

TOPIC VIII

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

Introduction

Most of us have heard the phrase, "The finished work of Christ" used to teach that what God did on our behalf, in and through Christ on the cross and through Jesus' subsequent resurrection completed the work of redemption on behalf of - well that's debatable depending on the denomination and the theology thereof - but at least on behalf of those who place their faith in Christ. This means that there are no works we can do that will supplement what Jesus did for us. What he did covered all sin and requirements of the law for all who believe.

Well, that sounds almost accurate except for the common fact that far too many churches and therefore Christians really don't believe it, and, the ones who supposedly benefit from His work is also controversial.

The reason I say this is that over the decades I have constantly heard from different "Christian" organizations that Christians are required to confess their sins to receive forgiveness (I John 1:9); or they must forgive others in order to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15); Or they must go to a priest and confess their sins to be forgiven, or they must tithe to avoid being under God's wrath and a curse as well as receive a blessing (Malachi 3:8-10); or that they must be either: 1. Christened; 2. Baptized; 3. Confirmed; 4. Become a member of a church; 5. Dedicated; 6. Pray; 7. Not fail to attend services, 8. Speak in tongues, or a host of other stuff to be assured of their salvation. There was a church in Pomona, California (Liberty Baptist) whose pastor proclaimed that if you were not a member of his church, you would not be saved. Wow!

Then there are those who put up a list of "don'ts" along with the Ten Commandments that must be followed or they will either; 1. Be out of fellowship with God or, 2. Lose their salvation. And God help you if you sin the same sin over and over because that will do it for you. But, on the other hand, sincere repentance, begging for forgiveness and pardon - and - contributing a nice, hefty share of cash can go a long ways to restoring a poor soul to his salvation and to fellowship with God. Before the reformation, Johann Tetzel (Dominican Friar) would go through the German villages demanding payment (indulgences) from the people promising that their contributions would spring a soul from

Purgatory. It is said that he would cry out, "When a coin in the coffer rings, another soul from purgatory springs."

Finally, there is the "conditional salvation" people who believe that one's salvation is based on a giant series of "ifs." These folks interpret passages like I Corinthians 15:1-2 that salvation is conditional upon more than just faith. Is that what this passage is saying? "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain." Or, Colossians 11:23, "...if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

On the surface without context or thought, one could conclude that salvation is conditioned on one's effort in some way." But this begs the question, "If we are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, how does this interpretation fit in especially in light of Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." The inability of those who cannot grasp or believe in the phenomenal magnitude of what Jesus accomplished on the cross for all mankind for all time saddens me. The result is often reflected by the words of John Bunyan in his autobiography, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners", pages 103, 116-117, 118-119.]¹ Bunyan, author of the great work, "Pilgrims Progress" lived from 1628-1688 near Bedford, England as made his living as a simple "tinker."² His story is one of several years of torment and struggle in his faith as he did not understand either the difference between the provision of the Old Covenant and the New or the finished work of Christ.

The vast chasm between the Old covenant and the New Covenant in His blood is also misunderstood and nearly ignored by way too many. But that alone, completing and fulfilling the eternal sacrifice for sin required under the Old Covenant, ought to by itself be evidence enough that the work of Christ is finished and sin is no longer imputed where there is no law. For we are not under law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). Plus, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as

¹ See scanned pages at the end of the study.

² A tin or black smith who went from village to village repairing broken metal tools or utensils.

it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

That is either true or it is not. Yet there are those who glibly quote passages like this and then heap all sorts of requirements on the believer in order to make sure they gain or sustain their salvation.

These are some of the questions we must address when studying "the finished work of Christ." Either He did it all or there is something we must add other than faith which means he didn't do it all.

So when you boil it all down, what good was Jesus' sacrifice on the cross anyway if it is up to us to maintain salvation by some work or other? Maybe the Jews are right? After all, we can add more now, right? Honestly, most churches see Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as an act of God putting a band aid on a problem - but with no permanent solution. We must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" and so on ad-nauseum.³

And finally, there are those who teach fervently that there is no condition or work at all because you are predestined to either heaven or hell and there is nothing you can do about it.

So, this study will delve into what the truth actually is - or conclude with the majority that when Jesus said, "It is finished," He was sadly mistaken. Those of you in our study group have little problem with this truth, but we want to delineate why it is true.

One group member rightly observed that if we believe we must do some work to assure our salvation or supplement what Christ did on the cross, that becomes denial that what he did was sufficient. It becomes an insult and diminishing of all He suffered and died for. How true! Hebrews says these people have, "trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (10:29)

³ See my commentary on the Book of Philippians, 2:12 available on line at: www.bibleclassroom.org

So, here we go.

"IT IS FINISHED"

These were the last words of Jesus on the cross according to John 19:30, "Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."

A. But what exactly was finished? B. Of what does the "redemption" Christ completed consist? C. For what length of time is it effective? And was it finished?... and... D. For whom?

A. What exactly was finished? Let's see:

John 4:30-34,

"They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples were saying to one another, 'No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'

So, Jesus described His coming as important to God's will and accomplish His work. Well, what was this supposed to be?

John 6:30, 38-40,

30: "So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"

38: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39: "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40: "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Matthew 20:28,

"... just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

[The Greek root word translated "ransom" is the same as translated "redeem." It is λυτρόω (lou-tra-oh) and means to release by paying a ransom, to redeem. Redeem means to buy back.]⁴

Titus 2:11-14,

"11: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12: instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13: looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14: who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."

Galatians 4:4-5,

4: "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5: so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

I Peter 1:18-19:

18: "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19: but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 1:7-12,

7: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8: which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9: He made known to us the mystery of His will,

⁴ Also, the term "for many" is a Hebrew idiom meaning everyone. This can be demonstrated by Romans 5:12-15.

according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10: with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11: also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12: to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory."

John 17:4,

"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."

B. Of what does the "redemption" Christ completed consist?

Colossians 1:13-14,

13: "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to The kingdom of His beloved Son, 14: in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Acts 13:38-39,

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39: and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

Romans 3:21-24,

21: "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22: even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;⁵ 23: for all have sinned and fall short of the

⁵ Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Colossians 3:11, "...a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

glory of God, 24: being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;..."

Ephesians 1:7,

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Hebrews 9:11-12,

11: "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12: and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Hebrews 9:15,

"For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

C. For what length of time is it effective?

Romans 6:10,

"For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God."⁶

I Peter 3:18,

⁶ It is important to note here that the translation "once for all" (from ἐφ' ἅπαξ - "eph-ah-pahx" here and in I Peter 3:18, Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, and 10:10 does not indicate who is included in Jesus' sacrifice but that it cannot be, and is not required to be repeated. It is unique and unparalleled. Hebrews 10:12 expresses it this way, "...but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time..." properly noting that His sacrifice was complete once and for all. Not for all people but for all time.⁶ Other passages indicate it was indeed for all people.

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"

Hebrews 7:27,

"...who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."

Hebrews 9:12,

"...and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

D. And was it finished?

We must also note that what was obtained was not a temporary or partial redemptive act, but a complete one and applicable to all eternity.

Hebrews 9:24-26,

24: "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25: nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. 26: Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Hebrews 10:10-14:

10: "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11: "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13: waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. 14: For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

The above passage also states the finality of Jesus' sacrifice as do the passages that follow. The Levitical priests who offered sacrifices on behalf of the sins of the people were not allowed to sit until their course was done and another took over. So there was no completion of the need to continually offer up sacrifices. Plus, it proved that sin could not be eradicated as people had to keep coming to the tabernacle (or temple) to offer sacrifices for their sins, over and over again.

But when Jesus died as a sacrifice for all mankind for all time, it was finished. All sin was removed for all time from all people. To make the statement that this was and is true, Jesus, having died once, sat down. Many verses make this proclamation.

Hebrews 1:3,

"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..."

Hebrews 12:1b-2,

1b: "...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2: fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Revelation 3:21,

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Matthew 26:64,

"Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

Ephesians 1:20,

"...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places..."

Colossians 3:1,

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

I Peter 3:21b-22,

"...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him."

E. And for whom?

John 3:16-17,

16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17: "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

John 8:26,

"I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

John 11:51-52,

51: "Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52: and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad."

John 17:1-2,

1: "Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2: even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."

John 17:20-21,

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21: that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."

I John 4:14-15,

14: "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 15: Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."

Titus 3:4-7,

4: "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5: He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6: whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7: so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Galatians 6:14,

"But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

And what did He accomplish for "the world"?

II Corinthians 5:18-19,

18: "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19: namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

I John 2:1-2,

1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2: and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

John 1:29,

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Luke 24:45-47,

45: " Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46: and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47: and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

Matthew 26:27-29,

27: "And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28: for this is My blood of the covenant,

which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.⁷ 29: "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Excursus - A Common Misunderstanding - Identifying Forgiveness with Salvation

Many churches, such as the Catholic church and many non-Catholic churches believe and teach the forgiveness of sin is the basis for salvation and that those who are forgiven are thereby saved. I will demonstrate that this is not the case, but that forgiveness is indeed given to all people for all time, and that it is a forensic act of God's love, grace and mercy, in fulfilling the Law on behalf of all peoples, but that salvation is a spiritual matter based in faith, and that the real issue is not, sin but life by faith - trust in Christ - a spiritual matter, or death by the trust in the physical - or one's works - a fleshly matter. For example, in Luke 23:34,

"But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

This was spoken in reference to the Roman soldiers who had crucified Him and indirectly in reference to all who gloried in His crucifixion. The question is, 1: Were they forgiven? Did God answer His Son's request? If you say yes then you agree with a multitude of texts both in the Old and New Testament. If you say no it is because you are confused about this issue. Of course they were forgiven. This is absolutely unquestionable. 2: If they were indeed forgiven, were they then "saved?" Another example,

Matthew 9:1-8,

1: "Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city.
2: And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."
3: And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes."
4: And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? 6: "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--then He *said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." 7: And he got up and went home. 8: But

⁷ In regard to the term "the many," see footnotes 168 and 172.

when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men."

The paralyzed man was forgiven his sins by Jesus. Were they forgiven? Was he thereby saved? If so, where is that fact stated. Is it possible that his forgiveness and healing could be the basis for faith by which he could be saved?

Another example,

Luke 7:36-50,

36: "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37: And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38: and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. 39: Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." 40: And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41: "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42: "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" 43: Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." 44: Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45: "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46: "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47: "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48: Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49: Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50: And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

It was her faith that brought salvation but it was the very person whose kindness, love and forgiveness that prompted faith.

Now, as to life and death being the key matter, let's look at that. There are so many verses about this that I have limited my selection.

John 3:14-16,

14: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15: so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:36,

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 5:24,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

John 6:40,

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 6:63,

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

John 10:10,

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:27-28,

27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

John 11:25,

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,..."

Acts 5:17-20,

17: "But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy. 18: They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. 19: But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, 20: "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

Acts 11:17-18, (Peter to the Apostles in Jerusalem about his visit to Gentiles)

17: "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" 18: When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

Romans 3:23,

"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

Romans 5:12-15,

12: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- 13: for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14: Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15: But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. 5:16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. 17: For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18: So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.⁸

Romans 5:20-21:

21: "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21: so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:21-23,

21: "Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22: But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. 23: For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:1-2,

⁸ Here, "the many" are clearly everyone, all mankind as verse 12 speaks to.

1: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

II Corinthians 3:6,

"...who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Galatians 3:21,

"Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

Galatians 6:8,

"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."⁹

II Timothy 1:8-10,

8: "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9: who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 10: but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel..."

I John 5:11-13,

11: "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12: "He who has the Son has the life; he who does not

⁹ See comment on page 446 following, "A common misunderstanding."

have the Son of God does not have the life. 13: These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

End of Excursus

Now, is what Jesus did and our faith in Him sufficient to complete and finish the work in us? Let's see.

Colossians 2:9-14,

9: 'For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10: and in Him you have been made **complete**, and He is the head over all rule and authority; 11: and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12: having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13: When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14: having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

"Complete" in verse 9 is the Greek πληρόω - "play-rah-oh" meaning, "To make full," "to complete," or "to be accomplished."

Hebrews 10:1,

"For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make **perfect** those who draw near."

The word "perfect" here is "τελειόω" - "tel-ei-ah-oh" translated "perfect." This is the same word translated "perfect" we find in passages like, Philippians 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you..." where it leans more to the idea of "mature."

But it's basic meaning is; "having reached its end," "complete," "finished." It would have this meaning in passages like, "Philippians 1:6, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Or: Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."

For our purposes, the same word is used in this sense in:

Hebrews 10:14-15, 14: "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

Hebrews 11:40: "...because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect."

And,

Hebrews 12:22-24,

22: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23: to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24: and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."

Other passages alluding to this are:

Ephesians 1:13-14,

13: "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14: who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

Ephesians 4:30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

II Corinthians 1:21-22,

21: "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God,
22: who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

The word "sealed" is σφραγίζω - "saph-rah-gid-zo" and means to stamp with a personal engraving tool. It indicates that which is stamped belongs to the one to whom the stamp belongs. No one is allowed to break the seal unless he has proper authorization. In ancient times seals could be impressed in wax, stamped in metal, clay, stone and so forth. We even brand cattle with a "seal."

In Revelation 7:3 for example, the bond-servants of God are sealed - "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." This sealing also includes the idea of being enclosed such as in an envelope, coffin, sarcophagus, vault or so-on. For example, in Revelation 20:2-3, we read, "And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time."

In John 6:27 Jesus says, "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

In Romans 15:26-28 Paul says,

26: "For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27: Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. 28: Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain."

The word is the same and the idea or intent of the word ought to be clear. So, if we are indeed "sealed" by faith in Christ, complete and perfect, what exactly is there left for us to do to assure that this will be done?????

What is left to do is to live here freely ("whom the Son sets free if free indeed") and ("It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. "*(the Law)* (Galatians 5:1), and

fearlessly, with the peace of God in our hearts and minds and do His will by the leading of His Spirit with love, grace and care for the lives and souls of others. So, indeed "It is finished." Period.

JOHN BUNYAN

John Bunyan, 1628-1688 (best known for "Pilgrims Progress") was a simple "tinker" (metalsmith) of no wealth who lived near Bedford England about 50 miles North of London in the middle of the developing Reformation Age. At that time, the Church of England, begun by Henry the VIII in 1534 over a hundred years previously, was as strict as the Catholic Church it had broken from.

He came to faith in Christ at the age of 40 and for the first few years he was tormented by the thought that, due to his sins, he had sold Christ out and was no longer confident of his salvation. The pages below are from his autobiography, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." His torment, as described below, lasted for several years because he did not understand "the finished work of Christ," the provisions of the New Covenant versus the Old, or the true grace of God. The Church of England had no idea either and caused him more distress.

He had no formal education in the scriptures and his struggle was difficult. In due time he came to the truth and began "in home" Bible lessons to help others who were in need of clarification. The Church of England arrested him and asked him to stop teaching the Bible and focus on the churches "Book of Common Prayer" and to have no more than 5 people in attendance. But since the Book of Common Prayer was useless to Bunyan's mission he declined to comply with their requests as was subsequently imprisoned for 12 years.

Here is a brief picture of this time of struggle, a time many today still endure.

for the time it tarried with me, which was about a day) as I never had from that, all my life, either before or after. Heb. vii. 25.

204. But one morning as I was again at prayer, and trembling under the fear of this, *That no word of God could help me*, that piece of a sentence darted in upon me, *My grace is sufficient*. At this, methought I felt some stay, as if there might be hopes. But, oh! how good a thing it is for God to send His word! for, about a fortnight before, I was looking on this very place, and then I thought it could not come near my soul with comfort, therefore I threw down my book in a pet: then I thought it was not large enough for me; no, not large enough; but now it was as if it had arms of grace so wide, that it could not only enclose me, but many more such as I besides.

205. By these words I was sustained, yet not without exceeding conflicts, for the space of seven or eight weeks; for my peace would be in it, and out, sometimes twenty times a day; comfort now, and trouble presently; peace now, and before I could go a furlong, as full of fear and guilt as ever heart could hold. And this was not only now and then, but my whole seven weeks' experience: for this about *the sufficiency of grace*, and *that of Esau's* parting with his birthright, would be like

That sentence
darted in upon
me, 'My grace
is sufficient'

My peace would
be in and out
twenty times a
day

a pair of scales within my mind; sometimes one end would be uppermost, and sometimes again the other; according to which would be my peace or trouble. *Hebrews 12:6*

206. Therefore I did still pray to God, that He would come in with this scripture *Therefore I did still pray to God* more fully on my heart; to wit, that He would help me to apply the whole sentence, for as yet I could not: that He gave, that I gathered; but farther I could not go, for as yet it only helped me to hope there might be mercy for me; *My grace is sufficient*: And though it came no farther, it answered my former question, to wit, That there was hope; yet because *for thee* was left out, I was not contented, but prayed to God for that also. Wherefore, one day, when I was in a meeting of God's people, full of sadness and terror; for my fears again were strong upon me; and, as I was now thinking, my soul *My fears again were strong upon me* was never the better, but my case most sad and fearful, these words did with great power suddenly break in upon me; *My grace is sufficient for thee, My grace is sufficient for thee, My grace is sufficient for thee*, three times together: And oh! methought that every word was a mighty word unto me; as *My*, and *grace*, and *sufficient*, and *for thee*; they were then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others be.

207. At which time my understanding was so

The passage that tormented him the most:

Hebrews 12:15-17, 15: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16: that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17: For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

enlightened, that I was as though I had seen the Lord Jesus look down from heaven, through the tiles upon me, and direct these words unto me. This sent me mourning home; it broke my heart, and filled me full of joy, and laid me low as the dust; only it stayed not long with me, I mean in this glory and refreshing comfort; yet it continued with me for several weeks, and did encourage me to hope: but as soon as that powerful operation of it was taken from my heart, that other, about Esau, returned upon me as before: so my soul did hang as in a pair of scales again, sometimes up, and sometimes down; now in peace, and anon again in terror.

208. Thus I went on for many weeks, sometimes comforted, and sometimes tormented; and especially at sometimes my torment would be very sore, for all those scriptures forenamed in the *Hebrews*, would be set before me, as the only sentences that would keep me out of heaven. Then again I would begin to repent that ever that thought went through me; I would also think thus with myself: *Why, how many scriptures are there against me? There are but three or four; And cannot God miss them, and save me for all them?* Sometimes again I would think, *Oh! if it were not for these three or four words, now how might I be comforted!* And I could hardly forbear at some times, to wish them out of the book.

209. Then methought I should see as if both Peter and Paul, and John, and all the writers, did look with scorn upon me, and hold me in derision; and as if they had said unto me, *All our words are truth, one of as much force as another: it is not we that have cut you off, but you have cast away yourself. There is none of our sentences that you must take hold upon, but these and such as these; It is impossible, Heb. vi.; there remains no more sacrifice for sin, Heb. x. And it had been better for them not to have known the will of God, than after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, 2 Peter ii. 21. For the Scriptures cannot be broken. John x. 35.*

210. These, as the elders of the city of refuge, I saw, were to be judges both of my case and me, while I stood with the avenger of blood at my heels, trembling at their gate for deliverance; also with a thousand fears and mistrusts, I doubted that they would shut me out for ever. Joshua xx. 3, 4.

211. Thus I was confounded, not knowing what to do, or how to be satisfied in this question, *Whether the scriptures could agree in the salvation of my soul?* I quaked at the apostles; I knew their words were true, and that they must stand for ever.