



THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Ephesians 2:8

(Literal translation from the original Greek)

“Now you see, by means of grace you have been saved in the past with the result that you keep on being saved forever, through faith, even this salvation (is) definitely not out from the source of you all, it is the free gift from the source of God, definitely not out from the source of works, so that no one can of himself boast.”

INTRODUCTION:

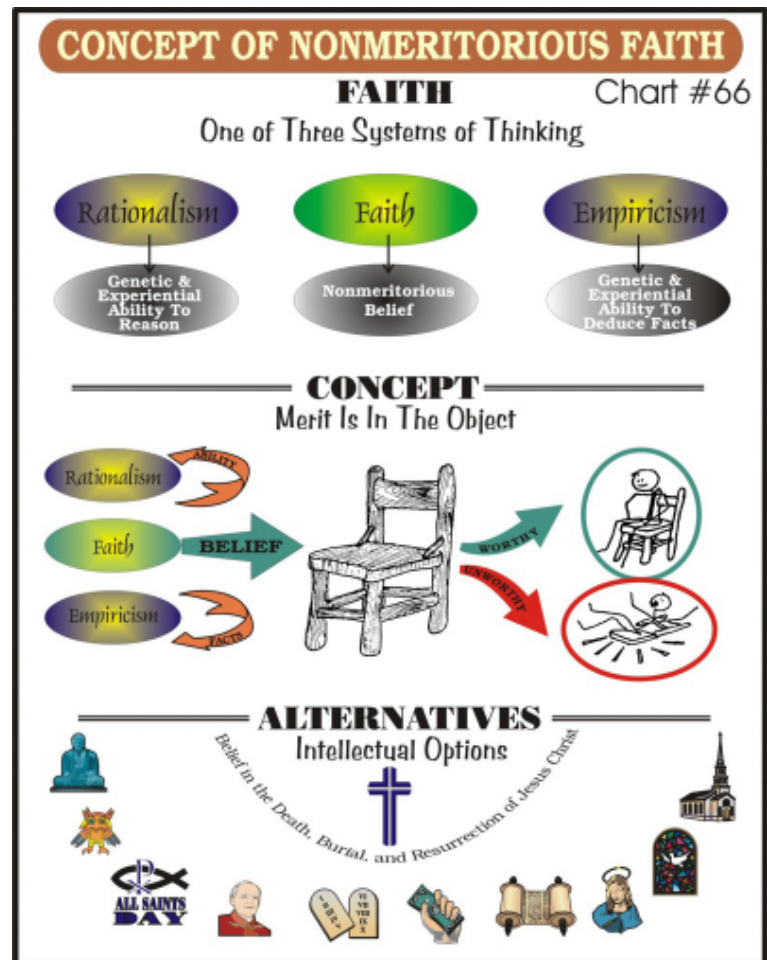
All members of the human race are sinners and unacceptable to God. (Romans 3:23; 6:23) The “Gospel” refers to the “good news” that Jesus Christ has provided a way for members of the human race to become acceptable to God. At issue is the fact that God is perfect Righteousness in His being and, in turn, demands conformity to the norms and standards of His Righteousness in all intellectual creatures. As intellectual creatures, members of the human race possess the powers of mind and the laws that pertain thereto, and as such God requires mankind to use those powers of mind to either adjust or maladjust to the norms and standards of Righteousness. All members of the human race are born into this world in maladjustment to the norms and standards of Righteousness (Romans 3:10), but the “good news” of the Gospel is the fact that all human beings can adjust to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness. All members of the human race can become acceptable to God’s Righteousness by means of the Gospel message. The Gospel message is that Christ provided the opportunity for members of the human race to receive eternal life by means of mere faith in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for salvation. The content of the Gospel message is threefold: First, Christ died a spiritual death on the cross for the sins of the world (11 Corinthians 5:21); Second, Christ died a physical death on the cross after the work of the removal of the sins of the world had been completely accomplished and was buried (John 19:30); And third, Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is presently seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:10 cf., Hebrews 12:2).

EXPLANATION:

Each member of the human race is born into this world possessing physical life and soul life, but without spiritual life. The fact that all members of the human race are born physically alive, but spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) is due to the fact that each one inherits from Adam, the

father of the entire human race, the original sin of Adam and a sin nature. (Romans 5:12 cf., 1 Corinthians 15:22) The sin and sin nature of Adam, which resulted in his spiritual death, is passed on to all his seed by means of procreation because, in his fallen state, Adam could not produce offspring genetically better than himself. Therefore, the spiritual death which is associated with Adam's sin and sin nature is passed on to all subsequent generations.

Since every member of the human race is born with their father Adam's sin and sin nature, all are born without spiritual life which means that they are all separated from a personal relationship with God. This separation is because of two reasons: First, "...God is a spirit and must be worshiped in spirit..." (John 4:24). "Worship" is a personal relationship activity, but since man is born spiritually dead in his natural state, such a relationship is impossible. Second, God is absolute Righteousness in His being and mankind is absolute unrighteousness in his being, therefore, a barrier exists between God and man. The first problem is overcome by being "born again" (John 3:3-7 cf., I Peter 1:3,23) which means to receive spiritual life at the point of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16). The second problem is overcome by reception of the Righteousness of Christ to one's credit by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (II Corinthians 5:21 cf., Romans 3:22).



Because man is an intellectual creature, he is able to come to know about God's moral norms and standards and is able to choose to adjust or to maladjust to them. Specifically, man is able to come to know the message of the Gospel which expresses the divine norms and standards for Salvation and man must choose to either adjust or maladjust to these norms and standards. It is only the work of Christ on the cross which is prescribed in the Scripture for eliminating the problem of man's spiritual deadness and maladjustment to the norms and standards of Righteousness. Therefore, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the message that grace has provided through the work of Christ on the cross the means whereby any member of the human race may receive spiritual life, the same being called "eternal life" (John 3:36).

SUMMARY:

1. Eternal Salvation is received when one believes in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as presented in the Gospel. "Belief" represents a nonmeritorious system of thinking called

“faith” which does not depend on or utilize any form of human merit. There are three systems of thinking with which mankind has been endowed by God: Rational, Empirical and Faith. The “rational” and “empirical” systems of thinking depend on human works and merit in that they both involve the utilization of genetically inherited and/or experientially acquired skills and abilities. Since all genetically inherited and experientially acquired skills and abilities are corrupted by association with man’s sin nature, all “works of righteousness” that might be produced by the same are absolutely unacceptable (Isaiah 64:6 cf., Ephesians 2:8-9). This means that a righteousness which is acceptable to God can never be produced “...out from the source of works...” By comparison, the other system of thinking, faith, does not depend upon any talent or merit of mankind, hence, it is the system of thinking which has been adopted by God as the means of responding to the Gospel message and at the same time not contribute any form of objectionable unrighteousness in the act — “...by means of grace you have been saved, through faith, this salvation is not out from the source of you all, it is the free gift from God, definitely not out from the source of works...” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2. This means that there are no activities — such as church membership, doing good deeds, tithing, baptism, walking an isle, raising one’s hand, making a public confession, etc. — by which man can make himself righteous and acceptable to God. Rather, by endowing mankind with the system of thinking called “faith,” the only nonmeritorious system of thinking available to mankind, God has provided man with the means of responding to His grace provision for Salvation without nullifying that response by adding human works to it. This is critical to understand in light of the fact that the best human-work-righteousness that man can produce is “filthy rags” in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6).
3. The only condition for Salvation is “belief.” Therefore, it is only by faith in God’s grace provision for Salvation whereby man can receive that Salvation (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). Consequently, while Salvation is available to all men, only those who utilize the faith system of thinking to believe and accept the work of Jesus Christ on the cross for Salvation can benefit from the death of Christ.
4. While on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ died for all sins: past, present and future, with one exception. He could not die for the sin of unbelief in Himself as Savior. Therefore, “not believing” the Gospel “good news” is the one and only criteria for condemnation and entrance into Hell. This means that all who are sent to Hell are sent there for the same reason — not believing and only for not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. The most certain and inevitable fact of life is that “...it is appointed for men to die and after this comes judgment...” (Hebrews 9:27). At the final judgment, everyone will be judged on the basis of whether he is acceptable to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness. The only means for an intellectual creature to enter into adjustment to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness is for him to choose to exercise faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross whereby he will receive everlasting Salvation. The Scripture states, “...faith in Jesus Christ ... for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the Gospel” (Colossians 1:5).
6. It is the Gospel message which conveys the necessary information regarding the work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby one may be saved: He died a spiritual death on the cross for all the sins of the world — past, present and future; He died a physical death on the cross

only after the removal of the sins of the world had been accomplished and then was buried; He then rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. The Gospel message is thus, “...*whoever believes in Him may have eternal life*” and Jesus said, “*everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*” (John 3:15; 11:26).

7. The final judgment of all members of the human race as to their eternal Salvation is committed to one person and that is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:22). Thus, it is not only Jesus Christ Who has provided a way for man to become acceptable to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness, but it is He who will decide who has actually made the proper adjustment by means of nonmeritorious faith.
8. Thus, it is only through reception of spiritual life and adjustment to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness through nonmeritorious faith in Christ that a spiritually dead and unrighteous member of the human race can become acceptable to the norms and standards of God’s Righteousness.

CONCLUSION:

Do you believe that the work of Jesus Christ is the only means of attaining eternal life? If so, you may exercise your faith in Christ by praying to God the Father, in your own words and vernacular, expressing the fact that you believe in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for and as the only source of eternal life.