

April, 2013



# FORSAKEN

- Chris Clevenger



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## Writer's Biography

Chris Clevenger is the husband of Melissa Jane Clevenger. He is one of the preachers for the Riggs church of Christ in Chapel Hill, TN. Chris is also the writer of [www.chrsclvngr.com](http://www.chrsclvngr.com) and a co-director of [The Light Network](#). He is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching.



# FORSAKEN

- Chris Clevenger

Forsaken. Few words have the ability to impact the human mind and produce vivid images of darkness and solitude than the word “forsaken.” Christians have been promised by the Father that He “will never leave [them] nor forsake [them]” (Hebrews 13:5); therefore, the feeling of being forsaken by God is rare. When such feelings do arise they have the ability to cripple the soul and stunt all spiritual activity. Perhaps that is one reason that the fourth saying of Jesus upon the cross is both terrible and terribly hard to comprehend.

“Eli, Eli, lāmā sabachthani?” or “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46) were the words that rang from the lips of the Savior as He emerged from three hours of darkness. The first three sayings of Jesus were sayings of sympathy: one to the Father for the sinful crowd, one to a thief covered in agony, and one to his troubled mother. The final three sayings of Jesus were sayings of solution: one for the quenching of His thirst, one to signal the completion of His work upon the earth, and one to commend His soul to the keeping of the Father. “My God, My God, why?” holds the central position and calls for the human mind to peer into a depth of meaning that it can never truly comprehend.

Though men may seek to exhaust the meaning of this central cry of Christ from the cross such an objective is unattainable. Martin Luther, the famous reformer, sat contemplating these words for many hours without food or water in deep meditation. After a great period of time he sprang from his chair and exclaimed, “God forsaken of God! Who can understand that?” While the complete comprehension of these words of Christ may be too difficult to entirely ascertain, each time one wades deeper into the sea of these words he becomes more familiar with the Father and more focused upon the Son.

## The Period

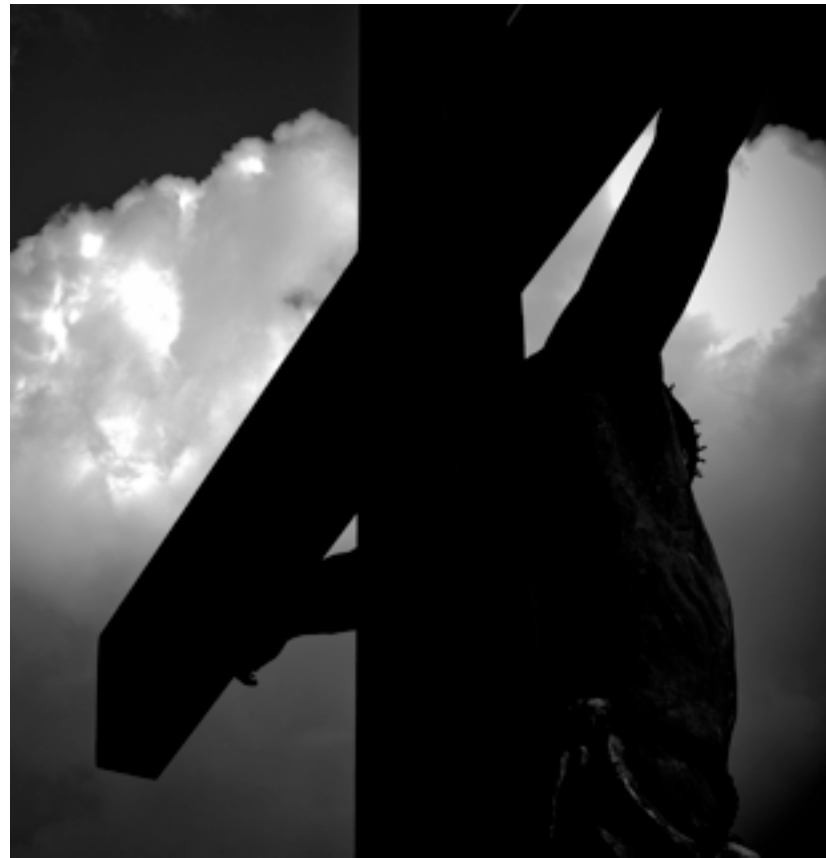
Matthew, the inspired writer who penned the book that now bears his name, describes the period that surrounded the fourth saying of Jesus upon the cross. When Jesus uttered the words, “My God, my God, why?” He was emerging from a period of darkness

that lasted three hours. The writer says, “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” (Matthew 27:45) From noon until 3:00 PM darkness shrouded the sufferings of Christ. This darkness could not have been due to a natural eclipse for eclipses never occur around the feast of the Passover, a feast of the Jews that constantly coincides with a full moon; therefore, the darkness that veiled the Cross was supernatural. While it is impossible to understand the exact reason for such darkness it is interesting to consider some Biblical insights.

The ninth hour (3:00 PM) was a time of sacrifice. Moses commanded the children of Israel that two lambs were to be offered each day. (Numbers 28:3-4) According to Jewish tradition the “evening lamb” was offered at the ninth hour. At the same hour that Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), uttered “My God, my God, why?” outside of the city walls of Jerusalem on Mount Calvary a Jewish priest typically offered the evening sacrifice for the people within the city walls.

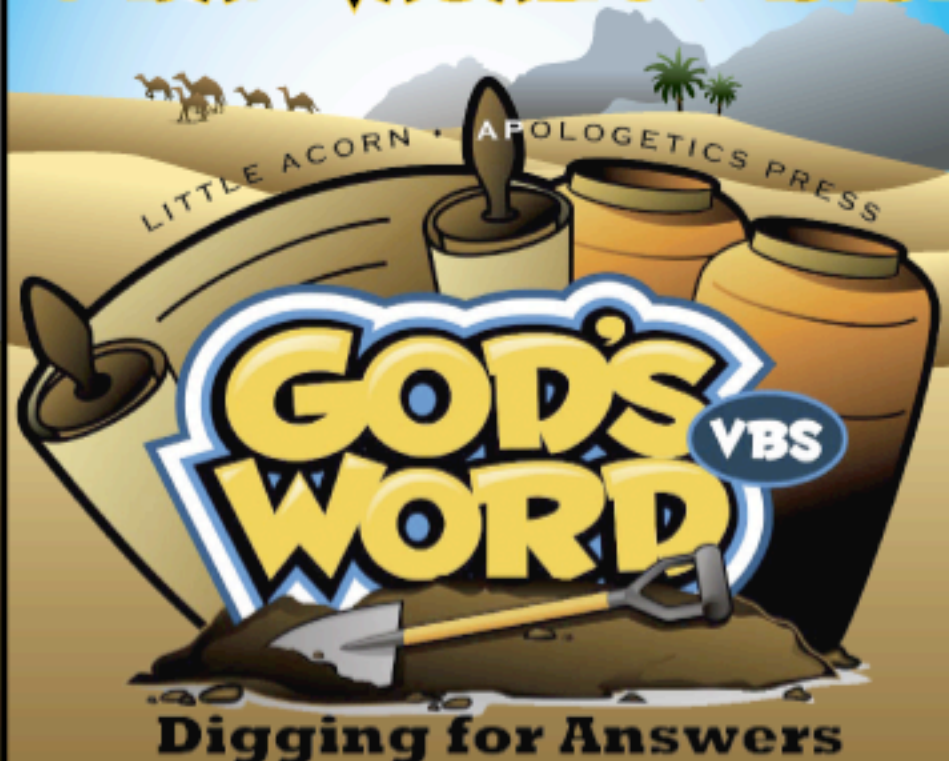
The ninth hour is also significant because it was an hour of prayer. In the Old Testament men like Daniel (Daniel 9:21), Ezra (Ezra 9:5), and Elijah (1 Kings 18:36) offered prayer to God while in the New Testament the apostles (Acts 3:1; 10:3) did the same. At the hour known as one of the “hours of prayer,” Jesus offered up fervent prayer to the Father when He

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You hopefully have been noticing the advertisements for The Light Network in the previous months of the PFP. Well, this week has been difficult for me to keep up on all of the shows on TLN because of being at the MSOP Lectures all week. But, I was able to catch an older episode of Preachers In Training that I missed a few weeks ago (episode 13). In that episode, Robert Hatfield, the host of Preachers In Training, went over 10 characteristics needed in a preacher which Yale University offered years ago. While going through these, I really couldn't see a single one that isn't a characteristic needed in a Christian as much as a preacher. Let's just go through them QUICKLY!

1. **Character** - This is pretty simple, isn't it? I mean, every Christian ought to be, as Dictionary.com defines it, moral and ethical! If we aren't, how do we suppose that the world is going to know that Christians are any different (1 Tim. 4:12)?
2. **Sincerity** - Many people want to ask, "What can I do to help my evangelism?" The answer is really simple, be sincere in your Christianity! Remember, people won't care what you know until they know that you care!
3. **Enthusiasm** - We've all seen it, the new Christian arises from baptism and is "on fire" for God. I wonder what happens that takes that away from us? Whatever reason, it shouldn't be!
4. **Knowledge** - Paul was very upset that the Jews had zeal, but really didn't know what they were doing (Rom. 10:1-2). I wonder if he would say the same about me? I sure hope not! But I always have to remember that Sundays and Wednesdays aren't enough to have the amount God wants me to have!
5. **Courage** - We live in a non-Christian world. And because of that it's going to take courage to tell people they ought to change!

6. **Imagination** - Every person needs to be approached differently in evangelism. But remember, you can't just imagine a new Gospel for every person (Gal. 1:8).
7. **Good Health** - This is just a common sense thing! Every person ought to want to be in good health.
8. **Hard Worker** - You know why the church isn't growing anymore? Because we ought to ALL be hard workers instead of hardly working. Are you working?
9. **Good Speech** - Eph. 4:29... People can tell your faith by your language and speech. Sometimes the problem is that *people can tell your faith by your language and speech.*

10. **Love For People** - This is what it's all about, whether a preacher or not. Without genuine love for those that are lost we aren't being like Christ and we aren't actually going to do any of the other nine things!

So, I know that was very quick and limited but I bet there are some things you ought to be working on. I know there are some things in the list that I am going to start working on!



## The Best Part

The best part of anything having to do with the Bible and the divine God in Heaven is the fact that He has provided a way by which a man can be saved from his sins. Paul wrote that every single person, attempting to justify himself by way of his own means, has fallen short of the mark and has therefore been guilty of trespasses (Romans 3:23). But, thanks be to God, He has not left us alone in order to find our salvation! He has sent Himself, in Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for the forgiveness of all man's sins (John 3:16). BUT, we have to access that salvation which is freely available. How does someone do that?

Hear - Romans 10:17

Believe - John 8:24

Repent - Acts 2:38

Confess - Romans 10:9-10

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16

If you have not done these things, or have never even heard such things, please contact us at the PFP. We would love to help you in your spiritual life so that you can be accepted by the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9).

Upcoming  
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MAY - Dalton Gilreath  
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uttered “Eloi, Eloi, lāmā sabachthani?” (Mark 15:34)

### **The Power**

The intense suffering of Jesus was not conveyed with whispered words from the tongue of a weakened man. The inspired text reveals that Jesus cried these words “with a loud voice.” (Matthew 27:46) Although he had fasted for about eighteen hours and endured agony in the Garden as well as abuse by the hands of the Jews and the Romans, Jesus remained resolute in His mission and resilient in His body. The young, strong body of Jesus provided an adequate vessel for Him to endure His measureless suffering.

The sufferings of Jesus were definitely physical in nature. He had been scourged (Matthew 27:26), stripped (Matthew 27:28), spit upon and smitten. (Matthew 27:30) He had endured shame (Matthew 27:35), staring eyes (Matthew 27:36), and scoffing. (Matthew 27:39-44) All of these trials simply accompanied the intense agony of Golgatha where He suffered the most horrendous death conceivable by man. Nevertheless, the power of the words of Jesus can be understood only when one considers the mental anguish of Jesus as well. He was concerned with those around the Cross and bore in His body the suffering for the sins of the whole world.

### **The Pain**

Jesus cried unto the Father, “Thou hast forsaken Me.” (Matthew 27:46) The pain of Jesus is more readily seen in these words than in any other He ever uttered. Was this pain subjective or objective? Did Jesus simply feel as if He was forsaken upon the cross, or was He actually forsaken by God? While some would state that Jesus cried these words in order to point men to the prophetic utterances concerning Him in the psalms (Psalm 22:1), such a position makes Christ an actor in a play instead of a man in real pain. Whether the forsakenness of Jesus was objective or subjective it makes His pain no less real. For those who struggle with mental illness subjectivity or objectivity makes little difference. Pain only in the mind can be as horrendous as pain in the body alone.

The pain of Jesus was remarkable because of the manner in which he suffered. Many early Christian martyrs suffered intense physical agony with the peace that passes all understanding. Stephen suffered

at the hands of the Jews yet never felt forsaken (Acts 7:54-60). Many other martyrs suffered patiently as they were put to death, yet the pain of Jesus was so significant and so intense that He felt forsaken. Perhaps these words point not simply to His physical suffering but to something far deeper.

In the life of Jesus this suffering was rare. He had always felt at one with the Father. “I am not alone, because the Father is with me,” were the words that He professed openly. (John 16:32) Even speaking to the hateful Jews he stated, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” (John 8:29) How is it that Christ stated the Father would be with Him even when He was lifted up and stilled cried, “Thou hast forsaken Me”? Truly, this pain of Jesus was rare: the only time throughout eternity wherein Jesus was or felt as if He was forsaken.

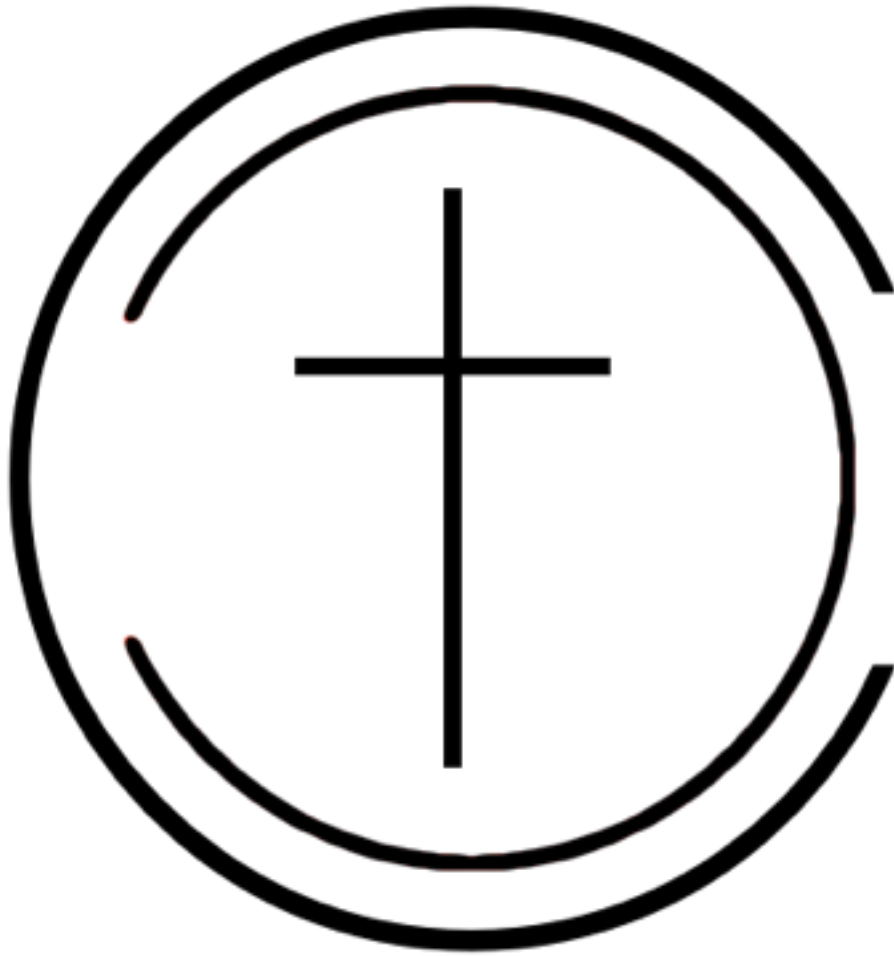
The pain of Jesus was terrible. He was in the place where the judgment of God must fall. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “The Man, Christ Jesus, beheld the Holy God in arms against the sins of man... God was for Him and with Him in an unquestionable sense; but for the time, so far as His feeling went, God was against Him and necessarily withdrawn from Him.” In a sense Jesus endured hell upon the earth: separation from God, intense physical agony, mental anguish, outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. He who could never enter the gates of hell endured a similar fate upon Calvary.

### **The Price**

Had God forsaken man for their sins He would have been just; yet, it is difficult to understand how God could have forsaken Jesus. “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” is the cry of the Lord. The Lamb of God, Jesus the sinless Son of the Father, was the price that was paid for the sins of mankind.

The writings of the prophet Isaiah reveal that Christ as the “Suffering Servant” would be the sacrificial substitute for the sins of man. “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” are the words employed by the prophet. (Isaiah 59:4-5) It is impossible that the price for man’s redemption would

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SERMONS, ARTICLES, NEWS AND NOTES FROM CHRIS CLEVINGER

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What a wonderful opportunity has been afforded me to have a small part in this publication. I am grateful to be writing this section for PFP. These answers are in no way the conclusive or definitive set of scriptures, only the ones that satisfy the question. It is the quest of the student of the Bible to take these answers and study further to reach a full understanding of God's divine plan for mankind.

## **1. "Does God ever endorse lying?" The handmaids lied to Pharaoh and were blessed by God.**

Exodus 1:15-22 records for us the premises of this question. As the Bible records this horrific event, it does not say the Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh. They simply violated a direct command of the ruling King.

God has never, nor will He ever endorse ANY sin, to include lying. A more accurate place to look in the Bible is found in Joshua 5. Rahab the harlot, lies out right as she chooses to hide those Israelite spies. DID GOD CONDONE THIS LIE? No. Did He use this lie to the advantage of the Jewish Nation? Yes.

It is also good to note this fact: God often used the Evil Nations and actions to both aid and punish the Israelites. Notice the Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans, etc...

God never condoned lying or any other evil work. He will not condone it today. As His children, we must not condone these actions either. We must live up to the standard of God's word. Lying does not fit in that standard.

## **2. "Why doesn't John 3:16 mention baptism?"**

John 3:16 states "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." While it is true that the word 'baptize' (in any form) is not explicitly stated in this verse, it is implied.

You and I must first have a working grasp of languages in order to understand the Bible as it is written. The only language we need to understand is English.

Sometimes we forget about things we have learned. Let's take a moment to remind ourselves about some English rules.

The greatest rule of language we can remember when studying our Bible is that some words have suffixes that we commonly do not use in 2013 in America. One such suffix is "eth". The suffix "eth" holds fast to this meaning: a continual process of. Therefore if "eth" is added to the end of the word believe it literally means to keep on believing and obeying due to the authority of the commander.

This verse would be most literally translated "God loved mankind to the point at which He sent Christ, His Son, to be our sacrifice for sins. After this sacrifice was made it is necessary to believe and obey the divine plan in order to be saved from sin."

## **3. "Is there a verse or a group of verses in the Old Testament that tells about the purpose of the Jewish Nation?"**

This is a very interesting question and really could be answered in one sentence. Every verse in the Old Testament points to the coming of Jesus and the New Testament points back to Christ. Now that being said, the purpose of the Jewish Nation was established by God, for God's purpose and to God's end.

The oldest verses are possibly, Genesis 12:1-5. There Abraham was told of 3 promises given to his family. God told Abraham that the entire world would be blessed by his Family. What does that mean? Well, Matthew 1:1-17 sheds a great amount of light on this promise. The blessing of all the world through Abraham is Jesus.

There are certainly many other verses to consider in this vein of thinking. Think of these: Genesis 49:10, 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:12-14, Daniel 2, Psalm 22, 37, 73, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 11:1, 52-53, etc... We could go on and on for a really long time but the long and the short stories of the Old Testament is JESUS!

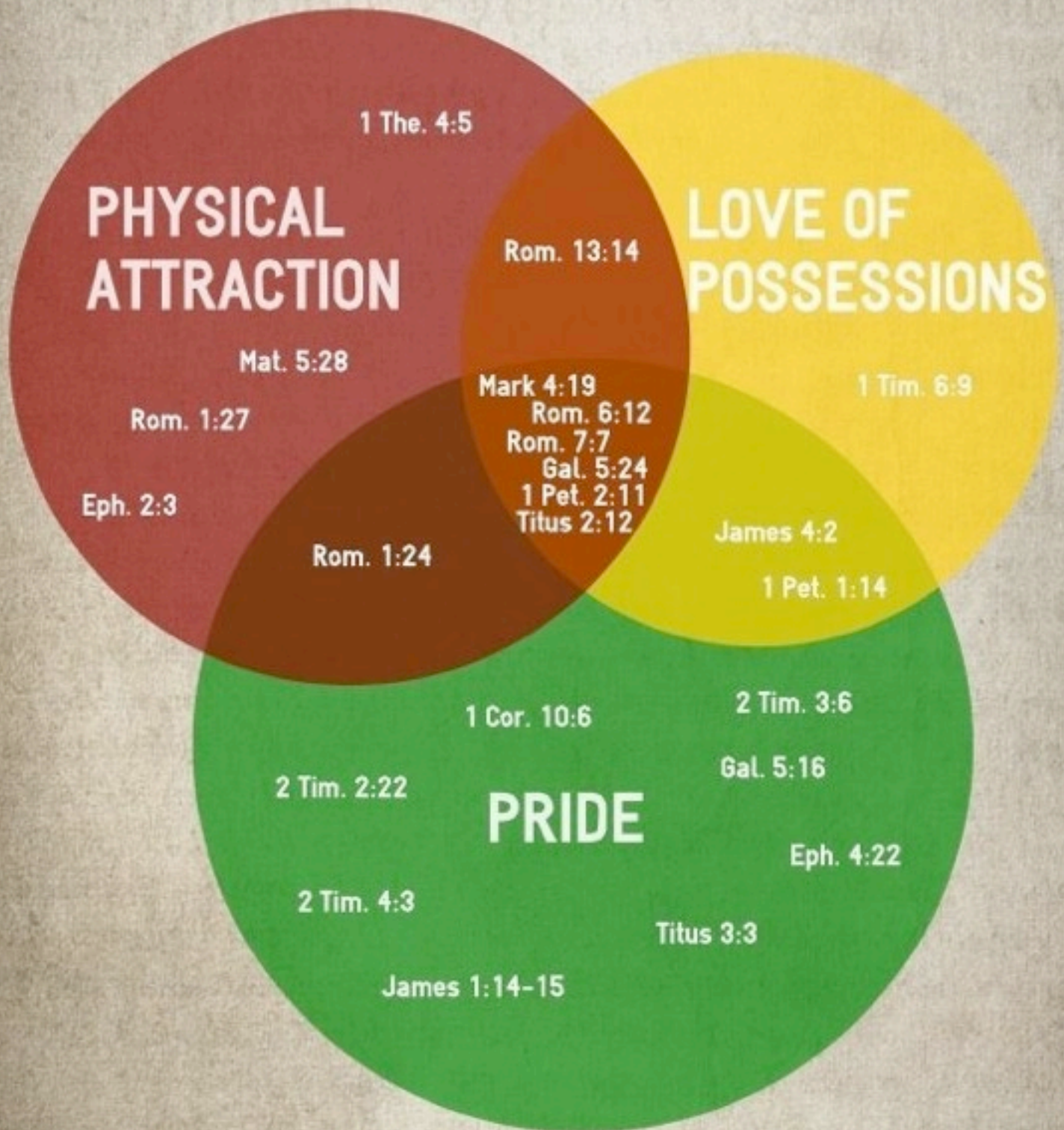
He was a Jewish man. He lived in a Jewish nation and was under Roman dominance. He is the reason for time, the one true church and salvation for all of mankind. THE JEWISH NATION WAS THE VEHICLE BY WHICH GOD BROUGHT THE MESSIAH INTO THIS WORLD AND HE IS THE BLESSING OF THE WORLD GIVEN TO ABRAHAM.

Thank you for all those great questions. I hope this has spurred a question in your mind. If it has, please send it in to the PFP ([thepfp@live.com](mailto:thepfp@live.com)) and we will study your question soon.



# LUST

Lust is something we often don't understand... What really makes up this sin?





be silver or gold (1 Peter 1:18-19); God's crowning creation, mankind, was only redeemed by the blood of Christ. He was the propitiation, the sacrificial substitute, for the sins of man. (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10)

### **The Purpose**

Having surveyed the majority of these enigmatic words of the Master there remains one word that will forever capture the attention of those who have been redeemed by the Lamb: Why. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) The forsakeness of Christ and the incredible pain that it brought was real. The power in His voice brought the attention of those present, and those who are still present by faith today, to the price that was being paid for the debt of sin. Certainly the Lord Who came to "give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28) was aware of the purpose for His suffering. Those who read these words are then compelled to search for the answer to the Lord's question.

Jesus suffered so greatly to show the horror of guilt. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2) When Jesus suffered upon the cross it was an eternal testimony to the horrendous nature of sin. Sin is blacker than hell

and more vile than the devil himself. Sin violates the nature of God and demands justice. While the sting of guilt may have never been His He was surrounded with the awful atmosphere of man's guilt.

The words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" show the holiness of God as well as any other passage in the Bible. Jesus clothed His utterance in the words of the Old Testament. The psalmist wrote, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" (Psalm 22:1) He answers his own inquiry when he writes only two verses later, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." (Psalm 22:3) Because of the holiness of God the price for sin had to be paid.

Under the Law of Moses a stubborn and rebellious son who would not repent was stoned to death by all the men of his city. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) Immediately following this Divine injunction God reveals that anyone who is hanged upon a tree is cursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). The punishment that was due to man because of the rebellious and stubborn nature of his sin was borne by God in Jesus Christ. Christ suffered suspended between heaven and earth in order to show the heart of God. God's mercy, forgiveness, and grace moved Him to send Christ to be man's sacrifice. There is no greater revelation of the love of God than the cross of Christ.

### **Conclusion**

God's people may never comprehend the depth of the fourth saying of Christ upon the cross. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" will eternally captivate the minds of God's people, yet each time one reads the question of Jesus again he is compelled to give the same answer: "I am the reason." Christ endured the agony of the cross to redeem man from sin. God the Father was in Christ the Son (2 Corinthians 5:19) Who offered Himself through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14). All of this was accomplished for each individual man who would submit to the rule of King Jesus. Each time one gazes upon the cross of the Lamb of God through eyes of faith he must whisper, "I am the reason for His suffering. I am the reason He was forsaken."



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# SAY WHAT?

with Tony Clay

Of the various doctrines that can be taught and accepted by masses of religious people, “once saved always saved” could be the most dangerous. This doctrine penetrates to the soul of the individual and deceives them into thinking that they can continue in sin and not receive damnation as a result. In this month’s column, let’s look at “once saved always saved” in light of God’s word.

First off, let’s define our terms and specify exactly about what we’re talking. “Once saved always saved,” which for simplicity sake, we will refer to OSAS. For starters, all “five point Calvinists” believe in OSAS, but not all those who believe in OSAS are Calvinists. It is the view of this writer that unless one believes in every aspect of Calvinism, their doctrine breaks down (unlike how it normally does pitted against the Bible). OSAS is the belief that after one has become a child of God that he or she cannot fall out of God’s favor and thus be lost. If this doctrine is true then the following scenario is true (This assumes that one has followed the biblical plan of salvation [believe, repentance, confession, and baptism]): *Susan became a child of God in her early twenties; she remained faithful for several years but after a difficult divorce with her husband, her faith was shaken and she started to become unfaithful. Occasionally, she would go to bars when friends from her past life of sin and became entangled in such and would eventually abandon the church altogether and never darken the door until her death.* According to OSAS, Susan would be going to heaven despite her unfaithfulness. Instead of admitting their inconsistency, they will claim that Susan and others like her were never saved in the first place. For the remainder of the column let’s look at clear and understandable passages of the New Testament that declare this destructive doctrine to be false.

## **GALATIANS 5:1-4**

This passage details what happens when one has obeyed the Gospel and are a member of the kingdom, but has abandoned the kingdom, much like Susan did in our example. Instead of returning to a former sinful life, Paul is talking about returning to a fulfilled system, the law of Moses. Paul says, that if one returns to the old law, then Christ is become of no effect! The key words in this passage are found in verse four when Paul comes out and says, *ye are fallen from grace.*

## **JAMES 5:19-20**

James is clearly writing to brethren, that is, members of the church (James 1:1). The church contains the saved (Acts 2:47, 20:28 et al). He also makes it known those to whom he is writing that the audience of the letter are brethren. And he says that brethren can err, which literally from the Greek word, *planao*, communicates the idea of a planet drifting from its orbiting alignment. James declares to us our responsibility to be

in the business of converting our fallen and erring brethren. It reminds of the charge given in Ezekiel 3:17-21 where God charged Ezekiel to warn the wicked of his wicked way and also the righteous who had fallen by the wayside! Verse twenty reclassifies the erring brother, by calling him a sinner. It is possible for the child of God to digress and become a sinner again, that is, to be one who continually and habitually sins, even willfully.

## **2 PETER 2:1**

Peter tells of the destruction that will befall those who, after that have been bought by the Lord, digress into false teaching. Peter is making a comparison between the Old Testament and the new. He mentions in the latter part of 2 Peter 1 of the prophets of old, who were inspired to write Bible books by the Holy Spirit. And just as there were false prophets during that time, there are false prophets under the new Law. The fate for those who speak such false things being both in the church and outside the church, is swift destruction. We have witness many notable brethren in the last several years who have preached the Gospel faithful but have been deceived, either by self or others into teaching false things. No one who speaks evil false things will be guiltless in judgment just because they became a child of God.

## **ACTS 5:1-11**

Finally, let us look at Ananias and Sapphira and the sin that cost them their lives. In the latter part of chapter four we read of the communion and fellowship the earlier church had. They provided one another and sold their possessions and gave to the church to meet the needs of brethren who were without. Jesus, also known as Barnabas was one who was notable for his donation to the church, selling the land he owned and giving the proceeds of the sale to his brethren. It is the belief of this writer that after Ananias and Sapphira saw the praise saw the thanksgiving directed toward the sacrificial brethren, they coveted such glory and set their hearts to receive such glory themselves. After they sold their possession they kept back part of the price and gave the rest claiming that they had given all. Their lie was known of the apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit, and they were killed for this sin. They had clearly fallen from grace for this transgression. The interesting part of this is the claims made by some that despite the punishment they received, they still died in a saved state. Consider with me the progression of thought in this regard: One is a child of God, then commits a sin worthy of physical death being given a expedited pass into paradise, Abraham’s bosom to await the time when they can be received into glory, Heaven itself. That simply does not fit!! If they sinned and would not repent (despite being given ample opportunity to do so) why would they be rewarded for their transgression?! It is clear by using common sense and by comparing it with other accounts of God exacting judgment resulting in physical death that they died lost (cf Lev. 10:1-2; Gen. 19:24-25).

It would certainly be easy to become a child of God and to just go out into the world and live like the world and feast upon the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, but that is not what God desires of His children. He desires for them to love Him, serve Him, Obey Him and remain faithful throughout life until the end (Rev. 2:10). God be thanked for His infinite mercy and lovingkindness for the gift of Heaven! To God be the glory for ever!



# YOUNG MEN'S LEADERSHIP CAMP

"WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN  
THE FAITH, QUIT YOU LIKE  
MEN, BE STRONG."  
1 CORINTHIANS 16:13

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JULY 14-19, 2013

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# WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

By Ben Giselbach

As I write this article, the internet is abuzz over the U.S. Supreme Court's possible ruling on the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8 ban on gay marriage. It seems like everyone has something to say about the issue – some are right, some are wrong. I don't claim to have all the answers, but I know God does. What does His Word have to say the issue?

## Everyone Is Tempted With Sin

There are countless kinds of temptation, and everyone struggles with temptation in one form or another. Some wrestle with alcoholism. Some struggle with gossip or lying. Some fight an exhausting battle against pornography and lust. Likewise, some people struggle with homosexual feelings and urges, making them no different than the rest of us.

Everyone faces temptation (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:15). Temptation by itself is not a sin, but giving in to temptation *is* (cf. Jas. 1:13-15). Wrestling with temptation is a good thing (Jas. 1:12). **It is when we stop wrestling against temptation (and give in) that we sin.**

When we encounter someone who legitimately struggles with homosexuality, we need to encourage that person as he/she tries to overcome temptation. Christians, as we walk in the light (cf. 1 John 1:5-7), need to be sympathetic to others who are also trying to walk in the light. Yet, if they stop trying to walk in the light, and instead embrace their homosexual urges, we need to avoid them (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13). **There is a world of difference between penitent people and impenitent people.**

## Sin Is Sin

Homosexuality is a sin (Gen. 19:4-11, 23-29; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Jude 7). Yet, it is no greater or lesser a sin than any other sin. **All sin will keep a person out of heaven** (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21, etc.).

The remedy to sin is the blood of Jesus Christ. One must initially "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4) to be cleansed.

To "repent" means to 'change' or 'turn away from sin.' **One cannot continue in sin and expect God's Grace to save him** (Rom. 6:1-2). A practicing homosexual cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven so long as he is practicing and embracing homosexuality.

## No One Is Born A Homosexual

God never created a 'gay' baby. Since homosexuality is a sin (see above), it would be contradictory to God's nature to cause someone to be born with that sexual orientation (cf. Jas. 1:13). The Bible describes homosexuality as being "**contrary to nature**" (Rom. 1:26-27; ESV). Indeed, no one is born a homosexual.

That does not mean that people cannot be conditioned to feel homosexual urges. There are people who legitimately wrestle with such feelings, and I sympathize and feel compassion for those people. Yet, **people experience homosexual feelings because of sin** (cf. Rom. 1:24-27), either because of their own sin or the sin of others. Perhaps they were abused as children. Perhaps they had a dad who did not demonstrate fatherly affection. Perhaps they grew up in a one-parent home, or a homosexual home. Perhaps they were made to think they were homosexual because of peer pressure at school. Or maybe they made a conscious decision to experiment with homosexuality.

## Jesus Taught That Marriage Is Between A Man And A Woman

One sometimes hears the objection, "Jesus never talked about homosexuality." Actually, He did when He defined a God-approved marriage as being between a man and a woman. Consider His words,

*[Jesus] answered, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."* (Matt. 19:4-6, *ESV*)

**If God's Son defines marriage as between a man and a woman, all other combinations or alterations are implicitly prohibited.**

When the apostles and disciples later specifically condemned homosexuality (i.e. Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Jude 7), they were speaking with Christ's authority. Jesus told His disciples that whatever He did not tell them in His earthly lifetime, His Holy Spirit would tell them later (John 16:12-13). Undeniably, "all scripture is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus did condemn homosexuality in His New Testament.



## God's Law Trumps Man's Law

As I am writing this post, people are awaiting what the Supreme Court will say about the 1996 Defense Of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8. What will the justices decide? Will they dismiss it outright? Will they declare this a 'states' rights issue? Will they make sweeping changes to how the laws of the land view marriage? I don't know. But in reality, it doesn't matter. God has already settled the issue. The practice of homosexuality is an abomination. It will always be "vile affection."

Man can legalize *any* sin he wants. Since Satan is deeply involved with the affairs of this world (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4), you can expect sin to become increasingly rampant. Yet just because some forms of murder (abortion), drug use, drinking, and homosexuality are legal does not make them right. Undoubtedly, "*we must obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29).

## To Approve Of Homosexuality Is To Be Guilty Of Homosexuality

It is very upsetting to see people who wear Christ's name come out in support of so-called "marriage equality." What they are saying, in essence, is, "*It is okay to embrace your homosexual desires. You don't have to fight temptation anymore. Don't pay any attention to what the Bible says. It is outdated and irrelevant to today's culture anyway.*"

First, the Bible is not a 'living document' in that it changes with culture. It never becomes 'outdated.' **Jesus Christ and His New Testament are just as relevant today as they were 2,000 years ago.** "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). The Bible is God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). How can our Almighty Creator take a back seat to our petty human culture?

Second, **to approve of homosexuality is to be guilty of the sin itself.** "*Though they knew God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them*" (Rom. 1:32; cf. 2:1-5). How can I say I love God while telling people it is okay to disregard His Word?

## True Hatred Is Refusing To Confront Sin

People wearing Christ's name who disgracefully support and encourage legalized homosexual marriages justify their apostasy under the guise of 'love' or 'tolerance.'

My question is this: Is it really 'love' to encourage someone to live in sin? I believe **tolerance of sin is the**

**true essence of hatred.** How much do you really have to hate someone to say, "I'm okay with the fact that your soul is lost"?

There were some Christians in Corinth who were formerly practicing homosexuals (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Yet when they became Christians, they were told to stop. I have an obligation – if I truly do love my fellow man – to tell him that he cannot be pleasing to God while approving of and practicing homosexuality.

*My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.* (Jas. 5:19-20, *ESV*)

## Christians Need To Approach Homosexuals With The Spirit of Christ

I've met a lot of 'mean' Christians. Some seem bent on antagonizing people who really just need our support and encouragement. Should Christians ever be defined as "hostile" or "mean"?

**Whenever we meet someone who wrestles with homosexuality, we need to respond to him or her as Jesus would.** When the crowd came to Jesus, Matthew reports that He reacted with "compassion for them" (Matt. 9:35-38). Is that how you first respond to people who have a sin problem? **Do you feel compassion?** When the rich young ruler came to Him (and Jesus knew the man had a spiritual heart problem), Jesus "looked at him and *loved* him" (Mark 10:21). **Do you love people who have a heart problem in relation to homosexuality?**

Let's treat homosexuality like Jesus:

- Let's hate sin.
- Let's be compassionate toward people who are living in sin.
- Let's encourage people who are fighting sin.
- Let's love people enough to expose sin.
- Let's rescue people from the bondage of sin and lead them to the loving arms of Christ.

## Further reading:

["Straight Talk About Homosexuality"](#) (by Wayne Jackson)

["Jesus Didn't Condemn Homosexuality"](#) (by Kyle Butt)

["Does The Bible Approve Of Homosexuality?"](#) (by Brad Bromling)

["This Is The Way God Made Me"](#) (by Dave Miller & Brad Harrub)

["So What Happened?"](#) (by Cindy Colley)