

Principles Of The Faith 9

Humankind, Sin, Covenants

The Creation & Purpose of Humankind

- ▶ Mankind was created “in the image of God” to be God’s co-regent on earth, to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion over the earth as God’s direct representative and as the bearer of God’s nature and qualities. (Genesis 1 & 2)
- ▶ An “image” is a smaller representation of the actual with all the details but at a different scale. We are to be finite representations of the Infinite One and our realm of activity is the Earth.
- ▶ We are to resemble God, in that we are to be perfect as He is perfect (Matthew 5:45-48), be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15,16), be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-8), to grow up in all things unto Christ (Eph 4:15), who calls us brothers (Hebrews 2:11, Romans 8:29), to judge the world and the angels (1 Corinthians 6:2,3), to put on immortality and incorruptibility and be spiritual beings (1 Cor. 15:49-55) and be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:14-21) and to “rule and reign” with Christ as His “kings and priests” upon the Earth. (Rev. 5:10, 20:6, 22:5)

Image of God

- ▶ Mankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28) and this includes male and female (Gen 1:27, 5:2)
- ▶ This image was damaged but not eradicated by the Fall (Genesis 9:6, 1 Cor 11:7, James 3:9)
- ▶ Christ is the perfect image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15, Heb 1:3)
- ▶ God’s plan is for us to be in the image of His beloved Son (Romans 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49)
- ▶ This work is performed through the Holy Spirit and the new nature (2 Cor 3:17,18; Col 3:10;)
- ▶ When we are in God’s image we glorify His Name because we truly represent Him to creation!

Body, Soul, Spirit, Mind etc

- ▶ Body – relates to the physical material world but is also indwelt by God as His temple (1 Cor 6:13-19)
- ▶ Soul – relates to the living world and makes us a living being, relational to people, animals etc. Different from the body and is immortal (Matthew 10:28) is our self (Acts 2:41-43)
- ▶ Spirit – is our inner light, and is our source of eternal wisdom and related to God, ideas, truth and to eternal things. Different from the body (Matt 26:41) and soul (Heb 4:12) gives life (James 2:26)
- ▶ Body, soul, spirit – 1 Thess 5:23, 1 Cor. 15:45
- ▶ The Mind - is how we focus the soul (on God or on men, the flesh, spirit, things above, things beneath). Mark 8:33; Rom 8:4-6, 12:1-3, Colossians 3:1-3; and can be opened to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45, 1 Cor 2:14-16) but can be blinded by evil (2 Cor 4:4)
- ▶ Revelation comes from God’s Spirit to our spirit and then is received by the mind and then affects the soul and is expressed by the body (1 Cor 2:9-16)

Human Free Will

- ▶ Free will is given to humankind so that we may reveal who we truly are. A robot has no free will and therefore has no self-revelation.
- ▶ Our wisdom is revealed by our wise choices, our holiness by our holy choices, our love by our loving choices, our righteousness by our righteous choices...
- ▶ Our free will choices should reveal a nature that is like Christ's nature to the glory of God. God is revealed as we think, speak and act in godly ways.
- ▶ When we choose to pray for those who persecute us, or when we choose to love our enemies or choose to be patient with the unkind and the unjust.
- ▶ Our faith directs our choices and our good choices become our good works
- ▶ We are given sufficient free will to choose Christ when moved on by the grace of God and to choose to produce good works after being born-again.
- ▶ The revelation of our nature can also be negative (that we are wicked)
- ▶ Deut 30:19,20; Joshua 24:15; 1 Jn 3:9,10; Col 3:1-4; Rom 8:16-19; Eccl 3:17,18; Eze 21:24; 1Jn2:19; Psalm 1, Prov. 1:29-33, Isa 7:15,16; Isa 56:4,5; Heb 5:14,



Free Will cont'd

- ▶ Thus God will be proved right on the Day of Judgment as our nature will be revealed to men and angels by the choices which we have made.
- ▶ Sinners will be condemned not just for believing the wrong thing but for constantly choosing the wrong thing (Rev 20:12,13; Lk. 16:19-31, Matt. 25:31-46, Lk 10:29-37) or by choosing to believe lies and suppress the truth (Rom 1:18ff, 2 Thess 2:9,10; Heb 12:25; Jn 10:25-28)
- ▶ While success is partly determined by circumstances (where and when you were born, your life events, genetics etc) eternal glory is determined by your choices. Even a martyr in prison can make choices to love, to not retaliate, to share Christ and so on the result in great eternal glory for that person (2 Cor. 4:17,18; 1 Peter 5:10). Even the thief on the cross achieved eternal glory (Lk 23:39-43) through the final faith-filled choice that he made. The stewards in the gospels are rewarded or punished according to their choices (Matt 18:23-25, 25:14-30, see also 1 Cor 3:10-15)
- ▶ Life's constraints may mean that you may not be able to choose to be a "great success" but you can choose to become a saint with eternal glory!



The One Way Mirror

- ▶ A certain wise employer sets up a job interview. The job candidate is ushered alone into a waiting room with a one-way mirror. On the coffee table are a pile of magazines, some of which are trashy and some of which are edifying. On the floor is an obviously lost wallet with a quantity of money inside. There is also a book on how to pass a job interview. Perhaps there are other tests as well.
- ▶ The interviewers watch through the one-way mirror as person A reads the trashy magazines, steals the money out of the wallet, and ignores the job interview book. Then person B enters, ignores the trashy magazine, politely hands in the lost wallet, and spends the time reading the job interview book and the edifying magazines. Then both are called in and told the interview is over and that person B has the job!
- ▶ Heaven observes our actions and choices as if "through a one-way mirror". We are being watched (Daniel 4) and even our words will count (Matthew 12:36,37). Life is our job interview for Heaven (Romans 14:10-12) where we will be rewarded for faithfulness (Matt 24:45-51).



Choices vs. Works

- ▶ We are not saved by specific religious works e.g. a pilgrimage, sacrifice, special clothing, or by any works of the Law (Eph 2:8,9, Gal 2:16, Romans 3:20) because these depend on outward circumstances (how can a lame man go up to Jerusalem or a poor man afford a special Mass)
- ▶ There is no accumulation of "merit" rather the price for our salvation is fully paid by Christ once for all time (Heb 9 & 10)
- ▶ The thief on the cross was saved by grace alone through faith alone and went straight to Paradise even though he had no personal merit.
- ▶ True faith will be expressed in godly choices. (1 Tim 6:10-12) and is not lawless and rebellious (1 Jn 3:4; Matthew 7:23) even demons can claim to have some correct doctrine, however his choices are unrighteous and wicked. (James 2:19)
- ▶ Faith that does not make righteous choices is dead (James 2:14-26) and our faith is to be used to do good works (Eph 2:10) through love (Galatians 5:6, 1 Thess 1:13) and our reward is according to the quality of the godly choices that we make (1 Cor 3:10-15)



Human Destiny

- ▶ We were always meant to be Spirit-indwelt, God-breathed, blessed and glorious images of God, heirs of the kingdom, co-heirs with Christ, eternal and imperishable spiritual beings with immortal bodies, this was God's plan from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:1-14) so that God might receive praise through eternal ages (Eph 2:6,7).
- ▶ Our destiny is NOT in this world (Lk 9:25, Ps. 17;13-15, Hebrews 11, James 4:4; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17) and we walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)
- ▶ Our earthly human nature is meant to put on the divine nature of Christ the second Adam! (Rom 5:14-21, 1 Cor 15:22-55) Human beings are sinners that become saints through the gracious and merciful work of Christ (Eph 2:1-10)



Sin

- ▶ There are only 4 biblical definitions of sin:
- ▶ Sin is lawlessness & unrighteousness – 1 John 3:4, 5:17
- ▶ Sin is selfishness & not doing good– Deut 15:9, James 4:17
- ▶ Sin is acting outside of your conscience / faith – Romans 14:23
- ▶ Foolish thinking & a wrong attitudes are also sin – Prov 24:9, 21:4
- ▶ Sin is falling short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) by acting in ways that mar the image of God and misrepresent God to His Creation. Sin is “falling short” of our created eternal destiny as God's representatives.
- ▶ This is why Moses did not enter the Promised Land after losing his temper as it was such a serious misrepresentation of God. Numbers 20:7-12



Types of Sin

- ▶ Iniquity – a sin that self-destructs, twisted-ness, crookedness, a perversion of nature that must be corrected and carries its own punishment
- ▶ Transgression – crossing a definite line or boundary, breaking a commandment
- ▶ Wickedness – active evil, often with a spiritual component
- ▶ Corruption – deceit, coveting, lying, cheating, perverting justice,
- ▶ Unrighteousness – that which is against righteousness, wrong standards, immorality, a wicked inner force that twists us away from righteousness, close to corruption
- ▶ Ungodliness – having no fear or reverence for God
- ▶ Unbelief – refusing to believe the truth even when the evidence is clearly there
- ▶ Rebellion – deliberately doing the opposite of what God wants



Covenants & Blessings

- ▶ Similar to contracts, wills, testaments or workplace agreements with clauses and stipulations, punishments, rewards etc.
- ▶ Suzerain-Vassal covenant (between a King and his subjects)
- ▶ God always initiates the making of the various covenants
- ▶ God binds Himself to us with certain promises
- ▶ The faithfulness of God stands behind the Covenants
- ▶ Unconditional – based on God's Promises alone (e.g Noahic, Abrahamic and New Covenants)
- ▶ Conditional – based on our active participation (Mosaic Covenant also known as the Old Covenant)
- ▶ Hereditary – Davidic Covenant
- ▶ Universal – New Covenant
- ▶ Blessings – the positive spiritual powers released from the covenant through faith and obedience or unconditionally “be fruitful, multiply, have dominion, exaltation, possess the gates of your enemies, wealth etc.
- ▶ Curses – the negative spiritual powers unleashed when a covenant stipulation is broken – death, frustration, humiliation, defeat, fruitlessness, failure, poverty, etc.



Various Covenants, Blessings, Curses

- ▶ Blessing on Creation: be fruitful & multiply (Gen 1:22)
- ▶ Blessing on Humankind: Fruitful, multiply, have dominion (Gen 1:28)
- ▶ Curse: on labor, child-bearing, humiliation of the serpent (Gen 3) also upon Cain –wandering (Gen 4) and Canaan – slavery (Gen 9).
- ▶ Noahic Blessing / Covenant: Genesis 6:18, 9:1-17; - fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, no more destruction by flood. Includes all living things.
- ▶ Abrahamic Covenant: Genesis 12:1-3, 15:9-21; 17:2-21; 22:14-18, an everlasting covenant – blessing, land, descendants, father of many nations, multiplication, gates of enemies. To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Ex 2:24
- ▶ Mosaic Covenant: Exodus 20-24, Deut 24-28, laws for blessing (Deut 28:1-14) and curses for punishment (Deut. 28:15-68)
- ▶ Davidic: Eternal kingship 2 Samuel 7:12-16
- ▶ New Covenant: eternal life, forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28, Lk 22:20), contains all the blessings of Abraham (Gal 3:6) and all heavenly blessings (Eph 1:3) is spiritual (2 Cor 3:), everlasting (Heb 13:20) and much better (Hebrews chapters 7-10) and releases us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14). Flows from Abrahamic covenant.

Law vs. Gospel

- ▶ The Mosaic (Old) Covenant was a covenant of works and spiritual performance and has been entirely and completely replaced by the New Covenant which is the covenant of grace and faith.
- ▶ Some aspects of the Old Covenant “carry over” just as some stipulations in a workplace agreement might be found in the new agreement, but the old agreement is finished and has no more power for the believer
- ▶ Nine of the ten commandments still apply (except the Sabbath) and we are still called to holiness not lawlessness
- ▶ We are dead to the Law (Rom 7:1-6, 10:4, Gal 2:16-21)
- ▶ We are no longer under the law (Rom 6:14; Gal 3:10; 4:4,5; 5:18)
- ▶ The Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ (Gal 3:21-26)
- ▶ Legalism cuts us off from grace (Gal. 5:1-4, Php 3:9)
- ▶ We serve by faith, by the Spirit and not by the letter (Gal 5:4, Rom 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6)

Law vs. Spirit

Law (Old Covenant)

- ▶ Compulsion & Conformity
- ▶ Law-Keepers, external obedience
- ▶ Bible & tradition focus – know Scripture not Christ. Jn 5:39,40
- ▶ Letter – “by the book”
- ▶ Servants / Slaves with offices
- ▶ Clean / unclean, excludes people and things. External qualifications.
- ▶ Should, must, ought to, have to, rules, regulations, justified by works
- ▶ Literalism & Rigidity, condemnation, death, judgment, harsh, unbending

Spirit (New Covenant)

- ▶ Freedom & Individuality
- ▶ Spirit-Followers, led by the Spirit
- ▶ Christ-worshippers (who also love God’s Word) Jn 4:23,24
- ▶ Spirit – via the conscience Heb 5:14
- ▶ Sons with gifts and callings
- ▶ Inclusive, “one new man”, unity out of diversity. Character qualifications.
- ▶ Promises, faith, general principles, love, conscience, justified by faith
- ▶ Life-giving, considerate, merciful, reasonable, easily entreated, forgives

Entering a Covenant

- ▶ A covenant is entered by choice and is agreed upon
- ▶ A covenant becomes activated after the death of the “testator” (Christ) and His death seals the New Covenant forever.
- ▶ The blessings are inherited by carrying out the stipulations of the covenant in faith and obedience
- ▶ In the New Covenant the blessings of the covenant come to us through faith and are lost by unbelief (Romans 11:20-23; Hebrews 3:7-19, 4:6-11;)
- ▶ In Christ we have all the blessings in the heavenly realms (Eph 1:3)
- ▶ We have the blessings of Abraham Gal. 3:7-9, 14, 29;
- ▶ Our salvation is secured by God’s promises and not by our performance, we stand by grace and faith (Rom 5:1-5, 11;20)

Covenants & Time

- ▶ Some parts of a covenant can be “yet future”
 - ▶ Much of the New Covenant will be unfolded after the Resurrection, in the new heavens and new earth.
 - ▶ We need to understand which parts apply to us now e.g. forgiveness of sins and which later (resurrection body)
 - ▶ We cannot claim a dominion that we have not yet actually received (1 Cor. 4:7,8) this includes the hundredfold blessing (Matt 19:27-30)
 - ▶ However by faith we can enter in to spiritual wisdom and revelation (Acts 2;17,18; 1 Cor 2:9-16) to God’s law written on our hearts (Heb 10:15-17), freedom from curses (Gal 3:10-14) and many other things (Eph 1:3)
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