

# We're Paralytics Healed Through Paradox

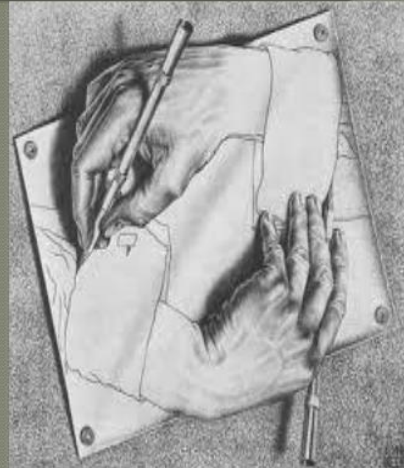
By **D. L. Burris**

## Paradox Is Presented As Logical Contradiction

### PARADOX

A **paradox** is a *seemingly* true **statement** or group of statements that lead to a **contradiction** or a situation which *seems to* defy logic or **intuition**.

Typically, however, quoted paradoxical statements do not imply a real contradiction and the puzzling results can be rectified by demonstrating that one or more of the **premises** themselves are not really true, a play on words, faulty and cannot all be true together



### Paradox



An apparently contradictory statement that actually reveals some truth.

**Examples:**

*"Everyone is completely unique, just like everyone else"*

*"Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again."*


-The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

*Each new power won by man is a power over man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger.-C. S. Lewis*

*Exception Paradox: "If there is an exception to every rule, then every rule must have at least one exception, the exception to this one being that it has no exception;"*

*Petronius' Paradox: "Practice moderation in all things. Including moderation."*





## GOD'S TIME RELATED PARADOXES

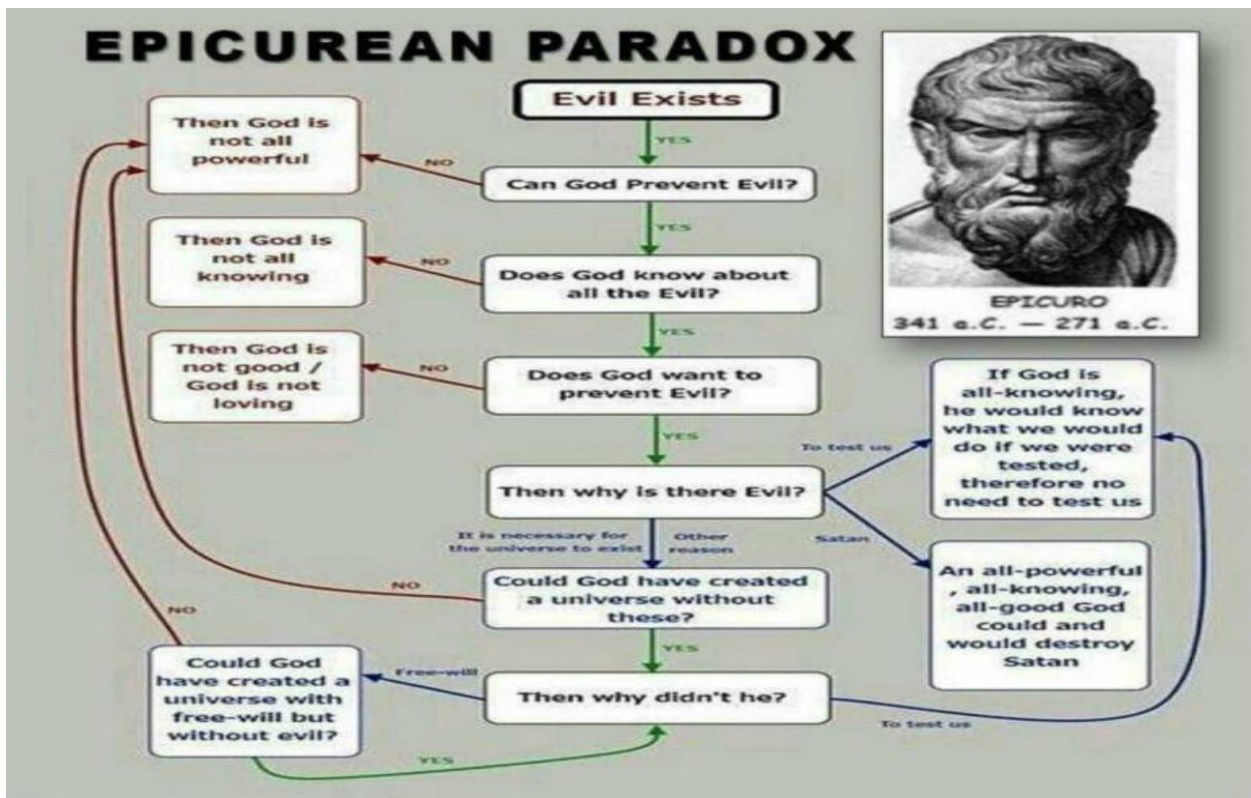
*A cause must come before an effect.  
Considering the creation of time is part of the "First Effect,"  
there is no before in which the "First Cause" could occur.*

*God is considered a willful, omniscient being.  
However, if He indeed knows all, He knows his future actions  
which means He is bound to follow whatever He foreknows  
himself doing throughout eternity and therefore lacks free will.*

*If God has always known all, He could never know what it feels  
like to learn, therefore he has not always known all.*

*The Bible shows God testing us, but this is a purposeless activity  
if the results are already known to Him.  
In fact, there is no reason to allow humanity to live out our  
relatively short lives when God could skip right to judging what we are  
predestined to do and arbitrarily serve eternal reward or punishment.*

God-Gifted Free-Will Variable To The Human Condition



Answer: Best Of Possible Worlds @Heaven Soul-Shaping

*"A paradox is Truth, held in the tension of contradiction."*

# Two Types of Paradox

<b>Reframing</b>	<b>Harmonized</b>	<b>Polarized</b>	
<b>Visual Symbol</b>	Picture frame: "reframes" reality as we look at it	Tuning fork: both tines vibrating together create a new note	Auger: performs best when hands are far apart on opposite handles
<b>Characteristic Tension</b>	Startles us, but ultimately dissolves	Pushes polarities together	Keeps polarities apart
<b>Representative Examples</b>	Faith vs. works Judge vs. judge not (e.g. Mt. 13:24ff) Great reversals (e.g. Mk. 9:35; Mt. 20:1-16; 25:29)	Eternal Life: present possession vs. future inheritance Predestination vs. free will	Jesus: God yet human God: transcendent yet immanent God: three yet one Humanity: sinful yet in God's image
<b>Opens the door to:</b>	Mysteries of life in God's kingdom	Mysteries of relationships: God's actions and purposes	Mysteries of Being: God's and ours
<b>Strategies for preaching</b>	Narratives/stories Playfulness Let listeners connect the dots	Unravel "double binds" Back and forth vibration ("C ... AR")	Emphasize contrasts between opposite sides
<b>Risks to Avoid</b>	Trying too hard to make listeners "get it"	Emphasizing one pole over the other upsets their delicate balance	Allowing black and white to coalesce into "dirty gray"

## @ *Three Orders of Paradox*

	1. Relation Reframe	2. Tuning Fork	3. Two Handles
<b>Key Image</b>	Picture reframes reality as we look through it	Frame: Tuning Fork: both times must vibrate together to create new note	Auger: performs best when hands are far apart on opposite handles
<b>Characteristic Tension</b>	Startles us but ultimately dissolves	Keeps polarities vibration together	Keeps both sides of the paradox separate and distinct
<b>Representative Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sayings of Jesus</li> <li>• Parables of the kingdom<sup>a</sup></li> <li>• Great reversals<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• Faith versus works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice/love</li> <li>• Transcendent/personal</li> <li>• Election/free will</li> <li>• God’s kingdom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanity</li> <li>• Scripture</li> <li>• Trinity</li> <li>• Jesus Christ</li> </ul>
<b>What do we see as we look through it?</b>	Mystery of life in God’s kingdom	Mystery of God’s relationship with us and ours with God	Mystery of God’s being and our own being
<b>Strategies Preaching</b>	for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narratives/stories</li> <li>• Playfulness</li> <li>• Allow listeners to connect the dots on their own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present two ideas vibrating back and forth (“C . . . Ar”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t try to reconcile opposing ideas</li> <li>• Employ Pascal’s “vaunt/abase” style</li> </ul>
<b>Risk to Avoid</b>	Trying too hard	Giving one side more attention, which stifles their tension and obscures harmony	Allowing the stark black and white opposites to coalesce into a dirty gray

<sup>a</sup> Parables of the kingdom (e.g., Matt. 13:24–30, 31–32, 33, 44–46, 47–50).

<sup>b</sup> Great reversals (e.g., Mark 9:35; 12:10; Matt. 20:1–16; Mark 9:40; Matt. 12:30; 25:29).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hansen, R. P. (2016). *Paradox lost: rediscovering the mystery of god*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

## The Counter-Intuitive Dominates Christian's Lifestyle

### The Paradox of Adversity

In an attempt to attract men and women back to God and make Jesus more appealing, every Sunday of fast-moving discourses **focus more on our happiness than our holiness**. Parishioners get fed a steady diet of **faith formulas and religious moralisms—and life, they hear, will become easier, healthier, happier, and, most important of all, more prosperous**.

And I wonder, *What Bible are these people reading?*

**No one** who walked with God by faith failed to slog through long, hellish periods of adversity, ranging from the loss of basic creature comforts to running for their very lives.

**Adversity is not optional, especially with God!**

Jesus himself said, “In this world you will have tribulation.” He insisted that we can expect doses of not just trouble, but **tribulation. Tribulation is trouble on steroids**. In the same breath Jesus also said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 KJV). He meant that a real-life encounter with the ultimate overcomer is no mere life-enhancing option, but a soul-saving, trouble-transforming necessity.

Where are the clarion voices extolling the virtues of the overcoming power (not the go-around power) of the resurrected Christ? **Simplistic solutions can never yield an effortless victory. At best they produce disillusioned listeners who blame themselves; at worst, they blame God.**

Too many of us long for a time and place that is neither hot nor cold. We like it mild. We don't like it black or white because we've gotten so used to beige. We don't like to sweat; that's why we created deodorant.

And what has happened to us in this safety-obsessed, easy-fix, pleasure-seeking world of ours? We have become people with lives a mile wide and an inch thick. Like brittle ice, the least amount of pressure cracks up the whole thing.

Yet denying the certainty of adversity serves only to make us weaker, not stronger. Even if we could hermetically seal ourselves away from sickness and sorrow, we would be short-circuiting the very events, people, and places that God wants to use to mold us and make us into the people we long to be.

I have learned that **adversity, by itself, makes no one stronger; only a proper response to adversity has the power to bring us astonishing strength.**

“Adversity is not an option; it is a fact of life. The fact of adversity is not our real problem, but rather the attitudes we adopt and the choices we make in the face of it. Those choices and attitudes separate those who prevail from those who don’t.”

Adversity can be our ally. We grow strong not in spite of our adversities, but because of them. We need not fear them, only face them. God has given us the power to take control of our lives, even though he alone retains the right to control the conditions and circumstances under which we live. He means for fear, uncertainty, and doubt to drive us to him.

Have you ever stopped to think that your **weaknesses and handicaps may actually be the key to your usefulness to God and to the world? God gave you the power to choose your attitude (the way you feel), your aptitude (the way you think), and your actions (your daily habits). The power to prevail lies in your knowing and mastering these three powerful response-abilities.**<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Foster, D. (2003). [\*The power to prevail: turning your adversities into advantages\*](#). New York City, NY: FaithWords.

## **Paradox #1: Worthless workmanship**

- “We are worthless servants.” (Luke 17:10)
- “We are his workmanship.” (Ephesians 2:10)

## **Paradox #2: Longingly satisfied**

- “Blessed are those who hunger.” (Matthew 5:6)
- “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry.” (Jn 6:35)

## **Paradox #3: To yoke or not to yoke?**

- “Take up my yoke and learn from me.” (Matthew 11:29)
- “Don’t submit again to a yoke.” (Galatians 5:1)

## **Paradox #4: The role of works**

- “A person is justified by faith apart from O.T. works of the law.” (Romans 3:28)
- “A person is justified by works & not by faith alone.” (James 2:24)

## **Paradox #5: The Christian life—easy or hard?**

- “My yoke is easy.” (Matthew 11:30)
- “How difficult the road that leads to life.” (Matthew 7:14)

## **Paradox #6: Optimist, pessimist, or realist?**

- “Everything is futile.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2)
- Everything is meaningful—“Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)



## **Paradox #7: Going public with good works**

- “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works.” (Matthew 5:16)
- “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.” (Matthew 6:1)

## **Paradox #8: Give up your tunic; withhold your pearls**

- “Give to the one who asks you.” (Matthew 5:40-41)
- “Don’t toss your pearls before pigs.” (Matthew 7:6)

## **Paradox #9: Judging the rightness of judging**

- “Do not judge.” (Matthew 7:1)
- “Judge according to righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)

## **Paradox #10: Wise dealings with fools**

- “Answer a fool.” (Proverbs 26:5)
- “Don’t answer a fool.” (Proverbs 26:4)

## **Paradox #11: “In The World – Not Of The World”**

- I. In the world, but not of the world - John 17:6-16
  - A. Jesus’ prayer was that his followers would not be a part of the world
    1. We are not to love the world or the things in it - I John 2:15-17

## **Higher Logic Resolves Pseudo-Contradictions**

We will now examine the logical limitations of scope imposed by only working within the locked box of deductive and inductive interpretations.

Both those that approach the scriptures with preconceived ideas and those that approach more seriously with open minds utilize one or more of the three forms of basic logic. We will examine **Logic in its Three-Part Typology**.

**Deductive Reasoning** - Conclusion Guaranteed. Deductive Reasoning moves from the general statement to the specific; If the original assertion is true then the conclusion is true.

**Inductive Reasoning** – Conclusion Merely Likely. Induction begins with observations that are specific and limited in scope, and proceeds to a generalized conclusion that is highly likely, but not certain, in light of accumulated evidence. The scientific method relies on Inductive Reasoning in getting evidence, seeking patterns, and forming hypothesis.

At the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century the Catholic church's authority over the whole of life was absolute; Society considered science skeptically and knowledge was classic and deductive. Though prominent philosophers such as David Hume still said much later that nothing new could be learned from Inductive Reasoning – they were considered by most – the remnants of the past - because - by the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century – the status quo had been largely overturned. Looking back, however, it can be said that Hume was somewhat justified in his comparative analysis because ironically - it was Inductive Thinking that had once led to the false conclusion that the Earth Was Flat.

**Abductive Reasoning – Optimal Inference.** In the 1930's Pragmatist Charles Pierce wrote of a Third Approach he initially labelled Retroductive Analysis – which later he changed to - Abductive Reasoning.

He wrote: “Of the three types of reasoning – it is abduction that offers one the most extensive range of reference. Deduction is entirely analogical, or self-referential. It imparts no new information and refers only to what is found with the proposition under consideration. Induction, on the other hand, is synthetic in nature, it does refer to objects that exists outside the proposition considered. Nevertheless, it is limited to conclusions that can be reached through repeated prior experience.

Abduction is able to introduce new ideas, to solve problems, and to lead to new explanations of life and reality.” Deduction applied properly yields a **Necessary Conclusion**. Induction applied properly yields **Probable Conclusion**. **Abduction applied properly yields the most Plausible Conclusion** – especially for such concepts as a **Godhead Trinity – Unitary W/3 Distinct Personalities!**

In other words, in our constant *Search for the Truth* we must put to work the brain God gave us – we need to approach at all angles and to resource all three ways by which we rescue truthful absolutes from the moral relativists. - DLB

## Paradox #12: From Death Comes Life

### C. “From death comes life”

1. At first this will strike people as absurd because death is the end of life.

2. Yet we see this in the world around us all the time. In order for a seed to germinate, it must first “die” being a seed - I Corinthians 15:36-38

a. Paul uses that paradox so that we might understand that in order to gain eternal life, our mortal bodies must die.

b. The same concept is used to describe the conversion of a Christian - Romans 6:3-7

3. There is another way to look at this as well, from the death of a plant or animal comes food to sustain the life of other plants or animals. From one death comes many lives.

**This illustrates the principle of Christ’s death - Romans 5:18**

## **Dogmatist Falsely Claim Scriptural Contradiction @Sovereign Will**

### **Calvin's Interpretation Of The Divine Sovereignty**

- ✠ “The confession of the sovereignty of God has become the hallmark of authentic Calvinism.” *Evangelical Dictionary*
- ✠ **From The Westminster Confession:**  
“God from eternity, did unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.”

### **In Their Own Words**

#### **Arthur Pink**

- ✠ “Not only did God know Adam would eat of the forbidden fruit, He decreed it.”

**Dogmatist Falsely Claim Scriptural Contradiction @Sin Guilt Blame**

**In Their Own Words**

**Edward Palmer**

- ✠ “It is even Biblical to say that God has foreordained sin. If sin was outside the plan of God, then not a single affair of life would be ruled by God.”

**In Their Own Words**

**Franciscus Gomarus**

- ✠ “God moves the Tongues of men to blaspheme.”

**Dogmatist Falsely Claim Scriptural Contradiction @Open Salvation**

**In Their Own Words**

**Kevin Fralick**

- ✠ “The population of heaven after the end of the world will not be determined by those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, but by those whom the Lord Jesus accepted before the beginning.”

**In Their Own Words**

**Homer Hoeksema**

- ✠ “A Christ for all is really a Christ for none.”

# Difficulties with God's foreknowledge

**Intro:** The doctrine of God's omniscience is a powerful truth; but it is also a Truth from which men have derived gross misconceptions/misunderstandings. Let's consider three viewpoints together.

## Is God's foreknowledge absolute and predetermining?

*John Calvin, following Augustine, affirmed that to whatever extent God knows man's action, he does then also make them necessary. Hence, man's actions are foreordained of God; some are foreordained to life while others are fore-ordained to salvation.*

**“All are not creation on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death. This God has testified, not only in the case of single individuals; he has also given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, to make it plain that the future condition of each nation was entirely at his disposal.”** (Institutes, Book 3, Chapter 21, Sec. 5 as quoted in McGuiggan's commentary on Romans) **“Reformation theology has contended that the divine foreknowledge contains the ingredient of divine determination. The Reformers claimed that God indeed foreknows who will believe, because believing in Christ is not a human achievement, but a divine gift imparted to men by God's grace and Spirit. Thus God's foreknowledge is not merely prescience, but knowledge that itself determines the event. That is, in Reformation thought what God foreknows He foreordains.”** (ISBE)

*It is true that God has foreseen what in His counsels He will do.*

God foreknew that His Son would die for the sins of mankind. This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23)

God foreknew and thus selected those who believed in Him would be His people.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ... to those who are chosen according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Peter does not affirm that God's choice was dependent upon the merit of those who believed or that God foresaw something in people that prompted His choice. He only affirms that God set the boundaries of salvation and those to whom He writes had fulfilled God's purpose by believing in Jesus. God foreknew that those He chose would have an inheritance with Him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11)



When God exercised His sovereign right to choose who His people would be and to set the terms of their inclusion, there is in that sense a predestination or foreordination that occurs. This no one can deny and the Bible plainly affirms.

*But the Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination and election contradicts Biblical affirmations about both man and God.*

It contradicts God's own stated will for all mankind. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

It contradicts God's statements about man's accountability and responsibility to respond to God. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Matthew 23:37) As McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia appropriately says concerning the actions of creatures endowed with free will: "If such actions do not take place then we reach a necessitating eternal decree, which in fact, the predestinarian contends of; but it unfortunately brings after its consequences which no subtleties have ever been able to shake off—that the only actor in the universe is God himself, and that the only distinction among events is that one class is brought to pass by God directly and the other indirectly, not by the agency, but by the mere instrumentality, of His creatures." (Watson)

Must we conclude God's foreknowledge is limited because of the nature of free will?

*One response is to contend God's omniscience must be qualified to mean "God knows what He chooses to know", affirming that God chooses not to know contingent events such as acts of man's free moral agency. Brents, in a vigorous anti-Calvinistic work, argues that God simply does not know what men may choose to do. He ends his chapter on God's foreknowledge by quoting Adam Clarke:*

*"We must grant that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore, he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know, no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do." (Commentary Acts 2:47). This is unsatisfactory because the Scripture clearly reveal that God foreknew certain things that require knowledge of individual decisions.*

That Pharaoh would harden his heart (Exodus 7:4).

That Cyrus would decree the return of the Israelites (Isaiah 44:28).

That the Jewish people would reject His Son and die for man's sin (Acts 2:23).

That God knows who the saved will be (Revelation 17:8).

*What about verses that suggest that God has learned something He didn't know?*

### **Anthropomorphic expressions of God's response to man's actions.**

*And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. (Genesis 11:5;) "I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know." (Genesis 18:21)*

*Did God have to come to earth to know what men were doing?*

*Surely not in view of texts that show that He sees all. Hence, these expressions are anthropomorphic, suggesting to Abraham that God's judgment of the city was founded on actual knowledge obtained by first-hand experience. And he said,*

*"Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (Genesis 22:12)*

*Did God not know whether Abraham would sacrifice His son? Is it possible that the expression anthropomorphically suggests a confirmation & a promise, like punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, based on actual first-hand experience? In both texts, God communicates to His creatures in this way that He is fully aware of their attitudes/actions.*

### **Anthropomorphic expressions of God's will in revelation.**

*"And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind. (Jeremiah 7:31) and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; (Jeremiah 19:5)*

*"And they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Jeremiah 32:35)*

*The point of all these texts is that the activity of human sacrifice was not a part of God's deliberative purpose for man in commanding man's worship and service.*

### **God's foreknowledge is complete but not determinative.**

*Perhaps a better solution is to affirm that God's foreknowledge is prescient, knowing reality before it is real, people before they exist, and days and events before they occur. He knows what His purpose is. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Psalm 33:11)*

He knows through whom those purposes would be accomplished. And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." (Romans 9:10-12)

**He knows the outcome of the redemptive plan not merely in theoretical terms but with specificity to individuals...**

I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. (Psalm 139) And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. (Revelation 17:8)

*It is not necessary to make God's knowledge of man's actions causative. Simply because God knows what men may do doesn't cause the action to take place. Man still has freedom of will. He is the cause of his actions; but God knows the action. His knowledge of man's choices does not make the outcome necessary but it does make it certain because God's knowledge is perfect. In this view God's knowledge is complete; mankind's free will is preserved. There is an adequate basis for prophetic statements in Scripture.*

*How God knows these things is not explained to us; but perhaps it is a quality of God's eternal nature. He lives in the eternal now; therefore, both past, present, and future (dimensions of time) are not relevant in describing Him.*

**Conclusion: Man's understanding or misunderstanding of the omniscience of God has played a key role in the forging of the doctrine of salvation found in many churches. Even if God knows the outcome of His redemptive plan, each person must exercise his free will. You are not destined to perish in hell by God's choice; but we may very well be destined for such a place by our choice! We don't need to wait for God to do something. He has done all that His nature allows to save our souls. Now we must decide whether we will be one of those who He elected to salvation or whether we are a vessel of wrath endured by God for final destruction. I would hate to think that I lived my whole life only, for it to be said about me, that God endured my existence only so He could save others around me, but not me!**

## **Dogmatist Falsely Claim Scriptural Contradiction @Pre-Destination**

# **Paradox Presupposes Unconditional Election Contradicted By Open Gospel Free Offer Part 1: Evidence that Salvation of Individuals Is Conditional**

## **I. Salvation Is Offered by God to All Men.**

Calvinism says that the decision whether or not a particular individual will be saved is entirely up to God, and man cannot influence that decision. If we can prove that God offers salvation to all men, then it must follow from Calvinism that *all people will be saved!* But that conclusion is clearly false. Hence, the Calvinistic concept of unconditional election must be false.

### **A. God Desires All Men to Be Saved.**

1 Timothy 2:4 - God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [Note: This is the same "all men" for whom we should pray - v1.]

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

If God sincerely wants *all* people to be saved and wants none to perish, and if the decision is entirely up to Him (man has no choice), then all people will be saved and none will be lost! The logical conclusion of unconditional election must be universalism! Yet we know only a few will be saved and most lost (Matt. 7:13,14) [22:14]. Hence, either God does not sincerely want everyone saved, or else man does have a choice!

### **B. God's Grace Is Extended to All Men.**

Because God wants all to be saved, He has shown all men mercy and favor by offering them salvation.

Titus 2:11 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Note that what God's grace brings to all is "salvation."

### **C. Jesus Died to Offer Salvation to All Men.**

1 Timothy 2:6 - Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all (the same "all" that God wants to be saved - v4).

Hebrews 2:9 - By the grace of God Jesus tasted death for everyone. This "everyone" refers to those who are subject to the fear of death (v15), which is every human.

John 3:16 - God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Note that the ones Jesus died to save are all those in the world whom God loves. Yet He loves even His enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).

Romans 5:18,19 - Justification came unto "all men" by Jesus' righteous act (His death). This was the same "all men" on whom condemnation came as a result of Adam's sin. So, however many people are condemned by sin, that is how many can receive the benefit of Jesus' death.

The intent of Jesus' death was to offer salvation to all men. If these passages are true, then either all men will be saved (which cannot be), or else there is something each man must do to determine whether or not he will receive the benefit of Jesus' death.

#### **D. God's Offer of Salvation Is Preached in the Gospel to All Men.**

2 Thessalonians 2:14 - Men are called to glory by the gospel. To whom is this call extended?

Mark 16:15,16 - The gospel should be preached to every creature in the whole world. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. [Matt. 28:19]

Acts 2:38,39 - The promise of remission and the gift of the Holy Spirit is for ALL, as many as God calls. But the call is sent to everyone in the world!

Calvinists respond to these points by saying that the gospel should be preached to all, however no one can respond to that call unless the Holy Spirit unconditionally works directly on their heart to empower them to respond. But this makes the preaching of the gospel simply a pretense. If the Holy Spirit makes the choice unconditionally, why not doesn't the Spirit just lead the person to salvation and forget the preaching?

Acts 2:39 says the promise of the Spirit is to *all* that are called, and we have shown that all humans should be called by the gospel, Jesus died for all, etc.

## **II. God Has Decreed Conditions of Salvation which All Men Can Meet.**

Calvinism says there is nothing in man that acts as a condition that moves God to choose any certain man to save him. Man is "altogether passive." However, notice the following conditions that the Bible lists as necessary for salvation, and note further that the Bible says everyone can meet these conditions.

#### **A. Men Must Believe in Christ.**

Mark 16:15,16 - The gospel is for the whole world. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved.

John 3:14-16 - Jesus died for the whole world, and *whosoever* believes should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Scriptures clearly teach that faith is a condition to salvation, and anyone in the world may meet that condition.

#### **B. Men Must Repent of Sin.**

Acts 17:30,31 - God commands *all* men *everywhere* to repent. This refers to all the people who will be judged by Jesus, which means everyone in the whole world.

2 Peter 3:9 - God does not want any to perish but *all* to repent.

Note that all who will be judged must repent (Acts 17:30,31). But those who need to repent are the ones God does not want to see perish. Hence, God does not want anyone in the world to perish. He wants them all to repent.

The Scriptures clearly teach that repentance is a condition of salvation, and everyone on earth must meet that condition.

### **C. Men Must Confess Christ and Be Baptized.**

Matthew 10:32 - *Whoever* confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Mark 16:16 - The message preached to everyone in the world is that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Acts 2:38,39 - The message to *all*, whoever God calls by the gospel, is that *everyone* must repent and be baptized for remission of sins.

## **III. God Grants to Each Person the Power to Accept or to Reject Salvation.**

If as Calvinism teaches, no conditions man can meet will affect whether or not God saves him, then man has absolutely no choice regarding his salvation. If God chooses the man, he will be saved regardless of the man's choice. If God does not choose the man, he will be lost regardless of his choice. Hence, man's choice is irrelevant to his salvation.

However, the Bible teaches man does have a choice in whether or not He will please God and be saved.

### **A. Each Person Is Able to Choose Whether or not He Will Meet the Conditions of Salvation.**

Consider the following passages. Why would God say these things if people have no power to choose whether or not to meet the conditions necessary to be pleasing to Him? Deuteronomy 30:15-19 - God promised blessings to Israel if they would obey Him (28:1-14) and curses if they would disobey Him (28:15-68) [cf. chap. 29,30]. Then He urged them to *choose* life.

Joshua 24:15 - Likewise, Joshua exhorted Israel to *choose* what god they would serve. [Cf. Exodus 32:26; 1 Kings 18:21]

Hebrews 11:24,25 - Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but *chose* to share ill treatment with God's people, rather than to enjoy sin. [Luke 10:42]

Isaiah 1:18-20 - God reasons with man, He does not compel them against their will. If men were *willing* to be obedient, God would bless them. If they refused and rebelled, He would punish them.

Matthew 23:37 - Jesus *wanted* to gather Jerusalem under His wings, but they *were not willing*! Note: Jesus preferred one choice, but the people rejected it because it was not according to their choice.

Clearly God does not choose men unconditionally and then compel men to accept His choice. He wants them all saved and invites them to accept His will, but He allows them to choose how they will respond to His invitation.

Matthew 13:14,15 - Certain people would not turn ("be converted" - KJV) and be (spiritually) healed by Jesus, because *they* closed their eyes and did not accept His teachings. Clearly Jesus was willing to heal these people if they were converted, but they resisted His teaching by their own choice.

Revelation 22:17 - *Whosoever will*(KJV) may freely take of the water of life. It is a matter of man's *will*, and each person may determine his own will.

### **B. Each Person Has a Role in Determining His Own Destiny.**

According to Calvinism, there is nothing in man's conduct or choice that influences one way or another whether or not God will save that person. Hence, nothing a man does will in any way affect his salvation. Yet note these passages that show that what man does definitely will affect His eternal destiny.

1 Peter 1:22 - *You* have purified *your* souls in *your* obedience to the truth.

Romans 6:13,16-18 - Present *yourself* to God and your members as instruments of righteousness. To whom you present *yourself* as a servant to obey, that is your master - either sin or obedience. They were freed from sin because they became *obedient* to the teaching delivered to them.

2 Corinthians 8:5 - The Macedonians gave *their own selves* to the Lord.

Philippians 2:12 - Work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Timothy 4:16 - Take heed to *yourself* and to the doctrine ... for in doing this you will *save* both *yourself* and those who hear you.

Acts 2:40 - Be saved (*save yourselves* - KJV) from this perverse generation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - God was pleading with men, through His ambassadors, to BE reconciled to God. Clearly God wants men to come to Him. But He does not compel, He pleads. Men must then take the step that determines the final outcome.

Based on these Scriptures, how can it be concluded that man is "totally passive" in salvation? How can it be that taught that nothing in man is a condition that influences whether or not God chooses to save him?

Clearly all these passages show that man does have the power to choose and that what we do will determine whether or not God chooses to give us eternal life.

### **C. God Is No Respector of Persons.**

Romans 2:6-11 - If God chooses to save some but not others, either the choice must be based on the conduct of the people (hence, conditional) or else God is a respector of persons. [Cf. Acts 10:34,35]

Calvinists respond that this simply means God will save people of all nations. But that is not all the passage says. It says He is not a respector of persons because His choice of who to save or condemn is based on *man's conduct*! He gives eternal life to those who continue doing good, and gives tribulation to those who are disobedient.

For God to grant eternal life to those who do not choose to meet the conditions, or for Him to punish those who do meet the conditions, would constitute respect of persons. Calvinism is a system inherently based on partiality, favoritism, and injustice! Worse yet, it makes God guilty of all of these!

## IV. One Who Is Chosen May Later Become Lost.

If salvation is unconditional and nothing one does will affect his salvation, then a person decreed to be among the elect would be saved no matter how he later acted. He couldn't possibly so act as to be lost because the choice was unconditional.

So, if we can show that people, once saved, later so acted as to be lost, then we have proved salvation must be conditional, and Calvinism is wrong.

### *An example - 2 Peter 2:1*

Men who have been bought by Jesus can yet deny Him and be destroyed. Clearly the choice of man's destiny is not unconditional. It does depend on man's conduct.

### *The solution - 2 Peter 1:10*

To "make our calling and *election* sure" we must add the listed qualities to our faith.

Then we will not stumble but will enter the eternal kingdom. It is conditional!

There are numerous other passages showing a child of God can so sin as to be lost.

That is another whole subject. But every such passage proves salvation is conditional and disproves Calvinistic election.

## Conclusion to Part I

### *Calvinism compared to a king*

Calvinism's doctrine of election pictures God like a king who has thousands of people imprisoned in his dungeon (for another man's crime - the sin of Adam). He declares to them:

1) My son has paid the penalty so all of you can go free.

2) However, your cells are still locked and I am the only one who has the key.

3) So regardless of what you say, do, or want, I will unconditionally open a few doors and let some of you go. The rest of you, regardless of what you say, do, or want, I will unconditionally leave your cells locked, and you will stay imprisoned forever!

Did the prisoners really have a choice about whether or not to be set free? If they did, why did the king free only certain ones regardless of their choice? If they had no choice, why did the king say they did have a choice?

Calvinism makes God unloving, unjust, untruthful, insincere, and a respecter of persons.

### *The proper conduct of such a king.*

He could be true to his will by offering *conditions* of pardon to all the prisoners (such as they must confess their crime, ask for pardon, and pledge loyalty to the king). Then each prisoner would have the right to choose whether or not to meet the conditions. He would free those who would meet them, but not the rest.

This would act in harmony with the king's wish that everyone be free (because he really hopes everyone will meet the conditions). Pardon would still be an act of mercy. But the king is still just if he keeps in prison those who refuse to meet the conditions.

This is exactly the course God has chosen. - *The Gospel Way*



# Doctrine Versus Dogma

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**Distinguishing Dogma & Doctrine.** "A doctrine is often the direct, naive, expression of a religious truth. It is not necessarily formulated with scientific precision and when it is, may be merely the formulation of a single person. A religious dogma, on the other hand, is a religious tenet based on authority and officially formulated by some ecclesiastical assembly." *Dogmas, aren't found in Scripture.* "They are the fruit of human reflection occasioned or intensified by theological controversies."

In summary: "A dogma may be defined as a doctrine, derived from Scripture, officially defined by the [Church Discipline], and declared to rest upon divine authority. This definition partly names & partly suggests its characteristics. Its subject-matter is derived from the Word of God - thus authoritative. It isn't mere repetition of what is found in Scripture, but the fruit of dogmatic reflection. And it is officially defined by an ecclesiastical body & declared to rest upon divine authority. It has social significance, because it is the expression, not of a single individual, but of a community. And it has *traditional value*, since it passes the possessions of the Church on to future generations." Dogma arises from the reflection on the "truths of revelation" by the "body of believers" and through the formulations of "representative bodies" of the Church. "Since the reflection of the Church is often determined and deepened by doctrinal controversies, the formulations to which Church Councils or Synods often bear the earmarks of past struggles." – *Internet Search*

**DOGMA MEANS  
THE SERIOUS  
SATISFACTION OF  
THE MIND!**

**G. K. CHESTERTON**

**DOGMA DOES NOT  
MEAN THE ABSENCE  
OF THOUGHT, BUT  
THE END OF  
THOUGHT!**

**G. K. CHESTERTON**

“The truth of the matter is, however, that logic is an attribute of God himself. He is the God of truth (*Psalms* 31:5); Christ is truth (Wisdom, logic, reason, etc.) Incarnate (*John* 14:6; *1 Corinthians* 1:24; *Colossians* 2:3). God is not the author of confusion (*1 Corinthians* 14:33); thus, He cannot speak to us in illogical, paradoxical statements. Because logic is one of God’s attributes, the laws of logic are eternal principles. And because man is an image bearer of God, these laws are a part of man. There must be, then, a point of contact between God’s logic (and knowledge) and man’s.

Argument appeals to biblical passages such as *Isaiah* 55:3, 9 are specious. No one questions the quantitative difference in God’s knowledge, thoughts, ways, etc., and man’s. What is questioned is the qualitative difference... Meaning that the difference between God’s thoughts and man’s thoughts is as one of degree, not of kind. Any exegesis of this passage that concludes that God’s thoughts are wholly other than man’s thoughts stumbles on the direct command for the wicked to forsake his thoughts and think as God does.

### The Three-Point Analysis:

**(1)** The issue of what is and what is not a paradox is totally subjective. To universally claim that a teaching is a paradox would thus require omniscience. How could anyone know that this teaching had not been reconciled before the bar of someone’s human reason?

(2) Even when one claims that the seeming contradiction is merely "apparent," there are serious problems. "If actually non-contradictory truths can appear as contradictories and if no amount of study or reflection can remove the seeming contradiction, there is no available means left to distinguish between this 'apparent' contradiction & real contradiction." How then would man know whether he is embracing an actual contradiction which is – of course – impossible with the Bible – see *1 Corinthians 14:33*.

(3) Once one asserts that truth may come in the form of irreconcilable contradictions, then, "he has given up all possibility of ever detecting a real falsehood. Every time he rejects a proposition as false because it 'contradicts' the teaching of Scripture or because it is in some other way illogical, the proposition's sponsor only needs to contend that it only *appears* to contradict Scripture or to be illogical. This being the case, Christianity's uniqueness as the only true revealed religion will die the death of a thousand qualifications.

What is our conclusion? Simply this: The Bible does not contain logical paradox. Any so-called logical paradoxes found in Holy Scripture are little more than charley-horses between the ears that can be removed by rational massage; they are the result of a faulty exegesis, not God's Word. Any stumbling in this area will lead to a fall into neo-orthodox non-sense."

– *Trinity Review Journal*

## That Eliminated As Paradox May Retain Element Of Mystery!

Chart to Compare the Differences Between

# Dichotomy & Paradox

Dichotomy	Paradox
Separates or divides something into two separate parts or subsets.	Paradox is a contradictory statement and is either true or false.
The parts belong exclusively to each other and may be called a bipartician.	Although the elements are contradictory the parts, through their opposing ideals, may be inter related.
The division of different genre into a sub species. Particularly in nature and the division of plant cells.	Paradox does not relate to the nature of division or subsets. Many paradox appear ridiculous and very contradictory.
Dualism is used as a synonym for dichotomy and helps understanding the meaning of the word.	Absurdity, enigma and anomaly are all synonyms for a paradox.

**That Eliminated As Paradox May Retain Element Of Mystery!**

**PARADOX**  
VERSUS  
**JUXTAPOSITION**

Paradox is a phrase or sentence where two contrasting ideas are used

Juxtaposition is a literary device where two contrasting elements are placed side by side

A type of juxtaposition

Broad term

Reveals a hidden or unexpected truth

Compares and contrasts two things

## That Eliminated As Paradox May Retain Element Of Mystery!

### ANTITHESIS VERSUS PARADOX

#### ANTITHESIS

Juxtaposition of two contrasting ideas or words in the same statement to create a contrasting effect

Create a contrasting effect and bring the audience's attention to the point writer is trying to make

Often has a parallel structure

Examples:

Man proposes, God disposes

Love is an ideal thing,  
marriage a real thing

#### PARADOX

Juxtaposition of a set of seemingly contradictory concepts that reveal a hidden truth

Use paradoxes to incite fresh thought and present an idea that is contrary to traditional concepts

Doesn't have a set structure

Examples:

Be cruel to be kind

Less is more

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## That Eliminated As Paradox May Retain Element Of Mystery!

“In every case of apparent contradiction, whether paradox or mystery, Scripture provides a clear framework to aid our understanding. The Bible doesn’t try to reconcile both sides of the argument—it merely states both to be true. From this emerges a framework of ‘both-and’.”

*Ross Cunningham, "Both And"*

[delightinggrace.wordpress.com](http://delightinggrace.wordpress.com)

## The Oxford Comma: Decried, Defended, and Debated

Also known as  
the serial comma...

The Oxford comma got its name from the Oxford University Press where the printers and editors traditionally used it.

The Oxford comma clarifies meaning when placed before conjunctions like **OR** & **AND** in a series of words in a sentence.



I promise I won't let you down!





## **The Temporal-Spacial Paradox Has Most Challenged Solution** **Theologically This Is The Transcendence-Immanence Debate**

Where is God, exactly? Why does the God of the universe, the ruler of creation, need a Tabernacle tent, if he is everywhere? When God is in the Tabernacle, does he cease to be present elsewhere? From the time of Moses believers have wrestled with the paradox represented by the Bible's teachings about the presence and the distance of God. There are two nineteenth-century terms that will help us with this paradox of God's whereabouts: first, 'transcendence' and second, 'immanence'. We have seen that the Bible teaches that God is present everywhere. As the Psalmist so eloquently puts it: Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. This psalm is comforting. There is no place where God is out of reach, and no time when God is off duty. This is what we mean by the 'immanence' of God: he is close by and available to each of us, as he is equally present in time and space, permeating the whole of creation. But at the same time, God is not to be confused with his creation – he may permeate everything, but God isn't the same as 'everything'. God is distinct, other, separate, holy or, to put it technically, 'transcendent'. Solomon knew this. He turned the blueprint of the mobile Tabernacle that Moses built into the solid structure of the temple on Mount Moriah. The temple was complete with its own Holy of Holies, and **a giant curtain separated it off from the rest of the sanctuary**. In the middle of his prayer of dedication of the temple, Solomon asks: But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Kandiah, Krish. Paradoxology (pp. 42-44). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

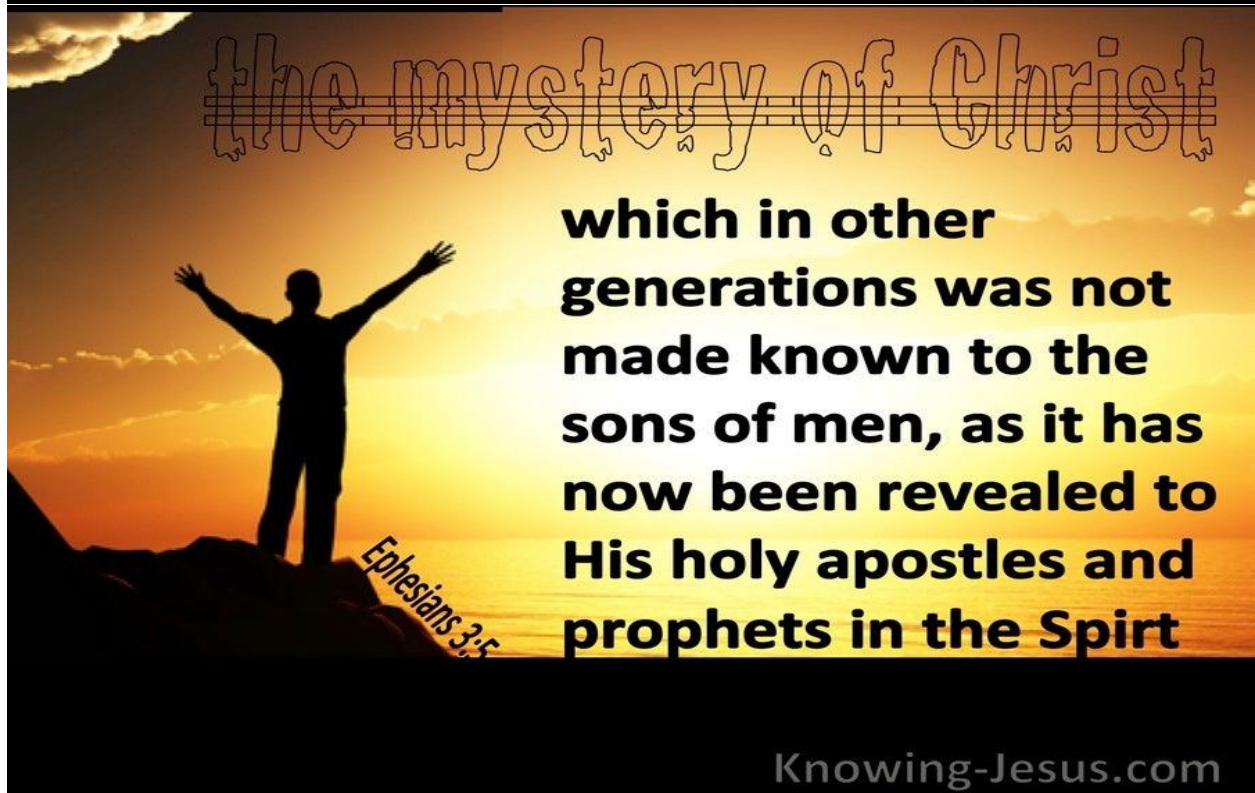
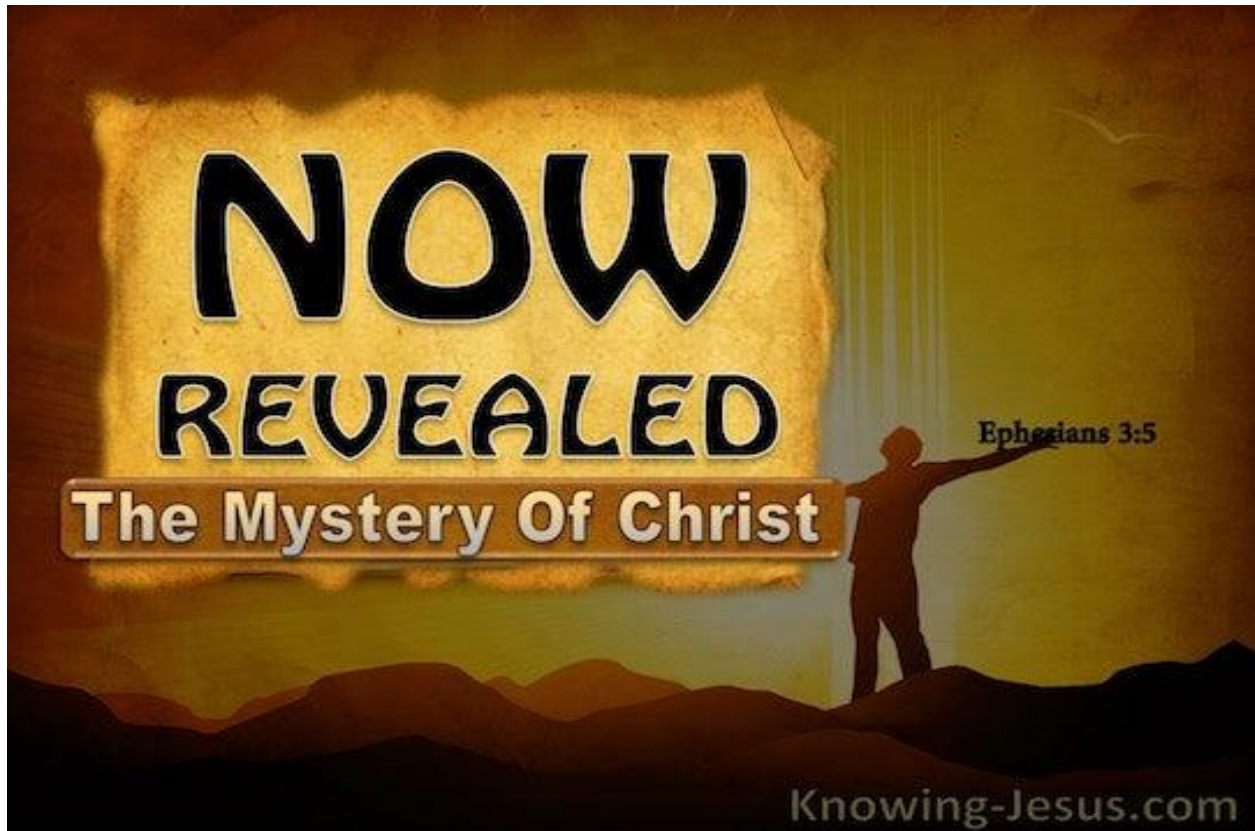


What self denial! What self abasement! What self emptying! He, whom no infinitudes can hold, is contained within infant's age, and infant's form. Can it be, that the great "I AM THAT I AM" shrinks into our flesh?

- Henry Law



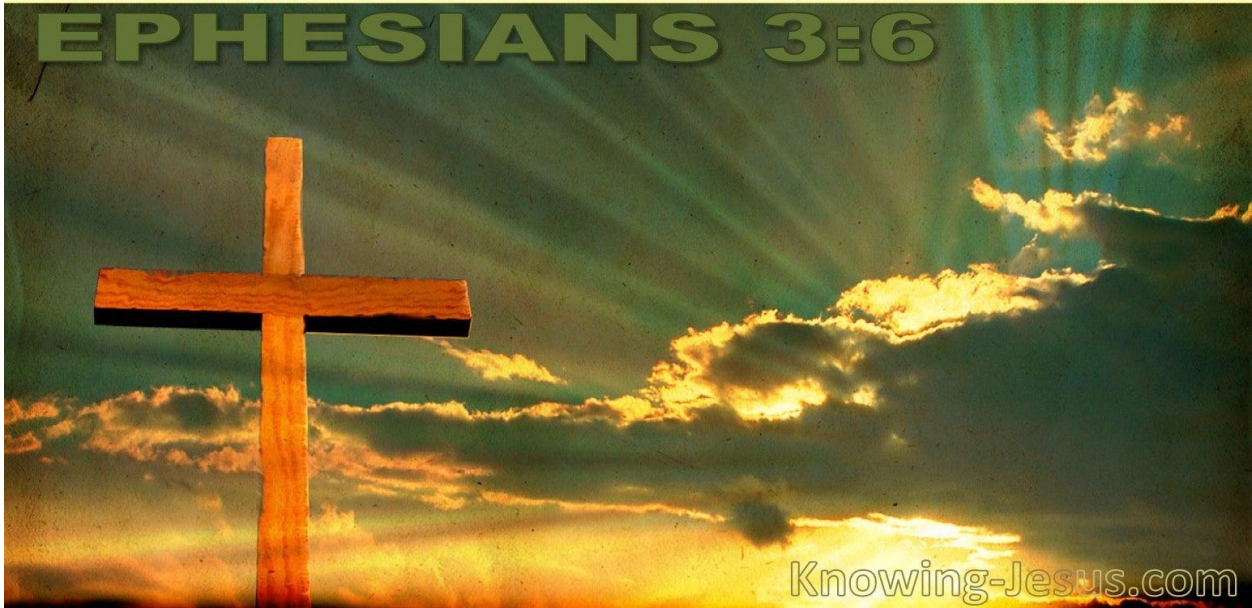
## THE TIMELESS MYSTERY REVEALED THROUGH THE INCARNATION



# JEWS - GENTILES

Partners of the Promise in Christ Jesus

EPHESIANS 3:6



*God* has chosen  
to make known among the Gentiles  
the *glorious riches*  
of this *mystery*,  
which is  
*Christ in you,*  
the *hope of glory.*

Colossians 1:27

© Rachel Anne Ridge

## Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

**Colossians 1:27** - What is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles. The apostle, besides calling the Gospel a "mystery", as before, ascribes "glory" to it; it is a glorious mystery, there is a glory in all the mysteries of it; it is a glorious Gospel, as it is often called, in its author, subject, matter, use, and efficacy; and also "riches" of glory, or glorious riches; containing rich truths, an immense treasure of them, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; rich blessings of justification, pardon, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life; and rich promises, relating both to this life, and that which is to come; all which were opened and made known, not to the Jews only, but *among the Gentiles also*; who before were aliens, enemies, exceeding wicked, poor, blind, and miserable, but now, through the Gospel, were become rich, wise, and happy; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; this is to be connected with all that goes before.

Christ is the riches of the Gospel; the riches of the divine perfections, which the Gospel more clearly displays than the works of creation or providence, are all in Christ, the fulness of them dwells in him; and this is **the grace the Gospel reveals, that he, who was rich with all these, became poor to make us rich**; the rich treasures of its divine truths are hid in him; and he is the substance of everyone of them:

Christ is also the glory of the Gospel, inasmuch as he is the author, preacher, and subject of it; it is **full of the glory of his person, both as the only begotten of the Father, and as the only Mediator between God and man; it is the glass through which this is seen: moreover, the glory of God in him is expressed hereby; Christ is also the mystery of the Gospel; he is one of the persons in the mystery of the Trinity; the mystery of his divine sonship, of his divine person, being God and yet man, man and yet God, and both in one person, and of his incarnation and redemption, makes a considerable part of the Gospel.**

## **Paralytic Paradox: Tradition Encounters Impossibility**

One of the fundamental axioms of both scholarly schools of Old Testament Law & Oral Tradition is what has been referred to as the **"Hebraic" principle, based on the greatest discovery of the ancient Hebrews, namely, the transcendence of God.** The priestly writers of the Sixth Century B.C. not only omitted the anthropomorphisms of earlier Hebrew writers, but also made a clean break with other Near Eastern views in which, for example, gods battled with or mated with humans. This of course thoroughly confused the distinction between the divine and the nondivine.

Ancient Hebrew Commentary stated that *God is God and creatures are creatures; and that one should not mix the nature and attributes of one with the other.* B.C Hebrew Writer Philo of Alexandria said that "neither is God in human form, nor is the human body God-like" and Yahweh himself declared "I am God and not man" (Hosah 11:9).

**Old Testament passages which clearly indicate the terms "redeemer" and "judge" referred exclusively to Yahweh. The Hebraic principle separates cleanly the functions and attributes of God from those of creatures. In short, the principle rigorously requires that God be God and humans be human.** The Hebraic principle was violated – shaken by the inconceivable mixing of message and messenger – by taking the person of Jesus as the gospel message, thereby displacing the transcendent for the immanent.

**What matters in Jesus' message is his sense of the abrupt juxtaposition of two opposed orders of things. The essential thing is that the two contrasting orders must collide. The New Testament Deity of Christ was now construed in terms of theophany, "the visible appearance of God in human form." Along with Pharisees, the Sadducees rejected the Christian idea of Incarnation (to them pagan mix of human & divine).**



## **Human Logic Versus God Incarnation**

Let us assume that the medieval theologians were correct that God shares, in an eminent way, at least three attributes with finite beings: God is a supreme unity; God is a supreme truth; and God has supreme value. **Following Scotus' Law of Disjunction, we can say that God is infinite but we are finite; that God is necessary but we are contingent; that God is uncaused and we are caused; and that God is immortal but we are mortal. The doctrines of Resurrection and Incarnation are conceptually similar.**

**It is logically possible that another universe would have different physical laws such that bodily resurrection would be a natural occurrence. By contrast the Incarnation, assuming that the Hebraic principle is true, involves a logical impossibility, not a physical impossibility. Our physical laws would not apply to every possible universe, but every possible universe must follow the laws of logic.**

### **When Jesus Healed The Paralytic He Planted For The Resurrection**

**Kenotic [Emptying] Christologies Claim Christ gave up some divine attributes in the Incarnation. The word "kenotic" comes from the Greek kenosis and the following hymn from Phillipians is the textual basis for this subordinationist Christology: "Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied (*echense*) himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (2:7).**

**Like Old Testament Prophets - The only view free from logical problems is "adoptionism," the view held early by some professed Christians that Jesus was a man chosen by God to be a unique Son of God, an obedient servant "even unto death."**

**Only Deity Heals Both Body & Soul.** Sinlessness is a property allegedly shared by non-fallen angels, Adam and Eve before the Fall, Jesus, and God. If Jesus could actually forgive sins, this again is inconsistent with Jesus as human prophet. **The scribes who criticized Jesus' healing of the paralytic in Mark 2 were assuming the Hebraic principle when they declared that only God can forgive sins.** – Repurposed Critique



## **The Counter-Intuitive Dominates the Gospel Message**

### **Gospel Paradox #1: With Jesus, impossible is possible.**

Early on in Jesus' ministry, his credentials were questioned pretty regularly. People thought they knew His parents, where He was really from, who He was (and wasn't), and what He was about. But that all changed in a very crowded room, in a small house outside of Jerusalem. Many people had gathered to hear Jesus teach, including His disciples, the house owners, the neighbors, and the religious ruling class. Jesus was known as a teacher and a healer by this point, so a brave group of friends brought their immobile friend to Jesus to see if He could give the man the ability to walk.

**At one point during the encounter, he asked what appeared to be a very easy question in Luke 5:23: "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'" They all knew the answer to this question. It was "Your sins are forgiven" because you could not see forgiveness — but you could tell if a once crippled man could suddenly walk! Jesus had already told the man that his sins were forgiven, which highly bothered the religious folk, while the rest of the people probably just shrugged.**

**How could you tell if it was true or not? They may have just been words. And then Jesus complicates the matter a bit, because to the surprise of everyone in the room, the crippled is told to get up, take his mat and go home — and he can. This is a bit awkward. If Jesus could do that, guess what else they had realized was a real possibility? That Jesus could actually forgive sins. But if only God could do that, then what did that say about this man named Jesus? Surely, He was more than a man, right?**

# MacLaren's Expositions

## IV. Note our Lord's answer to the cavils.

The absence from our Lord's answer of any explanation that He was only declaring the divine forgiveness and not Himself exercising a divine prerogative, shuts us up to the conclusion that He desired to be understood as exercising it. His answer starts with a counter-question—another 'why?' to meet their 'why?' **It then puts into words what they were thinking; namely, that it was easy to assume a power the reality of which could not be tested.** To say, 'Thy sins be forgiven,' and to say, 'Take up thy bed,' are equally easy. To effect either is equally beyond man's power; but the one can be verified and the other cannot, and, no doubt, some of the scribes were maliciously saying: 'It is all very well to pretend to do what cannot be tested. Let Him come out into daylight, and do a miracle which we can see.' **He is quite willing to accept the challenge to test His power in the invisible realm of conscience by His power in the visible region.** The remarkable construction of the long sentence in [Mark 2:10](#) - [Mark 2:11](#), which is almost verbally identical in the three Gospels, parenthesis and all, sets before us the suddenness of the turn from the scribes to the patient with dramatic force. Mark that our Lord claims 'authority' to forgive. It implies not only power, but rightful power, and that authority which He wields as 'Son of Man' and 'on earth.'

It implies His Messianic office, and as being Himself its sum and perfection—not *a*, but *the* Son of Man. Now the wonder which He would confirm by His miracle is that such a manhood, walking on earth, has lodged in it the divine prerogative. **He who is the Son of Man must be something more than man, even the Son of God. Jesus' power to forgive is both derived and inherent, but, in either aspect, is entirely different from the human office of announcing God's forgiveness.**

1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians

# PARADOXES AT THE CROSS

New Testament Church

**JESUS CHRIST**

**Came into the World**  
1 Tim. 1:15 • Mt. 20:20

**Was Born in Flesh**  
Jno. 1:14 • 1 Jno. 4:2-3

**Was Born of Woman**  
Gal. 4:4 • Isa. 7:14

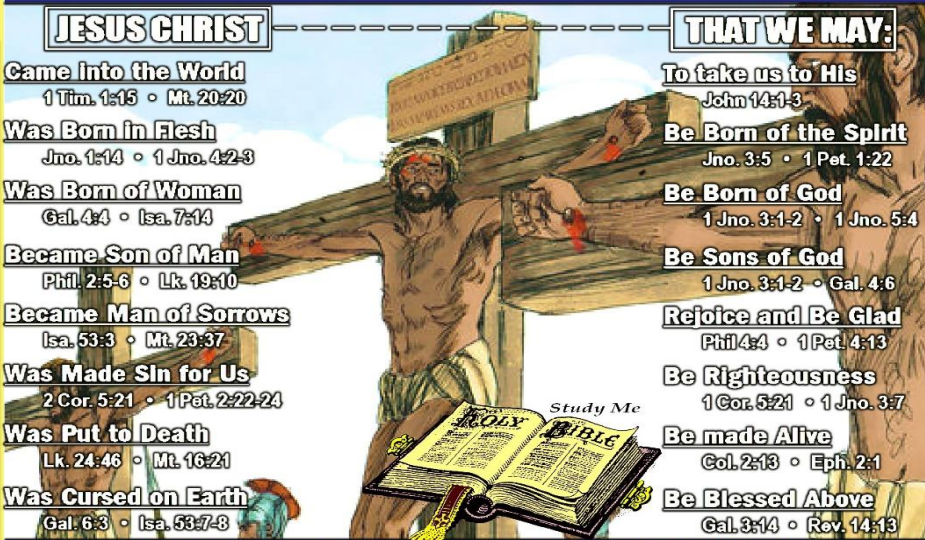
**Became Son of Man**  
Phil. 2:5-6 • Lk. 19:10

**Became Man of Sorrows**  
Isa. 53:3 • Mt. 23:37

**Was Made Sin for Us**  
2 Cor. 5:21 • 1 Pet. 2:22-24

**Was Put to Death**  
Lk. 24:46 • Mt. 16:21

**Was Cursed on Earth**  
Gal. 6:3 • Isa. 53:7-8



Study Me

**THAT WE MAY:**

**To take us to His**  
John 14:1-3

**Be Born of the Spirit**  
Jno. 3:5 • 1 Pet. 1:22

**Be Born of God**  
1 Jno. 3:1-2 • 1 Jno. 5:4

**Be Sons of God**  
1 Jno. 3:1-2 • Gal. 4:6

**Rejoice and Be Glad**  
Phil 4:4 • 1 Pet. 4:13

**Be Righteousness**  
1 Cor. 5:21 • 1 Jno. 3:7

**Be made Alive**  
Col. 2:13 • Eph. 2:1

**Be Blessed Above**  
Gal. 3:14 • Rev. 14:13

**HE WAS CRUCIFIED FOR ME ... AND YOU ... AND YOU ... AND ...**

Free Reproducible Christian Bible Study Cards & Charts, Non-Denominational/Pre-Denominational/Scriptural! Hear the Gospel / Believe & Obey the Gospel / Repent of Sins / Confess Christ / Be Baptized in the Name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit for the Remission of Sins / and Godward, Enduring Faithfully Unto Life Everlasting!

## Paradoxes of the Cross

**JESUS CHRIST**

**Came into the World** →  
1 Tim. 1:15 • Mt. 20:20

**Was Born in Flesh** →  
Jno. 1:14 • 1 Jno. 4:2-3

**Was Born of Woman** →  
Gal. 4:4 • Isa. 7:14

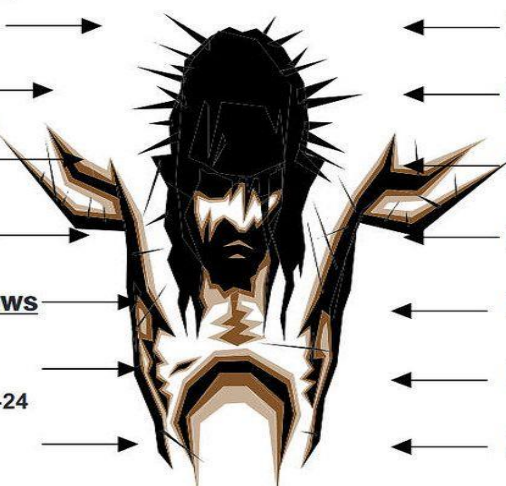
**Became Son of Man** →  
Phil. 2:5-6 • Lk. 19:10

**Became Man of Sorrows** →  
Isa. 53:3 • Mt. 23:37

**Was Made Sin for Us** →  
2 Cor. 5:21 • 1 Pet. 2:22-24

**Was Put to Death** →  
Lk. 24:46 • Mt. 16:21

**Was Cursed on Earth** →  
Gal. 6:3 • Isa. 53:7-8



**THAT WE MAY:**

← **To take us to His**  
John 14:1-3

← **Be Born of the Spirit**  
Jno. 3:5 • 1 Pet. 1:22

← **Be Born of God**  
1 Jno. 3:1-2 • 1 Jno. 5:4

← **Be Sons of God**  
1 Jno. 3:1-2 • Gal. 4:6

← **Rejoice and Be Glad**  
Phil 4:4 • 1 Pet. 4:13

← **Be Righteousness**  
1 Cor. 5:21 • 1 Jno. 3:7

← **Be made Alive**  
Col. 2:13 • Eph. 2:1

← **Be Blessed Above**  
Gal. 3:14 • Rev. 14:13

**HE WAS CRUCIFIED FOR ME ... AND YOU ... AND YOU ... AND ...**

## I. Earth for Heaven

1. He came to the earth.

15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief (1Ti 1.15).

2. That we might enter heaven.

1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14.1-3).

## II. Flesh for Spirit

3. He came in the flesh.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1.14).

4. That we might be born of the Spirit.

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3.5).

## III. Poverty for Riches

5. He became poor.

58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Luke 9.58).

6. That we might become rich.

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2Co 8.9).

#### IV. **Rejection for Acceptance**

7. He accepted the rejection of men.  
3 He is despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.  
(Isa 53.3)

8. That we might be accepted of God.  
6 ...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1.6).

#### V. **Death for Life**

9. He came to die.  
46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day..." (Luke 24.46).

10. That we might live.  
13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Col 2.13).

## Gospel Paradox #2: Bad news is good news.

Paradoxically bad news actually gets us to the good news. **When someone goes to the doctor, they will be given three pieces of information: the diagnosis, the prognosis, and cure. The diagnosis tells us what's wrong with us. It may be as simple as "your arm is broken" to "you have cancer." The prognosis is what will happen to you if you're left untreated. If you do not put your arm in a cast, it will remain crooked and broken, or if you do not kill the cancer, it will kill you. The cure is the treatment that will make your arm useable again or help you continue to live by killing the cancer.**

Christianity has its own set of these three pieces of info. The diagnosis is, we've "all fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) because of our sin. It is the default human condition. The prognosis is "death" which is the natural and spiritual consequence of being in and remaining in our sin (Romans 5:12). The cure is that through Jesus Christ, we can receive the gift of eternal life from God (Romans 6:23) and that sin no longer is our master — God is.

Here's the thing: the offer from God, **the "good news" of how God has rescued us from ourselves through Christ**, is more generous than we thought when we realize how bad the bad news is. **Without Christ, the bad news is that we are terrible people who will naturally separate ourselves from God in this life temporarily and in the next life eternally if we are left to ourselves. When we realize that is our default state, that we have been incredibly offensive to God**, it softens our hearts to the point of surrender when we are confronted with the realization that instead of leaving us alone with our flawed self, God gave us His good self. **God's the reason that the bad news paradoxically leads us to the good news.**

# **The Paradox of Grace**

Peter spoke to the gathering in Jerusalem on the question of circumcision and law keeping and said: “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are” (Acts 15:10-11). The yoke of which Peter spoke was the Law of Moses. Some of the Judaizers were trying to bind some segments of that law upon the Gentiles who had become Christians. Paul & Barnabas had strongly resisted such an effort at Antioch (Acts 15:1-2). Now in the meeting, Peter likewise resists such Pharisaical demands. He wants the Jews to realize that their salvation, like that of the Gentiles, is by grace of the Lord Jesus. The meticulous keeping of the law of Moses could not bring salvation to them.

Paul beautifully demonstrates how salvation comes to us in Ephesians Chapter Two. Based on the fact that God is rich in mercy, that he has great love, that he shows us the surpassing riches of his grace in his kindness, he saves us, raises us up with him and sits us with him in the heavenlies in Christ (vv. 4-7). Then in vv. 8-9 Paul avers: “For by grace you have been saved thru faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

**Here is where the paradox of grace enters. It is true that nothing that I do can merit salvation for me. It is by his marvelous grace. And yet, strangely enough, our Lord demands all that we have and are. He expects us to deny ourselves and take up his cross daily & follow him (Luke 9:23). He expects us to “present our bodies as a living sacrifice” to him (Romans 12:1). He expects my own body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). He urges me to “hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). He tells me that Jesus is the “author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him” (Hebrews 5:9). Really, he demands my everything – my every thought, my every action, my every word, my heart, soul and mind. And yet he says that I am saved by his grace.**

**How can it be that I am saved from past sins and continue to be saved from current sins by his grace and yet have him demand all that I am? If his grace saves me, why should I need to deny myself and take up his cross? Why should I be concerned about obeying him at all? This is the paradox of grace!**

**You see, the reason that I cannot be saved by works (of any kind) is that I would have to perfectly work or obey the law under which I live. Paul said that in Galatians 3:10-12: “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.’ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for ‘The righteous man shall live by faith.’ However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘He who practices them shall live by them.”“ To be justified by keeping a law, one would have to keep that law perfectly. Since no one perfectly keeps the law (any law), he can’t be saved by perfect law keeping. Even if we could be saved by perfect obedience, then we would have occasion to boast in our perfection. We would glorify ourselves. God’s plan is for all glory to be given to him through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:21). Since I am weak, frail, imperfect and unworthy, I must have one who is all-powerful and totally perfect in which to put my faith. When by faith I receive salvation by grace, I give him all the praise. I cry out, “Worthy art thou!” (Rev. 5)**

But not only so, when I put myself under Jesus as my Lord and do what he says (Lk. 6:46), I am giving glory, not to myself, but to him. When I take up his cross daily and follow him, it gives all the glory to God and none to myself, for I must deny myself.

The way that I glorify the Father is by honoring the Son (John 5:23). I do that by total submission to him. The only way that I can show my love to God is by obeying him (1 John 5:3). My purpose for being on this planet is to glorify God. I could not do this by my own works of righteousness or merit a right-standing with him. Consequently, God’s plan for my glorifying him is by my faith taking him at his word. That faith is a response to his love and his grace.



**When in response to his will, I repent and am baptized for the remission of sins, all the glory goes to him since it is his plan and not mine. Those who refuse Bible baptism are refusing God's grace and are not glorifying him. In the same way, Christians who do not accept his will for our lives in living for him do not glorify him. They become like those "whose God is their belly & who glory in their shame." The only way to give all the glory to God is to do what he says in his word.**

Does this mean "perfect obedience"? No, John tells us that "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). So, I do not live a perfect life or render perfect obedience. I falter, I slip, I fall. To glorify God in such an instance as this means that I turn from my sin in genuine repentance and confess it to him. His grace then forgives, and I keep on walking in the light of his glory. I will be constantly striving to do all that he wants in my life. But I do not rely on my own power to stand in right relationship to God. He is the one who enables. His grace makes it all possible. When I realize this, then I can have a happy and confident walk with God. The "blessed assurance" comes from his rather than from my own ability or power.

I am so thankful for the grace of God that reaches down into this sinful world and saves me and all who come to him in faith. Because of what he has done, I must be always seeking, learning, and following. And some glad day because of his grace and love, I can be with him in that glorious city where there is no sin and no sorrow. – *Forrest Moyer, Truth Magazine*

## We're Paralytics Healed Through Paradox



