

Belief: Its Power and Limitations

I. Definitions.

- A. power: Ability to do or effect something or anything, or to act upon a person or thing.
- B. belief: The mental action, condition, or habit, of trusting to or confiding in a person or thing; trust, dependence, reliance, confidence, faith. Const. *in* (*to, of* obs.) a person. b. *absol.* Trust in God; the Christian virtue of faith. 2. Mental acceptance of a proposition, statement, or fact, as true, on the ground of authority or evidence; assent of the mind to a statement, or to the truth of a fact beyond observation, on the testimony of another, or to a fact or truth on the evidence of consciousness; the mental condition involved in this assent. Constr. of a statement, or (*obs.*) a speaker; *that...*; **belief in** (a thing); persuasion of its existence.
- C. believe: To have confidence or faith in (a person), and consequently to rely upon, trust to.
- D. faith: Confidence, reliance, trust (in the ability, goodness, etc., of a person; in the efficacy or worth of a thing; or in the truth of a statement or doctrine).
- E. trust: *intr.* To have faith or confidence; to place reliance; to confide. Const. *in, to* (†*of, on, upon*).
- F. confidence: The mental attitude of trusting in or relying on a person or thing; firm trust, reliance, faith. Const. *in* (†*to, on, upon*).
 - 1. Confidence in Jesus Christ's satisfaction of God's justice opposes confidence in sinful man/self. **EPH 3:11-12 c/w PHIL 3:3-4.**
 - 2. Confidence in Jesus Christ must be held fast. **HEB 3:6, 14; 10:35.**
 - 3. There is a difference between confidence in Jesus Christ as the satisfier of God's justice and confidence in what the sinner does to procure Jesus Christ's satisfaction of God's justice. The Galatian churches had abandoned the former for the latter. **GAL 1:6; 3:1; 5:4.**

II. Observations.

- A. Belief may be of something true and factual, or something false. **2TH 2:11-13; JER 7:8.**
 - 1. Therefore, one's belief is not of itself an objective authority synonymous with truth. Believing in Santa Claus does not make Santa Claus a reality.
 - 2. One's belief that his body will win a contest against the inertia of a speeding locomotive will not be validated by experience.
 - 3. By contrast, one's belief in established fact (and especially the facts of Scripture) will be validated by experience.
- B. Neither belief nor unbelief of a truth or an error alters the truth or error. Eg's: God exists whether one believes that or not. Sin is evil whether one believes that or not. The wages of sin is death whether one believes that or not. **ROM 6:23.**
- C. We commonly conflate *belief* with *opinion* or *persuasion*: "I believe this suit, sir, is just the one you have been looking for." This is an opinion based upon observation and circumstances, perhaps also bias.
 - 1. This does not mean that valid belief is utterly divorced from persuasion. **ROM 4:20-21; 2TI 1:12; HEB 11:13.**
 - 2. But persuasion itself must be qualified by its source and details. **GAL 5:7-8.**
 - 3. Abel and Cain were both *persuaded* concerning their offerings but only Abel's persuasion was according to faith in God's word. **HEB 11:4.**
- D. Belief in God and His word may be based upon confirming evidences which appeal to man's natural senses. **MAR 16:17-20.**
- E. Belief in God and His word may be based upon confidence that needs not experiential

confirmation by natural senses. **JOH 20:24-31; 2CO 5:7; 1PE 1:8.**

- F. Observation and reason can be useful adjuncts of belief but certain facts ultimately depend on faith alone. **HEB 11:3.**
- G. Scripture is filled with declarations of past events and people, with declarations about God, God's promises of blessing and even of cursing, what He has done and what He would/will do.
 - 1. Every bit of it is pure and should be believed. **PRO 30:5; REV 21:5.**
 - 2. The success of it depends on one being convinced it is God's word. Those who do so will find it produces in them the very things which it declares it will. **1TH 2:13.**
 - 3. It is believed more accurately and efficiently by rightly dividing it. **2TI 2:15.**
- H. Belief not applied is vain. **JOH 5:45-47; JAM 2:19-20.**
- I. Jesus Christ is the supreme believer.
 - 1. He believed everything the Father said concerning him and acted accordingly. **JOH 5:31-32; 8:29.**
 - 2. He trusted God when He could only submit, not act. **ACT 2:25-28; LUK 23:46.**
 - 3. The elect's righteousness before God is owing to His faith. **GAL 2:20; PHIL 3:9.**
 - 4. His obedient faith produced the righteousness of the elect. **2CO 5:21; ROM 5:19.**
 - 5. Those who truly believe in Him have faith that is *counted for* righteousness, their faith being proof that God deems them righteous in Christ (**ROM 4:3, 22-25**). This is the first and most valuable comfort of the gospel and the power of this knowledge should be transformative. **ROM 6:1-4; HEB 9:13-14.**

- III. There are good things which God intends for men which are conditioned upon their belief in His word. In such cases, man's unbelief *thwarts* the will of God which was to benefit them.
 - A. Israel, Moses and Aaron should have all made it into Canaan but God's designed blessing was thwarted by their unbelief. **NUM 20:12; HEB 3:18-19.**
 - B. Christ's power and willingness to do great works was in some places thwarted by unbelief. **MAT 13:58; MAR 6:5-6.**
 - C. There is great relief from unbearable burdens of the Law which is reserved only for believers in Jesus as Christ. **ACT 15:10-11; ROM 10:1-4.**
 - D. The bulk of N.T. promises of knowledge of salvation, peace, joy, rest, spiritual strength, victory over fears and doubts and temptations and trials, consolation, help, mercy, grace for times of need, liberty of soul, confidence, assurance of eternal life, hope, temporal deliverances, etc. are for the enjoyment of believers. Unbelief thwarts God's intentions in such cases.
 - 1. Those who have never heard the truth cannot obtain them. **ROM 10:14-15.**
 - 2. Those who have heard the truth but refuse it cannot obtain them. **ROM 10:16-18.**
 - 3. Those who have believed the truth but forsake it forsake them since the Spirit by Whom these things come has been quenched. **PSA 51:10-12 c/w 1TH 5:19; 1TI 1:19-20; HEB 10:38-39.**
 - 4. The same God Who promises manifold good things to believers also promises certain negative things to apostates. **MAT 5:13; HEB 10:23-31.**
 - 5. There is therefore power in both belief and unbelief.
 - E. That man's unbelief *thwarts* the will of God in such examples as given above must be qualified.
 - 1. The thwarting is not of God's sovereign will to do as He pleases on His own terms. In that regard, God's will is never thwarted. **ISA 46:10-11.**
 - 2. The thwarting is only of God's promises of favors towards men *which are conditioned upon their belief*. Such promises carry with them a caveat that God is

- therefore not obliged to extend the favor in the case of unbelief.
- a. His will is still done. His government of men and situations is unfazed.
 - b. The thwarting, therefore, is really the individual thwarting his own welfare by unbelief which discharges God of any responsibility to keep His promise. **HEB 3:19 c/w NUM 14:34.**
 - c. Our problems are our own where we refused to hearken to promises of good. **MAT 23:37.**
 - d. The “all things” which work together for good (**ROM 8:28**) definitely don’t include sin like unbelief. **JER 5:25; ROM 3:8.**
3. The flip-side of many of God’s promises of good and favor is that the same unbelief which thwarts one’s own good also invokes the judgment of God against us.
 4. Unbelief both deprives us of a blessing and brings a curse, and this applies in *spiritual* things. Example:
 - a. Active belief of the gospel is rewarded with the gift of the Holy Ghost: the Spirit baptizes one into the local church where He abides to teach and comfort. **ACT 2:38-41 c/w 1CO 12:13.**
 - b. Inactive response to the gospel (unbelief) doesn’t just cause one to miss out on spiritual blessing, it puts one under judgment as an *informed* sinner. **LUK 12:47-48 c/w JAM 4:17 c/w 2TH 2:10-12.**
 5. Unbelief both deprives us of a blessing and brings a curse, and this applies in *carnal* things. Example:
 - a. Faithfulness in giving is promised blessings. **PRO 3:9-10; LUK 6:38; ACT 20:35; HEB 6:10.**
 - b. Infidelity in giving is promised cursings. **HAG 1:5-10.**
 - c. Unbelief is the root cause here: you don’t believe God will honor His word to bless and reward, or that He is really watching your heart and actions, or that He won’t chastise you for delinquency, or you falsely believe that you somehow have a special exemption, or (worse!) that you are prospering in spite of your disobedience and this is somehow to you a proof that you are good and right when God’s word says otherwise. This latter is the error of “gain is godliness” where prosperity is self-destructive. **1TI 6:5 c/w PRO 1:32.**
 6. Unbelief in those promises of good that are conditioned upon your personal faith in action has incredible power: power to deny yourself good, power to invite to yourself trouble, power to justify God in dealing with you negatively. Such cases make us to be *straitened in our own bowels*. **MIC 2:7 c/w 2CO 6:12.**
 7. This is a critical area in which your belief that you truly have God’s word (**1TH 2:13**) will be tested. It should have an effectual working in you to do what Scripture says is pleasing to God for the blessing, for the avoidance of a missed blessing, and for the avoidance of a curse. **LUK 14:15-24.**
- F. Active belief can turn God from His determined destructions whereas unbelief only justifies His destruction. **JON 3:10.**
1. Nineveh had a forty-day window and they made the best of it. **JON 3:4-9.**
 2. Had they not believed and acted accordingly by repentance (**MAT 12:41**), God would have overthrown them according to His word or He would be a liar.
 3. Had they determined to make no changes until Day 41, changes would have been impossible. Once God shuts doors, too late. **LUK 13:25-27.**
 4. We do not know the length of our space of repentance so why tarry? **REV 2:21 c/w HEB 3:7-9.**

- G. In conditional promises of God, belief has power to move God in your favor according to His promise of blessing. Unbelief has power to move God against you according to His promise of cursing. So choose wisely. **DEU 30:19.**
- IV. Remember, though, that unbelief has no power in *unconditional* matters in which God has declared certain things in His word.
- A. It cannot change the past.
 - B. It cannot negate a truth/fact.
 - C. It cannot negate a lie/error.
 - D. It cannot make God a liar.
 - 1. John twice says unbelief makes God a liar. **1JO 1:10; 5:10.**
 - 2. God cannot lie. **TIT 1:2.**
 - 3. Unbelief rather is tantamount to saying that God is a liar, a false accusation. This was and is Satan's tactic. **GEN 3:4-5; MAT 3:17; 4:1-3.**
 - E. It cannot thwart His purpose and prevent Him from doing what He has promised.
 - F. It cannot dethrone Him.
 - G. It cannot in any way damage Him.
 - H. A failure to distinguish between God's promises which are *conditioned upon belief* and God's doings and promises which *do not depend on the sinner's belief* is the source of much confusion concerning eternal salvation.
- V. Consider some things that God's word says about natural man and ask yourself whether man's belief or unbelief of these things has any bearing on their reality.
- A. All men are made sinners by Adam's sin. **ROM 5:12.**
 - B. All men have sin and have sinned. **ROM 3:23.**
 - C. All men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins deserving wrath. **EPH 2:1-3.**
 - D. All men by nature are depraved (corrupt, wicked). **ROM 3:9-19.**
 - E. All men by nature cannot receive/believe spiritual things of God. **1CO 2:14.**
 - F. All men by nature are condemned before God and cannot dwell with Him, no matter how good they are. **PSA 5:4-5; ISA 64:6; GAL 3:10.**
 - G. These are hard realities about sinful/natural man which are declared by God's word.
 - 1. If you believe them, you are on the same page as God concerning natural man. But your belief of these things is not their cause nor does it validate them.
 - 2. If you don't believe them, they do not therefore cease to be realities.
 - 3. Ironically, there are professing Christians who hold that not believing these things actually negates their realities while also holding that belief of the gospel is the only way to negate them.
 - H. Do not forget this: belief or unbelief of a reality does not cause, negate nor alter a reality and belief in a lie does not purify the lie to make it profitable. **JER 7:8.**
- VI. Consider some things that God's word says about Jesus Christ and ask yourself whether man's belief or unbelief of these things has any bearing on their reality.
- A. He is of the seed of David. **ROM 1:3.**
 - B. He was conceived by God in the womb of the virgin, Mary. **MAT 1:18-20.**
 - C. He is therefore the Son of God, uniquely so. **LUK 1:35; JOH 1:18.**
 - D. He is God Incarnate. **JOH 1:1-3, 14, 1TI 3:16.**
 - E. He is fully man, the Son of man: this is the nature He took upon Himself. **MAT 16:13; 1TI 2:5; HEB 2:16.**
 - F. He is the God-Man, fully God and fully Man. **COL 2:9.**

- G. He is Abraham's seed to Whom the promises were made. **GAL 3:16.**
- H. He is holy, harmless, sinless, undefiled, separate from sinners. **HEB 7:26; 1PE 2:22.**
- I. He was baptized and entered public ministry at the appointed time, being about thirty years old. **LUK 3:23; GAL 4:4.**
- J. He was approved of God by good works and miracles but was falsely convicted and crucified unto death. **ACT 2:22-23.**
- K. He was buried but resurrected and showed Himself alive to men for forty days. **1CO 15:4; ACT 1:3.**
- L. He ascended bodily into heaven to take David's throne in heaven. **ACT 2:29-35.**
- M. He is therefore Lord and Christ (Messiah), the promised One. **ACT 2:36; 7:52; 17:2-3.**
- N. He is therefore the Judge of all. **ACT 17:31; 10:42.**
- O. He is King and Priest for ever. **ISA 9:6-7; REV 11:15; HEB 7:17.**
- P. He is coming back with and for His people. **1TH 4:14-18.**
 - 1. Mark the wording, "For if we believe that..."
 - 2. This is obviously not setting up a condition for His return, as if man's unbelief would forbid Him from returning and raising the dead.
 - 3. It rather sets forth a logical progression: the return of Christ to raise the dead should be as certain in our belief system as His own life, death, burial and resurrection.
- Q. None of the above declarations of God's word concerning Jesus Christ are validated by man's belief nor thwarted by man's unbelief. They are facts of history, the present and the future that the whole creation must ultimately concede. **PHIL 2:5-11.**

- VII. Consider some things that God's word says about Jesus Christ's mission and ask yourself whether man's belief or unbelief of these things has any bearing on its realities.
- A. He shall save His people from their sins. **MAT 1:21.**
 - 1. He has a people: they are His.
 - 2. He *shall* (not "try to," "could," "make possible," etc.) save them from their sins.
 - 3. Their sins shall not persist with them. **1JO 3:2.**
 - B. His people were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world by God's will. **EPH 1:3-6.**
 - C. His people were given to Him by the Father to utterly save. **JOH 6:37-39.**
 - D. He gives (not "offers") them eternal life and they shall never perish. **JOH 10:27-29.**
 - E. His task of eternally saving them was completed by His obedience unto death. **JOH 17:2-4 c/w JOH 19:30; PHIL 2:8.**
 - F. His blood was shed to remit their sins and redeem them to satisfy the terms of God's everlasting covenant with them. **MAT 26:28; EPH 1:7; HEB 13:20.**
 - G. He took His people's sins and gave them His righteousness instead. **2CO 5:21.**
 - H. The mission and its fulfilment are declared facts of His purpose, method and performance for saving His people.
 - 1. This Jesus is truly the Savior. He actually saved His people as designed. He should not be believed on if He did not do the Father's works. **JOH 4:34 c/w JOH 10:37.**
 - 2. There is preached *another Jesus* (**2CO 11:4**) who saved *nobody* by his works; he only made salvation a *possibility conditioned upon the sinner's belief*.
 - a. The actual savior there, therefore, is the sinner's will, not Jesus.
 - b. Ironically, this is the very kind of Jesus that should not be believed in, per **JOH 10:37.**
 - I. Again, man's belief or unbelief of the stated facts of the biblical Jesus and His work cannot cause, validate, alter or negate them.

- VIII. Consider that Scripture consistently describes the *eternal* salvation of sinners from the *possibility, presence and final penalty* of sin (the lake of fire, **REV 20:15**) by Jesus Christ as a completed part of history as much as it declares Jesus Christ's conception, birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven as historical realities. He came to take away sin. **HEB 9:26; 1JO 3:5.**
- A. **(1PE 2:24)** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body...
 - B. **(HEB 1:3)** ...he had by himself purged our sins...
 - C. **(ROM 5:8)** ...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 - D. **(ROM 5:9)** ...being now justified by his blood...
 - E. **(ROM 5:10)** ...we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...
 - F. **(ROM 5:11)** ...by whom we have now received the atonement...
 - G. **(ACT 13:39)** And by him all that believe are justified...
 - H. **(ROM 3:24)** Being justified freely by his grace...
 - I. **(ROM 8:30)** ...whom he did predestinate, them he also called...justified...glorified.
 - J. **(TIT 3:7)** ...being justified by his grace...
 - K. **(GAL 3:13)** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law...
 - L. **(1PE 1:18-19)** ...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ...
 - M. **(REV 5:9)** ...hast redeemed us to God by thy blood...
 - N. **(EPH 1:7)** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...
 - O. **(COL 1:14)** In whom we have redemption through his blood...
 - P. **(HEB 9:12)** ...he entered in once..., having obtained eternal redemption for us...
 - Q. **(2CO 5:18)** ...hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ...
 - R. **(REV 1:5)** ...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.
 - S. **(COL 1:20-21)** And having made peace through the blood...yet now hath he reconciled...
 - T. **(1CO 1:30)** ...Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.
 - U. **(HEB 10:10, 14)** By the which will we are sanctified... by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.
 - V. **(2TI 1:9)** ...hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling...
 - W. **(1PE 5:10)** ...hath called us unto his eternal glory...
 - X. **(EPH 2:6)** ...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places...
 - Y. **(TIT 3:5)** ...according to his mercy he saved us...
 - Z. Consider the paradox created by those who hold that eternal salvation is conditioned upon the belief of the sinner (Jesus Christ's work is futile unless/until believed).
 - 1. They assume that none of the above declared facts about eternal salvation's accomplishment are true: they require one to NOT believe these things!
 - 2. Thus, while touting the power of belief for procuring eternal life, they are (albeit unwittingly in most cases) promoting *unbelief* of God's words as the means to procure eternal life! This is a form of *doing evil that good may come*. **ROM 3:8.**
 - 3. They will even sing, "Jesus Paid It All" while holding that He didn't, that He only made a down-payment and the sinner must come up with the balance.
 - 4. They may say, "But all of these things (above) are written to those who made a decision for Jesus Christ and that's what made them effectual for themselves." But then righteousness would not be by the *obedience of one* (**ROM 5:19**) but at least by two since believing Jesus Christ is a commandment to be obeyed. **1JO 3:23.**
 - 5. Boasting is excluded by biblical faith. **ROM 3:27.**
 - 6. It behooves men, that if they are persuaded that someone has paid off their debt for them, that they should not assume the transaction was invalid until they pay it off themselves, and so walk as free men. **GAL 5:1.**

- IX. Because many assume that the faith/belief of the sinner is the means to *procure* eternal forgiveness of sin and also to procure everlasting life (combined = *eternal salvation*), undue significance is therefore assigned to both belief and to unbelief.
- A. This system usually consists of two camps: those who hold that belief is *always* indispensably necessary to procure eternal salvation, and those who hold that belief is only necessary to procure eternal salvation in *some* cases.
- B. The “indispensably necessary” crowd draw hard lines: absolutely nobody who has not positively responded in faith to the gospel has eternal salvation.
1. This includes gospel deniers, the uninformed, the unabled (babies, severely handicapped, etc.). There is no Plan B for them whatsoever.
 2. Those “believers” who hold this position therefore cannot with clear conscience not sacrifice everything to facilitate the spread of the gospel to unbelievers. But reality shows otherwise and they end up holding that God will save them because of their belief but eternally damn the victims of their indifference.
 3. They necessarily also assume that they have the power to eternally damn unbelievers to hell and beyond by not sharing the gospel with them.
 4. Thus, this system lays claim to *double power* associated with *belief* or *unbelief*: the power of eternal life and the power of eternal damnation.
 - a. This is akin to *rebellion* and *witchcraft* which are illegitimate grasps at power. **1SAM 15:23.**
 - b. The power of eternal life is the sole property of Jesus Christ. **JOH 17:2.**
 - c. Only God has power to cast body and soul into hell. **LUK 12:4-5.**
 5. This logic applies to any system that makes anything in this world a necessary agent for the procuring of eternal salvation: sinner’s faith, ordinance, sacrament, church organization, etc. Paul interestingly referred to the Galatians’ reliance upon such as being *bewitched*. **GAL 3:1.**
- C. The “sometimes necessary” crowd holds that only those who have had an opportunity to respond to the gospel are bound by its call to faith for procuring eternal salvation (and condemned if they do not believe it). It is assumed that all who are unable to respond (the uninformed, babies, severely handicapped) are saved on the basis of God’s mercy in spite of no belief of the gospel.
1. This system first of all must concede that the gospel is not even necessary for the acquisition of eternal life since, if men can be saved without it, it isn’t necessary.
 2. This system turns the gospel into an instrument of eternal damnation for people who were already eternally safe.
 - a. They might reject the gospel and be condemned for their unbelief.
 - b. It would thus be better that unbelievers be left in pre-gospel ignorance.
 - c. Since the majority of the human race in all of history have not heard about Jesus Christ, this system must conclude that the majority are eternally saved.
 - d. Behold the power of unbelief!
 3. This system’s faulty premise is the basis for inventions like “age of accountability” or “Jews will be eternally saved without belief in Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Paradoxically, proponents of this system tend to denounce as dangerous heresy the idea that God can save sinners in spite of their unbelief!
 - b. Scripture actually declares that *some* Jews will be eternally saved without belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. **ROM 11:26-29.**
 - c. The “all Israel” of **ROM 11:26** are all of “the Israel of God” (**GAL 6:16**), “the children of the promise,” the Jacobs (no Esaus), the remnant seed, “the

- remnant according to the election of grace” (**ROM 9:8, 13, 27-29; 11:5**).
- d. The biblical truth about God’s election among the Jews is manifestly different from the position that all Jews are God’s elect and so do not even need the gospel.
4. This system sometimes reasons that God will *not* let all the unabled off the hook because of their circumstances but will judge them according to the degree of light that they have from nature: there is still accountability to perform acts of which God approves.
 - a. Thus, the gospel is not THE way to eternal salvation, just one of many ways.
 - b. Therefore, the gospel is *not necessary* and they should stop affirming it so.
 5. While decrying the biblical doctrine of God’s sovereign election of some sinners unto eternal salvation and life, this system relies upon it for its evangelism.
 - a. The missionary has limited time, ability and resources to take the offer of eternal salvation to every place.
 - b. He must choose to go to a particular place to the disregard of another place, in which case any converts will obtain eternal life on the basis of the missionary’s election.
 - c. Sensing the distastefulness of this, the missionary pleads with God to please show him which land he should go to with his message: he asks God to sovereignly elect which people to save!
 - d. There is no escaping some kind of election when it comes to sinners’ salvation: the choice will be God’s according to His own will, the sinner’s according to his own incapacitated and God-rejecting will, or by passing the buck to God to decide who should be saved in order to relieve the conscience of the missionary.
- D. Mind how so much undue power is assigned to belief and unbelief in such schemes of eternal salvation.
1. Some even say that unbelief is the one sin that God will *never forgive*. God may forgive a rapist, child molester, thief, tyrant, etc. who never had a chance to hear the gospel but He will never forgive someone who does not believe the gospel he hears.
 2. Unbelief is indeed a sin. **JOH 16:8-9**.
 3. But if unbelief is a sin which God will *never forgive*, then that sin remains a blot on his record to condemn him even if he one day believes.
 4. Inasmuch as all men are at some point unbelievers, none may dwell with the God who will never forgive the sin of unbelief.
 5. Paul obtained mercy for what he did ignorantly in unbelief! **1TI 1:12-15**.
 6. Christ died for the taking away of sin by the ransom payment of His blood.
 - a. If Christ died for all of the sins of all men, then all are eternally saved. But Scripture denies such a proposition. **MAT 25:41**.
 - b. If Christ died for only some of the sins of all men (unbelief being one such exception), then all men have sin to answer for which shall condemn them.
 - c. If Christ died for some of the sins of only some men (an elect group), they also have sin to answer for which shall condemn them.
 - d. If Christ died for all the sins of only some men (an elect group), then all of that group have no sin to answer for on Judgment Day, and this is the truth.
 7. It is not only the sin of *ignorant* unbelief (as Paul) that God can and will forgive. More on this later but remember **ROM 11:26-29; NUM 20:12 c/w MAT 17:2-3**.
- E. The problem with the common theory of how sinners are saved from death unto life is that it has a proposition becoming true upon belief of it *while it is not true*.

1. The unsaved man to whom Jesus IS NOT savior must believe Jesus IS his savior in order to MAKE Him such. At a time when Jesus is not his savior, he is supposed to confess, "Jesus is my savior."
2. The system holds that the unsaved sinner must be convinced of his sinfulness while he is still *unsaved* and *unchanged*: he is a natural man only. He must believe what Scripture declares about natural man, an impossible thing (**1CO 2:14**). If he is not convinced of this, he will do nothing.
3. To illustrate this error, look at it from the other side.
 - a. Scripture teaches that Adam's sin caused all men to be sinners under a sentence of death. **ROM 5:12**.
 - b. Someone who is ignorant of this fact is not exempt from it, nor would his belief or unbelief of this fact change the fact. Remember: belief or unbelief of a reality does not cause, negate or alter a reality.
 - c. When a sinner is told of his Adamic nature, his rejection of that information would change nothing: Adam was his sin-giver; he has Adam's sin nature.
 - d. But neither would his belief of it change anything: his belief did not MAKE Adam his sin-giver nor suddenly MAKE him have Adam's sin nature. Adam condemned all his posterity, whether they believe it or not.
 - e. Jesus Christ shall certainly save all His posterity, whether they believe it or not. **1CO 15:21-22**.
 - f. The performance and fruits of these two federal heads (Adam, Christ) are facts that cannot be caused, negated or altered by belief or unbelief.
4. Belief is a subjective experience: what one believes does not make it so. One may *think himself to be something when he is nothing*. **GAL 6:3**.
 - a. One cannot by thought add a cubit to his stature. **MAT 6:27**.
 - b. One cannot by thought alter the reality of his/her biology.
 - c. The dead can't think, and natural man is spiritually dead. **EPH 2:1**.
 - d. To make one's belief (an *effect* of eternal life, **ACT 13:48**) into the *means to acquire* eternal life makes as much sense as telling a blind man that he can have sight if he reads the directions on the page, or telling a corpse that he can have life if he will simply get out of the coffin.
5. Belief cannot affect reality but it can affect one's perception, understanding and response to reality. More on this later...

- X. The eternal salvation of sinners is a covenant salvation ordered by God and faithfully performed by God. **HEB 13:20 c/w 1PE 1:2-5**.
- A. This covenant is secure in spite of the beneficiary's flaws (**2SAM 23:2-5**), analogous to the named heirs of a man's will which cannot be changed after his death. **GAL 3:15**.
 - B. God made an enduring covenant with the earth and mankind that He would never again destroy either by a global flood. **GEN 8:21; 9:11**.
 1. Can the sinner's unbelief of this reality thwart it?
 2. Is it the sinner's belief of this reality what makes it effective?
 3. God confirmed this covenant with the token of the rainbow. **GEN 9:12-17**.
 - a. Does man's belief or unbelief of the connection of the rainbow with God's covenant affect that fact in any way?
 - b. A blind man's belief or unbelief of what he cannot confirm with his senses neither MAKES nor UNDOES the rainbow or that covenant.
 4. The everlasting kindness and covenant of peace God has sworn to His people is as certain as His sworn covenant concerning the waters of Noah. **ISA 54:7-10**.

- a. Man's belief or unbelief of the security of the Noahic covenant does not make, negate or alter it.
 - b. So, man's belief or unbelief of the security of the everlasting covenant of salvation does not make, negate or alter it.
- C. God made a sworn promise to David that He would raise up Christ to his throne and neither belief nor unbelief affected or affects that reality either. **ACT 2:30-31; PSA 2:1-6.**
 - 1. This royal government shall never be set aside because "...The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (**ISA 9:7**).
 - 2. This certain perpetuity of government is the basis for the perpetuity of the church of Jesus Christ against all opposition. **MAT 16:18; EPH 3:21.**
 - 3. The certainty of Messiah's government is also the certainty of His people's salvation since He is a king-priest forever by God's zeal and oath. **HEB 7:21.**

- XI. Consider that there are many things that God has declared as fact, as history, etc. which are not conditioned upon the belief of the sinner.
- A. God alone created all things out of nothing by His word. **HEB 11:3.**
 - B. God created a flawless, immortal Adam who sinned away his flawlessness and immortality, bringing sin and death into creation, passing this onto all his posterity. **ROM 5:12.**
 - C. God entered time in the person of Jesus Christ to save His people from their sins by His bloodshed, death, burial and resurrection. **1TI 3:16; MAT 1:21; ROM 4:25.**
 - D. All the facts about the work of Jesus Christ being all that was necessary to redeem, justify and resurrect the people given to Him to save are stated with the same historical certainty as any other aspect of history stated in Scripture like creation, the fall, the Flood, the Law covenant, the Davidic covenant, etc.
 - E. Similarly, everything which God has sworn to do of His own will is immutable and certain. Why should the everlasting covenant of salvation by Jesus Christ which God determined to do by Himself be any less immutable and certain?
 - F. If we accept the proposition that man's unbelief negates what God has done or forbids God from doing what He has determined to do (as many hold concerning the eternal salvation of sinners), would not man's unbelief be able to frustrate Him in other areas?
 - 1. God has emphatically declared that Jesus Christ will certainly return to judge the earth and force all men before His judgment seat where they will be measured by their condemning works. **ACT 17:31 c/w REV 20:11-13.**
 - 2. God has similarly declared that all outside of Christ will be cast into the lake of fire at the final judgment. **REV 20:6, 14-15; 21:8.**
 - 3. God will also certainly destroy the present heavens and earth. **2PE 3:10.**
 - 4. If unbelief of God's declared *unconditional* doings and promises concerning the eternal salvation of His people by Jesus Christ can thwart His will in that area, what about these other declarations?
 - 5. The logical conclusion of a falsely assumed power of the sinner's belief or unbelief in matters that are singularly of God's will would imply that that the sinner's unbelief could thwart the return of Christ and Final Judgment!
 - 6. Thus, logically, the most loving thing to do for the unconverted would be to facilitate their unbelief by not preaching the gospel to them!
 - 7. This is the logical conclusion of a faulty premise.
 - G. Mind that man's unbelief in areas of God's stated *independent* actions and promises does not nullify history nor His power and intentions.
 - 1. He has saved His own people by Christ and will save them from final judgment and wrath by Christ.

2. In this matter, the unbelief of the sinner does not make the faith of God to do what He has intended to do of no effect.
 - a. The unbelief of the Jew concerning the futility of works-righteousness shall not make the faith of God to save by Christ's righteousness of no effect. **ROM 3:3-6, 20-23.**
 - b. The unbelief of the elect Jew shall not thwart the will of God to take away his sins according to God's sworn covenant of forgiveness. **ROM 11:27-29.**
 - c. The unbelief of any of God's elect shall not thwart God's faithfulness to do what He has sworn to do for them and to them. **2TI 2:10-14.**
3. Never deceive yourself into concluding that there are no consequences to unbelief. God has many ways of judging unbelief, especially wilful unbelief in the face of known history and duty. **LUK 12:47-48.**
4. A son remains a son regardless of folly but folly has its costs. **LUK 15:11-24.**
5. By faith we work out our own salvation which God has worked into us and so avoid blame, harm and rebuke while showing the the world a better way. **PHIL 2:12-16.**

XII. There indeed is salvation that is conditioned upon the sinner's belief.

- A. Believers know that they are born of God and are not only natural men. **JOH 1:12-13.**
- B. Believers know that they are justified by Jesus Christ. **ACT 13:39.**
- C. Believers know that they have everlasting life. **JOH 6:47.**
- D. Believers know they have passed from death to life and shall not come into condemnation. **JOH 5:24.**
- E. Believers are assured of a blessed resurrection. **JOH 6:40; ROM 8:10.**
- F. Believers save themselves from an untoward generation. **ACT 2:40.**
- G. Believers are added to the company of God's saints. **ACT 2:41; 26:18.**
- H. Believers receive a forgiveness of sins upon conversion. **ACT 2:38; 3:19.**
- I. Believers are saved unto fellowship with God and Christ. **1JO 1:3-4.**
- J. Believers know there is a fount of cleansing blood for their defilements. **1JO 1:9.**
- K. Believers are saved from the fear of death and bondage. **HEB 2:14-15.**
- L. Believers dethrone Satan (and his lies) in their heart and submit to King Jesus and His liberating truth. **ACT 2:36-47; GAL 5:1.**
- M. Believers are delivered from the futility of works-righteousness. **ROM 10:3-4, 9-11.**
- N. Believers find rest for their souls in Christ. **MAT 11:28-30.**
- O. Believers have joy and peace by the knowledge of full atonement. **ROM 5:10-11.**
- P. Believers are assured they are saved from wrath by Christ. **ROM 5:8-9.**
- Q. Believers are delivered to patient waiting for Christ's return. **1TH 1:10.**
- R. Believers know that putting God first is always right and He is faithful to honor that. **MAT 6:33-34.**
- S. Believers grow closer to God through Christ by knowledge of Him. **EPH 4:12-15.**
- T. Believers are best fitted for soundness of mind. **2TI 1:7 c/w ACT 26:24-25.**
- U. Believers are indeed conquerors in this world and of this world. **1JO 5:4.**
- V. Believers have hope which transcends this world. **1PE 1:3-4.**
- W. This is just a partial list of the certainties promised to believers only. Unbelievers cannot claim them and contrarily invite deeper delusion unto their own destruction. **2TH 2:10-12.**

XIII. Belief, therefore, has considerable power but only in those things which God has declared to be conditioned upon belief.