

A quick look...

- The grace believer battles three enemies, each one assailing him with a distinct set of intense desires, or *lusts*
 - 1) the *world system*
 - 2) the *Devil*
 - 3) the *flesh*
- Sanctification began in the spirit with regeneration (**Joh 3:6**) and will also ultimately extend to the body and soul, “*at the appearing of Jesus Christ*”
- Man is tri-partite, the physical body being distinct from the spirit and the spirit distinct from the soul (**1Th 5:23**)
- Initial salvation culminates a sequence beginning with *hope* in a specific promise of God (**Rom 8:24-25; 15:4; Heb 6:11-18**; cp. **10:23; 11:6, 11**) – promise(s) implicit in the Gospel “*by which |we| are saved*” (**1Co 15:1-5**) – which in turn becomes *convincing* faith
- Salvation immediately delivers the grace-believer from *sin's penalty* (**Rom 1:16**), begins the process of deliverance from *sin's power* (**Phi 2:13; Rom 8:14**) and ultimately from *sin's presence* (**1Th 5:9; 1Th 4:13-17; 1Jo 3:1-2**)
- Upon belief in the gospel “*by which you are saved*” (**1Co 15:1-5**), God the Spirit gives the grace-believer position, permanently placing him into an imputed relationship of intimacy with Christ (**1Co 12:12-13**)
 - This imputed reality enables adjusting the thinking of the renewed mind (**Rom 12:2; Tit 3:5**) to the Father's thinking
 - The renewed mind sets the mental affections – *frames reflective thought* – upon “*the things above*” (**Col 3:2**)
 - Reflective thinking of the renewed mind contemplates the position, privileges and possessions of *sonship* (**Eph 1:5**)
 - Contemplating the imputed benefits of sonship enables victory in the grace-believer's life (**Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6**; cf. **Joh 7:37-38; 12:44-50**)

*“The Christian Life describes the grace believer’s existence on earth while manifesting **eternal life** (1Jo 5:11-13) and reflecting **resurrection life** (Col 3:1-3; 2Co 3:1-18) in Christ.” (O. Bidwell)*

Having been made near to the Father (**Eph 2:13**), situated *in Christ* at the Father’s right hand (**Eph 2:6**), the *grace-believer* has resource ability with the *renewed mind* to recognize and respond efficiently to *intense desires* from his three enemies, namely

- 1) the *world system* (**Tit 2:12; 1 Jo 2:17**),
- 2) the *Devil* (**Joh 8:44**) and
- 3) the *flesh* (**Gal. 5:16; 1Pe 2:11**), where the *sin nature* – Paul frequently calls it “*the sin*” (cf **Rom 7:14-23**) – resides.

Each enemy poses a threat to the Christian Life with a distinct set of intense desires, or *lusts* (*epithumia*) designed to subtly beset the *grace-believer* with temptation, followed by opportunity to commit acts of sin (**Jam 1:14-15**). The source of each assault must first be correctly identified, then met with the proper Biblical defense resulting in effective opportunity to escape (**1Co 10:13**). Fundamentally essential to this sequence is an understanding of the nature of man as a *tri-partite* being according to Scripture, comprised of spirit, soul and body (**1Th 5:23; Heb 4:12; Joh 3:6; 1Co 2:11-15; 15:42-45**).

Note: See Lesson 4) *Behind Enemy Lines*, under definition of terms, p.3

Discussion: Many passages of Scripture are erroneously used today to teach Christians about their position and privilege, *in Christ*. **Ephesians** and **Colossians** contain among the most explicit teaching on this subject, and do not require using Scripture out of context to do so.

Set apart, sanctified in spirit, soul and body

1Th 5:23 *And the very God of peace sanctify (**hagiadzō**) you wholly (**holotelēs**); and I pray God your whole (**holoklēros**) spirit and soul and body be preserved |unblamably| (**amemptos**) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Note: In this text *spirit*, *soul*, and *body* are each **articular** – lit., “|the| *spirit* and |the| *soul* and |the| *body*” – though not so translated in English, and are separated **conjunctively**.

Paul articulates his wish (**optative**) that God the Father will, **Himself** (**autos**), ultimately **set apart** (**hagiadzō**) – literally **make holy** – these Thessalonian believers – and by extension, all grace-believers – **thoroughly** (**holotelēs**), lit., “**to the end all**” and that it will be done **unblamably** (**amemptos**), in a manner literally involving **every part** (**holoklēros**), i.e., in *spirit*, *soul*, and *body*. Paul (**Rom 8:18-23; 1Co 15:39-54**) and Peter (**1Pe 1:7-9**) both make clear that this will have been completed “...at the appearing of Jesus Christ,” in the future sequence of events beginning with the rapture of the Church (**1Th 4:13-17**).

Notice what Scripture says about the sanctification sequence suggested here:

- the spirit is immediately regenerated (**Joh 3:6; Tit 3:5; cf. 1Co 6:17**) upon belief in the gospel “*by which you are saved*” (**Rom 1:16-17; 1Co 15:1-4**), followed by
- the redemption of the body (**Rom 8:23**), a future event occurring with the bodily resurrection, and finishing with
- the redemption of the soul (**1Pe 1:7-9**), the climactic future terminus (*to telos, articular*) of the grace believer’s faith,

“... *the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*” (**v. 9**)

occurring,

“...*at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*” (**v. 7**)

Notice in **1Pe 1:7-9** that, while the spirit is saved by the initial regenerating activity of God the Spirit (**Joh 3:6; Tit 3:5**), the soul – where the human emotional complex is seated – is not actually saved UNTIL “*the end of your faith*” (*to telos, articular; lit., the completion*), “*at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*”

Discussion: Complete redemption will ultimately extend to spirit, soul and body but not all at the same time. This is really what’s at issue in the sequence described above. Salvation begins with the regeneration of the spirit at the moment of conversion upon belief in the gospel. This is the event we commonly call “getting saved.” The Lord gives the Holy Spirit as a down payment of something to come – an *earnest* payment (**Eph 1:14**) – guaranteeing that He will finish what He has begun. The sequence is completed at the rapture, whether by resurrection or live translation. Because the spirit has been regenerated but neither yet the soul nor the physical body, these two must be disciplined by the regenerated spirit. This explains the oft times seemingly overwhelming challenge Christians face of walking in the spirit and making spiritual decisions while still burdened by mortal bodies and influenced by our unregenerate emotions. This ever present challenge can *only* be met with the specific grace-resource provided by God for this very purpose. This can *only* happen when Christians understand the principles of grace living in the New Testament epistles, principles which govern the grace life,

“*not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*”

1Co2:13

Note: **Joh 3:6** establishes sharp distinction between the immaterial spirit and the physical body in the metaphor of physical birth. The tri-partite view of man is explicitly taught in **Heb 4:12** and **1Th 5:23**, as well as **1Co 2:11-15** and **15:39-45** where the immaterial human *spirit (pneuma)* – the realm of cognitive self awareness (**1Co 2:11**), rational thought, understanding and reason – is sharply distinguished from the immaterial *soul (psuchē)* – the animating principle of physical life (**Gen 1:24; 2:7; 2Sa 14:7**) and seat of the human emotional complex (**Mat 26:38; Mar 14:34; Luk 14:26; Act 14:2; Rom 2:9; 1Th 2:8; 1Pe 1:22**), interpreting

the bodily senses and appetites to the mind (**Mat 6:25, Luk 12:19-22; Rev 18:12-14**). Paul explicitly distinguishes between the immaterial soul and spirit in **1Co 15:43-45**, comparing the *earthly body* (***sōma psuchikon***),

“sown in corruption (42), ...dishonor (43), ...weakness (43)...”

with the *resurrection body* (***sōma pneumatikon***),

“raised in incorruption (42), ...glory (43), ...power (43).”

In Paul’s words (**1Co 15:44**),

“There is a *natural* (***psuchikon***) body...” (“Adam became a living ***psuchē***,” **1Co 15:45**; cp. **Gen 2:7**, “and man became a living ***nephesh***),

“...and there is a *spiritual* (***pneumatikon***) body.”

In this passage, the natural body is literally, “a *soulish* body,” physical and material, suited and naturally disposed to Adamic *souliness*, its senses and sensibilities; the “*spiritual* body” of which Paul speaks here, received at the resurrection, will indeed also be physical and material, though suited and disposed to the activities and sensibilities of the regenerated spirit. In his excellent grammatical note adjacent **1Co 15:44**, Vincent emphasizes the keen importance of this intricate, sometimes elusive, often even carelessly dismissed theological distinction.

Addit. note: See Vincent on *a natural body* (***sōma psuchikon***) **1Co 15:44**, and *the natural man* (***psuchikos anthropos***) **1Co 2:14**; and *life* (***psuchēn***) **Rom 11:3**. While Vincent’s distinctions are not always properly placed theologically, his observation of the fundamental distinction between soul and spirit is incontrovertible.

Some essential thoughts on salvation...

The sequence necessary for salvation

The mind is critically important to the sequence resulting in biblical faith.

- Exposure to the gospel, “*by which you are saved*” (**1Co 15:1-4**)
- The Spirit *convinc*es (***elengchō***) *the mind* of reality (***peri*** with the genitive, i.e., ***generally about***), respectively, ***about*** sin, ***about*** righteousness, and ***about*** judgment (**Joh 16:8-11**)
 - 1) of reality about sin, specifically “*because they believe not on [Christ]*” (this is *not* the burden of every individual act of sin ever committed, as some teach, but specifically of the sin quality associated with the disobedient, ***stubborn refusal to believe*** (***apeitheō***, **Joh 3:36; 1Pe 2:7**) the content of revealed truth concerning Christ
 - 2) of reality about Christ’s righteousness, specifically because the righteous One has been accepted into the Father’s presence and remains there (**1Jo 2:1-2**)

3) of reality about judgment, specifically because a righteous basis for judgment has been established, beginning with judgment upon Satan (**Joh 16:11**), *who has been judged already!*

If the Spirit does not effectively *convince*, essentially *substantizing* hope in a specific promise of God, in turn resulting in *faith* (**Eph 2:8; Phi 1:29; 1Co 3:5**), *salvation does not occur*.

Note: “... *faith is the substance* (**hupostasis**, *sis ending; lit., the essence standing under*) of things |being| *hoped for* (pres pas ptc gen m pl, **elpidzō**), *the evidence* (**elengchos; lit., conviction**) of things not |being| *seen* (pres pas ptc gen m pl, **blepō**).” **Heb 11:1**.

This verse does much to explain the mechanism of the Spirit’s effectively *convincing* activity promised in **Joh 16:8-11**. On the necessity of faith to hope, as issuing from the specific promise(s) of God, cf. **Rom 8:24-25**, “*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*”

Notice that *faith’s object is never seen* (**2Co 5:7**), for when *faith* has become sight, patient hope will no longer be necessary. Cf. also, **Rom 15:4; Heb 6:11-18**; cf. **10:23**, “*let us hold fast the |confession|* (**homologeō**) of our |hope| (**elpis**)”; **11:6, 11**

Discussion: It is over simplistic, and potentially confusing to say that faith is simply belief, in some abstract or even subjective sense. Rather, the previous section makes clear that faith, as the term is used in Scripture, is always related to the certitude of God’s promises. Hope which issues objectively from a specific promise of God, is individually personalized in an exercise of faith, i.e., *conviction* (**elengkos**) in the rational mind of a specific reality. This is clearly illustrated in **John 16:8-11**, with resulting conviction in direct fulfillment of the Son’s promise that God the Spirit would *convince rational minds of reality concerning sin, righteousness and judgment*. Absent this sovereign, supernatural convincing work of the Spirit, there is no resulting faith, and individual salvation does not occur.

Complete salvation: Deliverance in 3 aspects

- sin’s penalty – with the regeneration of the *spirit*, the *grace believer* has been permanently delivered at a point in past time from the *penalty* of sin (**Rom 1:16; Acts 16:31**, “*What must I be doing to be saved?*”)
- sin’s power – the *grace believer* is being continually delivered in present time from the insidious power of sin by the availability of grace resource (**Phi 2:13**, “*Work out your salvation...*”). This deliverance is offered in the effectiveness of grace living, available right now, daily, in yielded and ongoing co-operation with the Spirit of God (**Rom 8:14**)
- sin’s presence – with the complete redemption of the *body* (**Rom 8:23**) and *soul* (**1Pe 1:9**), the *grace believer* will finally be delivered from the very presence of sin at the rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ, escaping the wrath of God which is “*to try them*

that dwell upon the earth.” (Rev 3:10; cp. 1Th 5:9; 1Th 4:13-17; 1Jo 3:1-2)

A done deal

Upon convincing of the reality of the truth of the gospel, God the Spirit placed the believing one into the body of Christ (a one-time event in a moment of time), literally, into “*the Christ*” (1Co 12:12-13). This is an *imputed* relationship of intimacy with the risen, glorified Christ, *reckoned to be so* (*logidzomai*) because this is precisely the way God sees it, the grace-believer literally *clothed over* with Christ.

Gal 3:26-27 For ye are all the |sons| of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Discussion: Notice an often untranslated, post-resurrection distinction in the articular usage of Christ, i.e., “[the] *Christ*,” designating not the Person of the Son, nor even Israel’s Messiah, but a unique, new relationship involving the risen, glorified Christ and the Church saint, associated *intimately together* by Spirit baptism in the indivisible union of permanent relationship. In **Eph 2:15**, and again in **Eph 4:24** Paul refers to this unique and intimate relationship as “*the New Man*,” in **2Co 5:17** “*the New Creation*.” Careful attention to this distinction will clarify a wonderful content of fascinating new truth concerning the resurrection life of grace believers.

The believing one becomes a *born one* (*teknon*, 1Jo 3:1) by *regeneration* (Joh 3:6; Tit 3:5), and receives the position of sonship by *son-placement* (*huiiothesia*, Eph 1:5). This sonship benefit is an *imputed reality*, acknowledged by the new believer when he literally recognizes God for the first time as “*Abba, Father!*” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; cf. Joh 7:37-38; 12:44-50). This marvelous, combined work was accomplished *by the Spirit*. Being thus a son of God by position, the *renewed mind* – the new capacity for spiritual *understanding* (*dianoia*), rational and spiritual assessments (1Co 2:15), communication with the Father, and instruction by the Spirit – must be disciplinably *restricted* (*phroneō*) to the imputed reality of this new in-Christ relationship (Col 3:1-3).

Note: Because the KJV translators regrettably translated *huiiothesia* as “*adoption of children*” in **Eph 1:5**, in-Christ *son-placement* of the grace believer has been erroneously diluted, made merely equivalent to the contemporary, Western cultural practice of adoption, whereby someone with no real biological relationship to a particular parentage is nonetheless given familial relationship to those parents, with attendant legal implications. Paul’s use of *huiiothesia* however, more narrowly designates a climactic promotion to position and privilege culminating the minor child’s disciplinary regimen under the tutor, or child trainer, in preparation for ceremonial advancement to adulthood.

Addit. note: The *putting on* of Paul’s frequent instruction (**Eph 4:24; 6:11, 14; Col 3:10, 12; 1Th 5:8**) must begin with consciousness of the imputed *in Christ* reality, *reckoned to be so*, and subsequent *restricting of*

the mind to the things above, i.e., the things which issue from the fact that “*Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*” (**Col 3:1-2**). These are things belonging to the Father (**Joh 16:15**), things which have been given to the risen Christ, the very things Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would teach (**Joh 16:13-15**), things the natural man “*receiveth not... for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (**1Co 2:14**). Understanding of *sonship* is absolutely necessary to this blessed sequence of obedient yieldedness to the Spirit of God, beginning with *reckoning the in Christ relationship to be true*. This is manifestly *spiritual activity* (**1Co 2:10-15**); it can and ought to become the disciplined habit by which *spiritual maturity* becomes apparent and distinctly evident.

Notice,

Rom 8:14 *For as many as are |being led| by the Spirit of God, they |are being| the sons of God.*

The grace believer who is co-operating with the Spirit of God is literally conducting himself according to the imputed reality of *his position as a son*.

Rom 8:15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of |sonship|, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

This initial acknowledgment of God as Father, while obviously not issuing from spiritual maturity, is nonetheless patently *spiritual activity*, initiated and produced by the Spirit of God.

Gal 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Discussion: In much the same way that it is not necessary to be physically mature to behave physically, it is not necessary to be spiritually mature to behave spiritually.

This plaintive and child-like “*Abba*” acknowledgement is the first spiritual evidence of the regenerated human spirit, evidence of the *renewed mind* correctly aligned with God the Spirit.

Discussion: Pastors and Bible teachers frequently refer broadly to a “*discipline of mind*” characteristic of spiritual maturity, but fail to explain this or give Scriptural support for how this is accomplished. The answer is found in Paul’s instruction to “*put on the new man*” and “*restrict the reflective thinking to the things above*”, specifically to the rich and comprehensive content of *in Christ* truth.

Why did Paul place such emphasis here?

Because spiritual activity cannot be accomplished by the flesh.

“Someone’s not thinking!”

Gal 3:1-3 *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Cf. Heb 7:19; 1Ti 1:7-10)*

Here’s Paul’s real question:

“Since the Spirit began the work, how do you now reason that you might complete His effective maturing work by the power of the flesh?”

The obvious answer to this rhetorical question is, emphatically,

“By constraints of law? It can’t be done!”

Regeneration of the human spirit was an inaugurating event accomplished by the Spirit of God, and signals real potential for development of a maturity of spiritual experience distinguished by desires and actions in correct alignment with the leading of the Spirit. This sequence was conceived and initiated on the Spirit’s terms; it will only be completed on His terms.