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: - Mt. 15:18-19

Hence, “works” are all those things that proceed out of the heart including “evil imaginations.” These are “works.” However, Jesus does not stop there. He denies that good things can come out of an evil heart:

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. – Mt. 12:33-35

The words “*either make*” refers to recognition of the tree (heart) as either good or evil but it cannot be both. Jesus denies that an

“*evil*” heart can bring forth “*good*” fruit in the sight of God. If the same heart could be either “good” or “evil” God would not have to give a “new heart” (Ezek. 36:26).

The unregenerate heart is incapable of bringing forth any “*good fruit*” (works). That is, it is the “*corrupt*” tree/heart is the condition of “*being evil*” which Jesus denies can bring forth any “good fruit” in God’s sight.

This brings us to the core problem of the fallen heart of man. It is evil by nature/motive. The only righteous motive is “whatsoever things ye do, do all for the glory of God.”

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. – 1 Cor. 10:31

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. - Col. 3:17

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; - Col. 3:23

Why is God’s glory the only “good” motive acceptable to God? Because God does not determine good and evil as men do by their external words and actions, but He looks upon the heart:

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. – 1 Sam. 16:7

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for

*that which is highly esteemed among men is **abomination in the sight of God.** – Lk. 16:15*

*All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; **but the LORD weigheth the spirits.** – Prov. 16:2*

*But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that **triest the reins and the heart,** let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause. – Jer. 11:20*

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.- Jer. 17:10

So, is there any natural born human who has been born with a good heart? If there are such, then God knows them. If any should have a good heart it should be found in infants:

*What is man, that he should be clean? and **he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?** - Job 15:14*

*How then can man be justified with God? or how can **he be clean that is born of a woman?** - Job 25:4*

*Behold, **I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.** – Psa. 51:5*

*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they **go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.** – Psa. 58:3*

Moreover, infants do not come into the world as believers but as unbelievers. They do not come into the world inclined to do righteousness, but without instruction naturally are inclined to be self-centered and do evil. No parent has ever had to teach infants how to do evil.

Indeed, God looked down from heaven “*upon the children of men*” to see if there were “*any*” who understood, or would seek God or do good and here is His conclusion:

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

– Psa. 14:2-3

This is true because man is born with an evil and fallen nature already inclined toward evil. Therefore, that heart, according to Christ is “*evil*” and an “*evil*” heart cannot bring forth good fruit or works in God’s sight.

Therefore, the “*works*” or “*deeds*” of the Law are simply all “*the things done in their bodies*” offered to God in order to be justified in his sight. However, no such fallen man has such a heart that can do anything “*good*” in his sight. Therefore, “*no flesh*” shall be justified by the works of the law in the sight of God.

3. The Ability for Good Words.

How then can man do “*good*” works if the heart they are born with is incapable of doing anything good in God’s sight? The Word of God does speak of men doing “*good*” things in God’s sight.

However, such men have been given a “*new heart*” or have been born again. Moreover, the born again man does not have power in himself to do anything good either. This is the lesson Paul learned and left in writing for us to read about in Romans 7:14-25 and in Galatians 5:16-25.

Good works are the product of the indwelling Holy Spirit as the Spirit empowers the righteous motives of the new heart that is “*created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24).

This is what Paul means when he says “*redeeming the time*” by being “*filled*” by the Spirit (Eph. 5:16-18). As our daily time is brought under the leadership of the Holy Spirit by submission of our thoughts, words and deeds to the Holy Spirit, they are being saved in the form of rewards in heaven. This is what Paul means when he tells the Galatians:

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. – Gal. 5; 25

This is what Paul describes as the ultimate way our Salvation is worked out in our own lives:

For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure— Philip. 2:13

Good works are only possible by born again children of God, and then only by submitting our lives to the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

However, this in working by the Holy Spirit is progressive and never produces a sinless life (1 Jn.1:8-10). Therefore, it cannot be the basis for justification before God, as the standard for justification before God is an entire life of sinless obedience. Therefore, progressive sanctification or the progressive impartation of Christ’s righteousness in and through our lives is not for the purpose of obtaining entrance into heaven, but rather is for an “abundant” entrance or rewards in heaven (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

4. The Example of Abraham

The view that the phrase “*without works*” is merely a denial that one must become a Jew to be a Christian, also fails in the example of Abraham in Romans 4.

Abraham lived more than 400 years (Gal. 3:17) before the Law of Moses was ever given. Paul introduces and states his view of justification by faith in Romans 3:24-26 where the object of justifying faith is the Person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:27 he begins to defend his view of Justification by faith by contrasting it with “*works*” as operating by two different contrasting fundamental principles (laws) in regard to their nature. The point of opposition is found in regard to boasting or glorying. The fundamental law or principle behind works is that it provided the basis for the one performing the works to boast or glory or take credit for his works. Judgement day proves this as the fundamental law in play is “*every man will be rewarded according to his works.*” Abraham is brought into this discussion by Paul to counter this principle or law of works in regard to boasting/glorying:

*Where is boasting [Gr. *kauchesis*] then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by **the law** of faith. – Rom. 3:27*

*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; [Gr. *kauchesis*] but not before God. – Rom. 4:2*

Works by their very nature (“*law*”) promotes boasting, whereas, faith by its very nature (“*law*”) repudiates boasting.

Romans 4:3-21 is given as a systematic defense by Paul to prove that justification by faith repudiates boasting.

a. Justification is freely by grace (Rom. 3:24) and faith is of grace, (Rom. 4:16) but works incur debt or obligation to reward the worker according to what his works merit (Rom. 2:6) whereas justification is an unmerited gift of free grace which denies any grounds for boasting (Rom. 3:24; 6:23).

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. – Rom. 4:4

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace;.... – Rom. 4:16

b. It is the faith of the “ungodly” that is justified “without works” and to him righteousness is imputed. No “ungodly” person has any basis for boasting in “imputed” righteousness – Rom. 4:5

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. – Rom. 4:5

Note that “worketh not” is placed in contrast to “believeth on him. Note that it is the “*ungodly*” not the **godly** which are justified thus denying that “*imputeth*” means righteousness progressively imparted to the person making him sufficiently **godly** enough to be justified in God’s presence. Anyone who continues to sin in their own person by definition of the Law of God is “*ungodly*” and justified persons continue to sin in their own person (1 Jn. 1:8-10). Hence, this righteousness is FOREIGN to their person. It is forensic or legal righteousness provided by Christ’s own Person received by faith. Neither is it righteousness by spiritual union with Christ, simply because such union does not produce a whole life of sinlessness in your own person. Spiritual union through regeneration provides only progressive incomplete righteousness in your life never completed until glorification.

c. It is the faith of the “*ungodly*” who is justified by faith, meaning his righteousness comes by way of imputation instead of impartation through works; and his sins are remitted “without works” – Rom. 4:6-8

*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness **without works**, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. – Rom. 4:6-8*

Here Paul defines the essence of Justification, as consisting of two parts: (1) The imputation of righteousness; and (2) The remission of sins. In order to be justified before God, a man must have righteousness that God accepts; and must have no sin that would keep him from being condemned to hell. Both are obtained by free grace by faith in the Person and work of Christ “*without works*” on the part of the justified.

d. Neither is the blessedness of imputed righteousness and remission of sins (justification) obtained in connection with external divine rites or sacramentalism – Rom. 4:9-12

9 *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

10 *How was it then reckoned? **when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.***

11 *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*

12 *And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of*

that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The question of “when” was Abraham circumcised is presented above. Only two possible options are provided in verse 10 – (1) in uncircumcision or (2) in circumcision. How does justification relate to external divine ordinances? The external divine ordinance in Abraham’s day was “circumcision” whereas today it is baptism and the Lord’s Supper. His answer is that Abraham was justified “NOT IN CIRCUMCISION.” Abraham’s life is recorded from Genesis 11 to Genesis 28. Abraham was circumcised in Genesis 17. Therefore, his life “*in uncircumcision*” was between Genesis 11 and Genesis 16, and his life “*in circumcision*” was between Genesis 17 and Genesis 28.

Paul is denying that justification is a progressive act of God that continues throughout the life of Abraham. Paul claims that justification by faith was a completed act (aorist tense “*had yet being uncircumcised*”) while he was “*in uncircumcision.*” He is flatly denying that Abraham was being justified “*in circumcision*” as he flatly says “*not in circumcision.*”⁶ Rather, divine rites are external “signs” or testimonies that provide a visible “seal” or evidence that one has already been justified.

Abraham is provided as the pattern for “*all them that believe*” and “*all who are of faith*” (Rom. 4:11, 16; Gal. 3:6-7).

⁶ Paul does not contradict James 2:21-24. Paul is speaking about justification “before God” (Rom. 4:1-2) whereas, James is speaking about justification of faith by profession before men (James 2:14-18 “though a man say...show me....show you”). Moreover, Moses uses the perfect tense in Genesis 15:6 and 12:1 which both refer back to the actual time when Abraham was justified in Ur of the Chaldees before he left with his father to Haran in harmony with Galatians 3:8. The perfected state of justification continues and that faith strengthens with each new revelation provided by God.

e. Justification by faith is without obedience to the Law – Rom. 4:13-15.

*13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was **not** to Abraham, or to his seed, **through the law**, but through the righteousness of faith.*

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

The promise of entrance and ownership of a new heaven and earth which Abraham looked for (Heb. 11:13-16) was not obtained by his personal obedience to the Laws of God, but by faith in the personal obedience of Christ to the laws of God “*for him*” (Rom. 4:24-25). The law could not justify obtaining any promises for anyone whose entire life was less than sinless, but only promise “*wrath*.” There is no question that God had laws before the time of Moses or else “*where there is no law, there is no transgression*” and all men between Adam and Moses sinned. Therefore “*works*” in relationship to Abraham was not defined by Mosaic Law but by general laws of God (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 2:14-15) or by special revealed laws (circumcision, etc. – Gen. 9:2-3; 18:16).

f. Justifying faith is “*of grace*” and is not faithfulness or any definition that can be defined as assisting or cooperating with God to obtain justification – Rom. 4:16-21

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17 ¶ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:*

20 *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

21 *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

22 *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

Grace secures the promise to “*all the seed*” simply because it is not based upon man’s ability to obtain the promise through works (v. 16). Instead, it is based upon God’s ability to obtain what is impossible for man to obtain by works – “*raiseth the dead*” (v. 17). Paul then provides an example in the life of Abraham to define the precise nature of justifying faith in obtaining the promise of God (vv. 18-21). God purposely waited until Abraham and Sarah could not assist, aide or cooperate with God in obtaining God’s promise by faith. He waited until their reproductive abilities were “*dead*” (v. 19) as only God “*raiseth the dead*” (v. 17). Justifying faith is defined in verse 21 as “*being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was also able to perform*” without his assistance, aide, ability or cooperation. It is this kind of faith that righteousness was imputed to him (v. 22).

g. Just as God provided a son for Abraham by faith without Abraham’s assistance, aide, ability or cooperation, so also God justifies those who believe in God’s promise of the Gospel, which justification is obtained by God’s power and God’s provision in the Person of Jesus Christ for us – Rom. 4:23-5:2

23 ¶ *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;*

24 *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;*

25 *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

5:1 ¶ *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Abraham is not an isolated case, but is the pattern or example set forth in God's word for "*all who are of faith*" (Rom. 4:11, 16, 23) especially in regard to justification by faith in the gospel (Gal. 3:6-8).

Justifying faith is not faithfulness to God, but is faith in the faithfulness of the Person and work of Jesus Christ in our behalf (vv. 24-5:1).

God having raised Jesus from the dead proves that his deliverance "*for our offences*" had been accepted. If it had not been accepted the consequence of sin (death) would have prevailed over the dead body of Christ. Thus, he was raised "*for our justification*" as it is our sins that he provided satisfaction for on the cross.

Paul uses aorist and perfect tense verbs to describe the completed act of justification at the point of faith in Romans 5:1-2. Again, denying it is an ongoing uncompleted process that only finds completion at death or the Day of Judgment. We "*have peace*" at the point of faith. We have access at the point of faith. We have a standing or a position of justification before God that was completed at the specific point of faith and continues to stand as a completed or perfected action (perfect tense "*we stand*").

Justifying faith is the work of God, solely “*of grace*” and “*without works.*” There was no law of Moses in the time of Abraham but there were “*works*” and there was “*law*” or commandments prior to Moses, but Abraham was justified “*without works*” or by personal obedience to those laws.

Therefore, the idea that “*works*” or “*deeds of the Law*” refer only to the Mosaic Law and only to becoming a Jew is thoroughly repudiated by Paul in the example of Abraham.

Saving Faith is not Vain Faith

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:.....And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain..... - 1 Cor. 15:1-5, 14

In the above context, Paul is affirming the gospel he had preached to them which contained the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. Some at Corinth were denying this aspect of Paul's gospel. Paul argues that if what he preached, and what the scriptures declared, and what all the witnesses of Christ's bodily resurrection confirmed is really false, then all these witnesses are "*false witnesses*" and their faith in that gospel is vain. Moreover, he argues that if that is false they are still in their sins without any hope of salvation, and those who have died believing in that gospel are perished without any hope of future salvation. However, on the other hand, if what he preached, and what all these eyewitnesses confirmed was true, then all who deny it are false witnesses and faith in their gospel is equally vain, as their gospel denies the very essential for salvation from sin. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17). Christ was delivered to the cross to die for our sins and to redeem us from sin. If the body of Christ did not rise from the grave, then sin is not satisfied by Christ's death, as death still reigns over his body. It is the resurrection of Christ's dead body from the grave that declares He has not only paid in full for our sins but has obtained victory over

its consequences – death. Hence, if he has not risen, then we are still in our sins without any future hope at all for victory over death. Hence, if he has not risen, then all believers in the gospel of His resurrection have perished without any future hope for deliverance from the grip of death.

In other words, Paul is demanding that the resurrection of Christ is an essential of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. If anyone professed to believe in Christ but rejected this essential they “*believed in vain.*”

Vain faith is faith in any falsehood. In regard to the gospel, vain faith is faith in any gospel that omits, denies or perverts anything essential to the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another example would be the case presented in the epistle to the Galatians. Some among them were adding to the gospel things that transformed it into an entirely different gospel or “*another gospel*” (Gal. 1:6-9). Those who preached such a gospel were to be regarded as “*accursed*” (Gal. 1:8-9). Those who believed in that perverted gospel would have believed in vain.

The specific error among the Galatians did not have to do with denial of Christ’s death, burial or resurrection, but the denial of something equally as essential to the gospel. Some among them denied the essence of the “good news” provided by the gospel, which is the good news of the full and final sufficiency of Christ’s righteousness to justify us before God by faith without our works. In other words, what Christ did “*for us*” was not sufficient to justify us without our own personal obedience to God’s Law by our own works.

Another example would be the denial or perversion of the Person of Jesus Christ who is the primary object of faith in the true gospel.

There were some who came in among the early Christians who either denied the absolute deity or the absolute humanity of Jesus Christ, and therefore, preached “*another Jesus*” (Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:2-4; 2 Cor. 11:4; etc.). Faith in “*another Jesus*” would pervert any gospel preached or embraced by such a one. Faith in another god would equally pervert any gospel preached or embraced by such a one.

A “vain faith” is not merely just any faith in a falsehood, but especially any faith in falsehoods that pervert, deny, or omit what is essential to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Saving Faith is not Dead Faith

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? – James 2:14-20

James is a book about practical Christianity on a horizontal level especially with the brethren among you. In chapter two, James deals with “*respect of persons*” among the members of the congregation (James 2:1-13)

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. – James 2:1

In James 2:8-13 he brings into this discussion the “*royal law*” of God in order to define how they should treat one another in regard to “*respect of persons*.”

If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye,

and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. – James 2:8-13

James argues that the gist of what the whole law requires is for them to love others as they do themselves (v. 8). If they do not love others as themselves in regard to this “*one point*” in regard to “*respect of persons*” (vv. 1-7) they are violating every point of the law (vv. 9-13) as whole law stands or falls on that very principle.

James 2:1-7 deals with “*respect of persons*” in regard to the rich by showing special honor to the rich above the poor. In contrast, James 2:14-22 deals with the rich among them and their failure to show *proper* “*respect of persons*” to the poor and needy among by excusing themselves from meeting their needs by making pious, but empty remarks. His argument is that their profession of faith contradicts their actions toward the needy and poor among them. Their public profession of faith says one thing but their lack of action says another thing.

Here is where the issue of **dead faith** enters into this contextual discussion of improper “*respect of persons.*”

To claim you have been justified by faith before God is to claim that your relationship is not merely right with God, but to claim that you have the eternal life of God abiding within you. Dead faith offers no evidence of a living God abiding within you or working through you.

James is not speaking about occasional lapses in mistreatment of others, but the **complete void** of proper responses toward others (vv. 15-18). He is referring to those whose faith is no different than demons (v. 19) – completely void of any life of God moving them

to love for others. It is this kind of faith, faith void of any evidence that God lives and works through a person that he asks:

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? – v.

14

He then gives an example of exactly what he means:

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

It is the kind of faith that says but does not show itself through actions. However, true justifying faith shows itself by actions:

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

The faith that says but does not show itself by actions is the kind that demons have in regard to God – completely void of obedience to God:

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

It is true that we are justified by faith without works before God (Romans 4:5-6), but it is equally true that the faith which justifies us without works before God, justifies us by works before men – as it is faith in a living indwelling Savior, who works in us “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philip. 2:13). It is true we are “*saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is a*

gift of God not of works” (Eph. 2:8-9) but it is equally true that we are “*created in Christ Jesus UNTO good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in*” (Eph. 2:10).

James is not denying that we are justified by faith alone, but he is denying we are justified by faith that is alone. Justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is not alone as regeneration, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit are among the many things that accompany salvation:

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. –
Heb. 6:9

This is how works make justification by faith complete before men.

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? – v. 22

The Metaphors of Saving Faith

Jn. 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Did Jesus intend for his hearers to understand this language literally or metaphorically. The Roman Catholic Church establishes its doctrine of transubstantiation upon a strict literal rendering of this text. They believe when they partake of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper that it is transformed into the *literal* flesh and *literal* blood of Jesus Christ and thereby communicates eternal life to the partaker – thus a sacrament. This text is their primary source of Biblical evidence to defend their doctrine of Transubstantiation.

However, Jesus said this long before he established the Lord's Supper or gave His body as a sacrifice on Calvary. If he expected his listening audience to *literally* obey this language, he would have never been able to institute the Lord's Supper or offer up his body on the cross. Moreover, in the Catholic Mass there is no drinking of the wine by the people. The context that immediately precedes and follows this text demands that he intends for his listening audience to understand these words according to well known Hebrew idiom used by Old Testament prophets.

Jer. 15:16 *Thy words were found, and **I did eat them**; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

Ezek. 3:1 *Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.*

2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

This language is expressive of partaking of God's Word, as one would partake of food, but not with the mouth, but with the heart and mind. Notice the final application of Ezekiel eating the roll is "*speak with my words unto them.*" He was to devour the roll containing God's Word so that his mind and heart totally digested its content so that he could preach it to the people of God. Likewise, Jesus is telling his audience that they must partake of him, as one would partake of food, but not with their mouth, but partake of him with their mind and hear by faith.

The contextual backdrop and development of this food theme begins in John 6 with Christ feeding the five thousand (Jn. 6:1-15). Much of the crowd he fed, afterwards laboriously pursued him across the sea where Christ confronted and charged them with having sought him for more food (Jn. 6:15-26) rather than seeking Him for eternal life. Based upon their motive for seeking him for food, He then opens a discussion with them from verse 27 to verse 57 where he makes a transition from seeking him for literal food to seeking him for metaphorical food:

*27 Labour not for the **meat** which perisheth, but for that **meat** which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son*

of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

It should be obvious to the reader that there is a contrast between two totally different kinds of “*meat*” (lit. food) found in this text. One is *literal* food while the other is *metaphorical*. The literal food “*perisheth*” but the metaphorical food “*endureth unto everlasting life*.” Significantly, this metaphorical food is something that the Son of man must “*give unto you*.” It is a gift (“*given*”) of God rather than something merited by works.

His audience was raised under the Law and from the time they were sufficiently old enough to read the Law, they were wrongly taught by their leaders (Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees) to believe that eternal life comes only by personal obedience to the Law or by doing the “*works of God*.” Hence, they ignored that Jesus says eternal life is a gift, but rather ask what can they “*do*” to obtain it.

28 ¶ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

So right at the beginning of this discussion the audience rejected this metaphorical food as something Jesus must “*give*” unto them, but rather insisted they *could* “*do*” the “*works of God*” in order to obtain it. Here is the contrast of obtaining eternal life by a free gift versus obtaining it by doing works. It is in the light of this specific contextual contrast that Jesus then responds:

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Notice the contrast between the plural “*works*” they had asked and claimed they could “*do*” versus the singular “*work*” that only

God can do. They envisioned obtaining eternal life by their works, whereas, Jesus claimed that eternal life was a gift obtained by faith which is “*the work of God.*” Paul also taught this in Ephesians 2:8-10:

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it⁷ is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..... - Eph. 2:8-10a

However, just as they rejected that eternal life was a gift (vv. 27-28) and insisted they can do the works of God, they also reject that believing in Christ is the work of God, but insist they are capable of believing in him based solely upon proper visible miraculous evidence to support their faith.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

First, take note they are freely admitting their total unbelief in him.

Second, it must be remembered that these are the very ones who already saw Him miraculously feed 5000, and yet they remained in unbelief. This proves that mere exposure to miracles is not sufficient to bring them to faith in Christ as they falsely claimed. Indeed, Jesus told another crowd that asked for the very same thing, that only an unbelieving and rebellious people seek after miracles for the purpose to believe:

⁷ “It” – refers to the whole phrase “for by grace are ye saved through faith” as salvation cannot be separated from faith as it is “through” faith. Hence, faith is inclusive in this “gift of God.”

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: - Mt. 12:38-39

Outward miracles, signs and wonders do not change inward problems of the heart (Rom. 8:7). Only God can change the inward obstacles that prevent lost people from coming to Christ by faith. He had told them that believing in him was the work of God (Jn. 6:29), but they told him they were inherently able to believe in him if he just supplied sufficient evidence to warrant their faith (Jn. 6:30). Christ denied this was true and said:

But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. – Jn. 6:36

They had seen him do miracles, and more miracles would not be sufficient to change their inward resistance to believe in him. Moreover, the miracle they were requiring was to feed them like Moses fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were still pursuing food.

However, it is in this dispute over faith as a natural inherent ability of man versus the work of God that the transition between literal food and metaphorical food takes place:

*27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.....30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, **that we may see, and believe thee?** what dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from*

heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you **not** that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 **And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

They were asking for Christ to repeat the miracle of providing natural food to sustain their natural lives. Jesus uses this request to make the transition between natural and supernatural food.

Jesus then tells them that he is the bread that the Father has sent down from heaven that the world might have life:

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you **not** that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

What was their response to this? They acknowledge him as “*Lord*” and then request “*evermore give us this bread.*” Most modern day evangelists would have responded by calling on them to say a little prayer and then proclaimed them as saved based upon their prayer. However, here is how Christ responded:

36 But I said unto you, That ye also **have seen me, and believe not.**

He says the very same thing concerning those who claimed to be his “*disciples*” (vv. 63-66) who had not only publicly professed faith in him, but had submitted to baptism and were following him.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

Christ attributes the very same reason for the unbelief of “*some*” of his own disciples as he does this audience. True saving faith is the work of God and God had not done this work in them (vv. 36-39; 64-65).

However, let us return to the transition language between literal and metaphorical food. Take note of the language Jesus uses in verse 35 where the same transition between literal and metaphorical food first introduced in verse 27 is again introduced with regard to the literal manna God provided in the wilderness to the Person of Christ:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. – v. 35

The phrases “*cometh to me*” and “*believeth on me*” are parallel expressions⁸ of the very same thing – **coming to him by faith**. Thus partaking of him by faith eternally satisfies all spiritual “*hunger*” and “*thirst*.”

Obviously he was not **literal** bread. Thus, he is speaking of himself as **metaphorical** bread, and as such, he is not referring to

⁸ Both equally obtain complete satisfaction “*never hunger...never thirst*”. The absence of this in his audience is interpreted by the words “believe not” in verse 36. Therefore, the words “cometh to me” and “believeth on me” are parallel expressions of the same thing – coming to him by faith.

literally partaking of him by the mouth, but partaking of him metaphorically by faith. He is not teaching cannibalism of his physical body.

If this doesn't make it sufficiently clear that he is not teaching cannibalism of his body and blood, he again makes this same transition in John 6:47-51 but this time from metaphor to literal so that there should be no confusion as to what he means by partaking of his flesh and blood:

*47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.***

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

*51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: **if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.***

Therefore, he explicitly and clearly tells them that obtaining eternal life is by believing on him and then he proceeds to relate it to them again in metaphorical terms of partaking of Christ as metaphorical bread (vv. 48-51). Thus, “*he that believeth on me shall have eternal life*” is the same thing metaphorically as “*if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.*”

He would give his life on the cross to satisfy God's demand for righteousness and wrath in the place of the sinner (2 Cor. 5:21), thus securing eternal life for all who received His substitutionary atonement by faith. Just as one would partake of food and drink which would become inseparably part of them to sustain physical life, so also those who partook of Christ by faith, He would be “*in*”

them by regeneration, and they would be “*in*” him by positional justification through faith.

If this was not sufficiently clear, He then later tells them that his physical flesh will be removed to heaven after his resurrection, completely out of their reach (v. 62), making it impossible to literally eat his flesh and drink his blood. Moreover, he further explains that it is the Spirit that gives life (“*quickeneth*”), but not the “*flesh*” of which they thought he wanted them to physically digest. The flesh “*profiteth nothing.*” The instrumental means by which the Holy Spirit uses to quicken them are his “*words*” not his physical “*flesh.*”

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Yet, like the Roman Catholics, the Jews, as well as “*some*” of his own disciples failed to understand he was speaking metaphorically. The root problem was not in his “*words*” but in their state of unbelief:

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Jesus attributes their inability to understand and believe his words due to the fact that the work of God had never been performed in them – “*therefore I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*”

However, Peter understood that Jesus was not calling upon them to literally cannibalize His flesh and blood, but that eternal life was partaken through faith in His gospel words:

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

*68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? **thou hast the words of eternal life.***

*69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that **Christ, the Son of the living God.***

Jesus used many such metaphors about himself. He said “*I am the door*” and that only by entrance through him could one obtain eternal life. However, he was not speaking **literally**, or suggesting anyone must **literally** walk through His body as a literal door to obtain eternal life. These are all **metaphorical** statements which mean he represents characteristics found in these literal things. He simply **represented** a “door” in the sense of the only access to eternal life by coming to Him in faith for eternal life – “*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*” (Jn. 14:6). He said “*I am the vine*” but he did not mean he was to be understood as a **literal** vine. . He said, “*I am the light*” but not a **literal** light.

When he did speak of the bread and wine used in the Supper and said “*This is my body*” and “*this is my blood*” he was speaking **metaphorically**, as He was still in his body, and the blood was still pumping throughout his body when he said this. He is simply conveying to them that the literal bread and wine represent my body and represent my blood, as the Supper is performed “*in remembrance of him*” rather than in recreating his real literal presence in bread and wine.

Therefore, partaking of Him by faith is metaphorically represented by partaking of the Lord's Supper. Eating and drinking are metaphors for partaking of Christ by faith.

Conclusion

Most of modern evangelism preaches the gospel in the belief that fallen man has inherent ability to come to Christ, or that the spiritual dead fallen nature can be assisted to revive itself briefly to ask God for help to come to Christ. This is false.

The Biblical doctrine is that all men freely chose to sin in Adam and thereby spiritually died in Adam and came under the just condemnation of death passed upon all men because all sinned in Adam. Hence, they are born in unbelief and under the just condemnation of God. God could have cast Adam immediately into hell and thus destroyed the whole of humanity with him and done it with complete justice. That is the only justice any sinner deserves.

However, for some reason that can only be found in God, he chose to allow Adam to procreate his fallen nature, and then allow some fallen men to freely choose to continue in their rebellion against God, while mysteriously choosing to save others by pure grace, who were equally deserving of eternal condemnation. He chose to save such by empowering the gospel to effectually call them out of darkness into the light of His Son (1 Thes. 1:4-5).

Therefore, God is glorified by carrying out justice in some deserving sinners who continue to freely choose to resist God, while God is glorified in others through pouring out just wrath that they equally deserve upon His Son purely by grace.

Nothing prevents the worst of sinners from coming to Christ except their own inherent resistant will to respond to the light of nature, the light of conscience and command of the gospel to repent and believe the Gospel. They can only blame their own free

choice. Likewise, none saved can take credit for any aspect of their salvation, including their ability to choose, as nothing accounts for their salvation from equally just condemnation, but the grace of God shown them “in Christ.”

Coming to Christ by faith is the work of God (Jn. 6:29). Only those given to the Son by the Father come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:37-39) and he does not give all mankind without exception to Christ (Jn. 17:2). Although, he does give all mankind without distinction of race, gender or class to Christ (Rev. 5:9).

Only those drawn by the Father come to Christ (Jn. 6:44-45) and not all mankind are drawn by the Father (Jn. 6:64-65). Although, he does not draw all men without exception to Christ, he does draw all mankind without distinction of race, gender or class to Christ (Jn. 12:21, 32; Rev. 5:9).

Only those quickened by the Spirit through the creative word of God come to faith in Christ (Jn. 6:63; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Thes. 1:4-5). Quickening is the creation of “*the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” in the previously darkened heart (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 4:18). It is the revelation of Christ in the heart that is the basis of the true Gospel profession (Mt. 16:17). The gospel is brought unto all it is preached, but the empowerment of the gospel within man is the work of God toward His elect. Therefore, we are called to preach the gospel to all creatures relying on the Holy Spirit to empower it within the hearts of lost men – manifesting who the elect are.

Justifying faith is a gift of God by grace (Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:8). Justifying is not faithfulness to Christ but is faith in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ as found in only the Person and life of Christ as the basis for justification by faith before God.

Neither should justification “*without works*” be defined to be the denial that one must become a Jew by obedience to the Law of Moses in order to be a Christian. This concept is a failure to understand (1) the purpose of the law; (2) the nature of works and the (3) example of Abraham.

Although general faith is common among all fallen human beings, justifying faith is contrary to the very nature of fallen man, as it requires a complete change of love of darkness to love of light, from intellectual resistance and enmity toward God to submission toward God or a fundamental change of the human heart, mind and will. Both the power and the change is the work of God called quickening/new birth/regeneration and is experienced by those being turned as gospel conversion.

This is the work of God that ye believe on him... - Jn. 6:29