

9 *Is Jesus' Salvation Doctrine in Revelation A Rebuttal to Paul?*

Revelation Is A Post-Pauline Writing of an Apostle

Key features of the Book of Revelation are that:

- It is written long *after* Paul's writings.
- It was written by one of the twelve apostles.
- It was written in a region where Paul's writings were available to Apostle John.
- The churches addressed are in Gentile lands, thus potentially under the influence of Paul.
- Only one church of the seven churches mentioned was one that Paul visited (according to the Bible): the church at Ephesus.
- **Jesus** is the *actual speaker* in much of Revelation.

Thus, Jesus could address the key issue about Paul's ministry: is Paul correct that salvation is by grace through faith alone without works (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:4)?

Jesus in the Book of Revelation is speaking after Paul's ministry. Jesus has every opportunity to confirm or disaffirm Paul. Jesus has every opportunity to skewer Paul on doctrine or confirm Paul. Jesus has the opportunity to identify Paul as a thirteenth apostle or restate the number of apostles as only twelve. What does Jesus do?

First, *grace* is mentioned only twice in Revelation. The word is used as part of greetings and farewells. (Rev. 1:4; 22:21.) *Grace* is never mentioned as part of salvation statements. Nor are *faith* and *believing* ever mentioned as saving doctrines *anywhere* in the Book of Revelation.

"Grace and peace to you." Rev. 1:4

**"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the saints."
Rev. 21:22**

Yet, salvation themes from James, the Parable of the Sower, and the Parable of the Ten Virgins are evoked repeatedly: repentance, the spirit flickering out, faith becoming dead due to incomplete works, casting out those with lukewarm works, and giving the crown of life to those who resist apostasizing. Jesus is backing up James' salvation theology to the hilt!

Also, Jesus never mentions a thirteenth apostle. Instead, Jesus portrays there are only twelve apostles for eternity. The New Jerusalem is built on the twelve foundation stones which the twelve apostles represent. Paul is left out completely.

This emphasis on works and ignoring grace doctrine appears to be no accident from even a superficial examination of Revelation. Despite Paul's supposed popularity and alleged approval by Jesus and the twelve, there is not the slightest approving mention of Paul in Revelation even though it post-dates Paul's ministry and death. Instead, the doctrinal contradiction between Jesus and Paul is repeatedly exposed in the Book of Revelation.

Paulinists Admit Revelation is Anti-Pauline

Paulinists are completely aware of the anti-Pauline nature of the Book of Revelation. Most of the time, they avoid mentioning it. Luther was willing to say he could not see the 'Holy Spirit' in the book. He insisted the Book of

Revelation must be non-canonical. (See page 370.) Calvin did a commentary on every book in the New Testament other than the Book of Revelation. The Calvinist Westminster Confession of 1647 initially excluded the Book of Revelation from inspired canon.¹

Other Paulinists openly recognize the problem and boldly decry the Book of Revelation. These Paulinists do so apparently unaware that Revelation can *truly* be linked to Apostle John based on the witness of his friend Papias. Thinking they can prove it is non-apostolic, they let down their guard on the Book of Revelation. They boldly proclaim the Jesus presented in the book of Revelation is *heretical* because this Jesus *contradicts* Paul on salvation issues.

In an article entitled *Why the Book of Revelation is Heresy*, Dr. Weakly—a Methodist Minister with a Masters in Theology—unwittingly lays out a case against Paul while he thinks he is debunking the Book of Revelation as heresy. We read:

Would Jesus vomit you and me out of the Kingdom of heaven for being only luke warm?

Would Jesus change salvation by faith back to salvation by works?

Pergamum (2: 12) is in Satan's territory. It held fast and did not deny Jesus during persecutions. But [John of] Patmos' Jesus **rebukes them for eating food sacrificed to idols** (2: 14). Here Patmos' **Jesus contrasts with Paul who said this is permitted** (1 Cor. 8).

1. See "Reformation Doubts About the Canonicity of Revelation" on page 9 of my article *The Authenticity of the Book of Revelation* available online at <http://www.jesuswordsonly.com>.

Sardis (3: 1) is judged by Patmos' Jesus as being dead for lacking works. If their works do not improve, Patmos' Jesus will come undetected and save only those in Sardis who have good works. ***Contradicting [Paul's] Gospel, Jesus, Patmos' salvation is by works and not by faith.***

Philadelphia (3: 7) has done everything right according to Patmos' Jesus. They have endured patiently. If they will just keep on enduring, they will receive their reward. ***Reward here is based on enduring rather than believing.*** It is ***these who endure that Patmos' Jesus will save.*** Those who cannot handle persecutions are outside the blessings. [Patmos'] Jesus is entirely different [from Pauline doctrine].****

Laodice (3: 14) is neither hot nor cold so Patmos Jesus will ***vomit the lukewarm Christians out of his mouth*** expel them from the body of Christ (3: 15,16)....Patmos' Jesus qualifies who he will bless by their works, ***their endurance being the measure by which they are judged worthy to be saved and remain saved.***

Works are the basis salvation for Patmos' Jesus. That doctrine is specifically stated in Revelation's twentieth chapter (20: 12,13).

John Patmos' Jesus salvation by works takes away this 'blessed assurance.' The result of Revelation's doctrines is that no one can know their status with God until they are raised from the dead and judged (20: 12,13).

John Patmos' Jesus is that of the Old Testament God, holding grudges, ruling with an 'iron rod,'

judging our works, and viciously punishing. His is not the loving Abba Heavenly Father of Apostle John's Jesus.

'Revelation' continues the ancient argument about 'works' (James' Letter) versus 'faith' alone (Paul) that is explained in Paul's letters, (Romans 10, esp. 10:4).²

These are excellent points. Dr. Weakley agrees Paul permits eating meat sacrificed to idols. However, he also agrees Jesus in Revelation prohibits it. Paul says salvation is by faith (alone), without works, but Dr. Weakley say Jesus in Revelation repeatedly contradicts this.

Thus, we have a flat contradiction of Paul by Jesus *after* Paul's writings were published and well-known. These passages in Revelation contradict Paul's salvation formula that excludes works. The message of Revelation is that instead of us being judged by faith, we are judged and justified by works. As one commentator writes:

Jesus says in the book of Revelation also that we are justified by our works.

It reads: 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, **to give every man according to his WORK shall be.**' Revelation 22: 12.

'And death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them, and they were **judge every man according to their WORKS.**' Revelation 20: 12.

So now we have Jesus and his disciple...John **are different than Paul's teaching.**

2. Clare G. Weakley, Jr., *Why the Book of Revelation is Heresy* reprinted at <http://www.christian-community.org/library/revelheresy.html> (last visited 2005.) Dr. Weakley is a licensed Methodist minister with a Masters in Theology.

To justify and to judge a sinner or a believer,
God shall ***analyze them by their works***
according to the law.³

There is never any assurance given in Revelation that *without works* you are seen as perfect based upon a one-time belief in Jesus. There is never any suggestion in Revelation that works are not your *personal* responsibility and now you can lean back and relax and expect God to perform in you or attribute to you based on faith. Let's review what Jesus tells us about salvation and test whether Paul lines up with Jesus' words.

Faith and Works in Revelation

Jesus in Revelation aims a dagger right at Paul's teaching on faith and works. Jesus is going to strike hard again and again. In Revelation, salvation is under constant threat for members of seven churches. Jesus gives several warnings on how to overcome, and how ***not to be blotted out from the book of life.*** In the salvation message in Revelation dating to 90 A.D., ***grace*** is never mentioned although it was Paul's banner slogan from 45-62 A.D. Faith in the sense of a mental assent is likewise ignored. Jesus does so despite *faith* being the lynch-pin of the salvation doctrine from Paul 25-45 years *earlier*. (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:9; Rom. 4:4.) Rather, in Jesus' Book of Revelation, faithfulness is promised the crown of life: "Be thou ***faithful*** unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)⁴

3. *Judgment According to Our Works* (2003) available at http://www.captelco.qc.ca/churchofjesus/_disc1/00000154.htm (last visited 2005).

Rather than salvation by grace without works (Eph. 2:8-9), Jesus tells us in Revelation those whose works are “not complete” are “dead.” They must repent because otherwise something living in them is about to die. (Rev. 3:1-3.) James 2:14-21 is ringing in our ears.

In a threatening context (not a promise of happy rewards), Jesus likewise says He judges by works. “And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and *I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*” (Rev. 2:23.) Jesus promises again later that on Judgment day “every man” is “judged...according to their works.”

(Rev.20:13.)⁵ Cf. Matt. 12:36-37 (“every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”)

“We are saved by faith, but we will be judged by our works! The final judgment will be based on our works of obedience.”
Pastor Reimar Schultz (on Rev. 20:13)

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4. Paulinists are loathe to admit this is synonymous with eternal life. The only other reference to the “crown of life” in the New Testament is in James. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the *crown of life*, which the Lord promised to them that love him.” (James 1:12.) This verse stands in contrast to Luke 8:13 where the seed “believes for a while” but in “time of temptation” falls away and is lost. This seed does not endure in obedience. Thus, James is holding up the fate of the fourth seed against the second seed. The *crown of life* must be *eternal life*. Gill and Henry claim James means eternal *happiness*, not *life*, while Jamieson admits James means *eternal life* by the term *crown of life*.
 5. In Rev. 20:11-15, the *final* criterion for salvation is works. All are judged by works, without distinction. It is not merely wicked people who are judged by works. Rather, Jesus says the distinction at the judgment between the finally saved and unsaved is based on works.

Then Jesus emphasizes to members of particular churches that holding fast is the way to avoid being *blotted out of the book of life*. Contrary to the Paulinist spin of these passages, Jesus is addressing *individuals* on their personal salvation within a church. Jesus is not measuring the value of the corporate body's activity. For a church can neither be written in nor blotted out *as a body* from the *book of life*.

(3) **Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.** If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief...(5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Rev. 3:3-5, KJV.)

To those who will not hold fast the word and do not repent, Jesus has a warning. To the Christians at Laodicea, Jesus writes:

(15) I know thy **works**, that **thou art neither cold nor hot**: I would thou wert cold or hot.
(16) So then **because thou art lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, **I will spue thee out of my mouth**. (Rev. 3:15-16, KJV.)

Jesus is declaring clearly that those who have not zealously pursued works of some sort will be rejected. The lukewarm in that regard will be spewed out.

Thus, Jesus in Revelation issued a salvation theology identical to that of James in James chapter two. It was the same message Jesus gave in His own earthly ministry. Jesus thereby let it be known in a thinly veiled manner that Paul was a false apostle. Paul's view of salvation is diametrically different, as everyone knows. (Eph. 2:8-9.)

In fact, Jesus' monologue in Revelation is filled with allusions to the Parable of the Sower and the Ten Virgins. In Revelation 3:1-3, Jesus will be talking of the spirit that is flickering out as equal to works that are incomplete and makes these Christians "dead." Jesus will talk of works that are neither hot nor cold. Jesus will spew out of His mouth Christians who are guilty of such incomplete works. Jesus' solution is a call to repent and obey and do the works they did at first. Otherwise, they will be blotted out of the book of life. *What message further from Paul, and more confirming of James 2:14-21 can you find?* He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Yet, Paul hinged everything on his doctrine of salvation on faith alone without works. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Rom. 4:4.) This was his entire gospel. Every word quoted from Revelation's different message is cringed at by Paulinists because they know if they lose this battle then they lose everything. Their domination over Jesus Christ with Paul as their most revered apostle will be exposed. They have banked everything on Paul's doctrine. Now it is time for Jesus to speak!

To do this, we must start with the Parable of the Ten Virgins, for Jesus definitely alludes to it in Revelation as the means to rebuff Paul. Thus, to understand Revelation fully, we need to go back to Jesus' earthly preaching.

Parable of the Ten Virgins & Revelation 3:1-3

In Matthew 25:1 *et seq.*, there were ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom to come. Five still had oil for their lamps when the groom came. The other five were running out, and their lamps were beginning to go out just before the groom came. Thus, the second five were not prepared as the crucial time approached. They had the oil for a time, but then they ran out ("their lamps were going out"). So these five determined just before the groom came that they would try to get more oil. To their shock and dismay, the groom came

when their oil was barren and they were hoping to get more. The door is then shut and they are excluded from the wedding feast.

The moral of the story is it was then too late. Their *good intentions were not enough*. They postponed getting the extra oil too long. The door was shut. When the second five heard the groom arriving, they turned back from their shopping trip. These five tried knocking on the door for entry. However, they found they were excluded from the banquet. They suffer weeping and gnashing of teeth outside. Jesus then says this should teach us “you will not know the day nor hour.” So the lesson is we must always be ready for our Lord’s return. *We cannot rest on our good intentions to someday get the oil we need*. Instead, God will *absolutely* require sufficient oil burning when that time comes.

To whom is this parable directed? A Christian or a non-Christian?

Oil in Scripture typically represents the Holy Spirit.

A *virgin* in Scripture usually symbolizes a blameless person. A saved person. The term *virgin* is never used elsewhere to describe the lost. It also makes no sense to refer to a lost person as a *virgin*.

Jesus closes this parable saying we must be ready and watch for when He returns because you know not the day nor hour of His return. (Matt. 25:13.)

Could Jesus’ parable be a warning to a non-Christian to be watching and ready for when Jesus returns? That makes no sense. First, a non-Christian having *oil* makes no sense. Second, the label *virgin* for a non-Christian makes no sense. Lastly, the warning to be ready makes more sense for a Christian than a non-Christian. Everything points to them being a Christian.

However, there is an exception—the NIV says the five foolish ones did not bring “any” oil. That translation implies they did not even have oil in their lamps. Thus, these

virgins lacked any oil, according to the NIV. Hence, they are non-Christians who do not have the Holy Spirit, if you trust the NIV.

Therefore, the NIV asks us to believe Jesus would incongruously call someone a virgin who *entirely* lacks the Holy Spirit. Something does not make sense in the NIV version.

It turns out the NIV is a mistranslation. The original Greek does not say they did not bring *any* oil, nor they brought *no* oil with them. The original Greek simply says the five foolish virgins did “not bring oil.” By contrast, the wise virgins brought “extra oil in jars.” Yet, the Greek also clearly reflects the unwise virgins had oil for a time burning in their lamps. Even the Calvinist *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* points out the Greek says their “lamps were going out,” implying a flickering out process as the oil burned away. It notes the Greek is the “present tense” of the verb “*are going out*,” and not as the KJV has it: ‘are gone out.’⁶ Something in their lamps is burning, but is going out. They had oil in their lamps, but they did not carry extra oil with them like the wise had done.

Thus, most commentators acknowledge the foolish virgins must have initially had oil in their lamps, but unlike the wise, they did not bring *extra* oil in separate jars. Otherwise, there is no way of explaining how the five foolish virgins had lamps that were burning for a while. They complain later that their “lamps are being quenched,” implying they were burning but going out. The *Amplified Bible* realizes this and translates the passage to say the five foolish ones did not bring “extra oil in jars.”

So there are several clear indicators that the five foolish virgins were Christians.

What is happening with them? While they are pure virgins, they also have very little oil in their lamps and the light is about to flicker out in them. When the oil is

6. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (1989), *supra*, Vol. VIII at 513.

exhausted, they will suffer weeping and gnashing of teeth in darkness outside the kingdom of God. They foolishly did not pack extra oil prior to the Lord's arrival. What does the Parable of the Ten Virgins mean?

*Paulinists Preempt The Parable's
Application by Denying Any Parabolic
Meaning*

Paulinists attempt to deflect this parable before it can influence doctrine. What they do is astonishing. They can see what is coming if the obvious parabolic meaning is used. Keeping one's *oil* burning focuses on some *work*. The line between foolish and wise is drawn between *two kinds of initially justified and innocent persons* (i.e., virgins). If a Christian can be foolish and later become lost, then some kind of personal irresponsibility becomes relevant to salvation. Paul's contrary message would be exposed if *any kind of spiritual interpretation is applied to a Christian* from this parable.

Thus, the Paulinist simply denies the Parable of the Ten Virgins has any parabolic meaning. This approach is clearly set forth in the Calvinist *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (1989):

There is **no point** in seeing hidden meanings in the *oil*...

The oil **cannot easily apply** to...the Holy Spirit. It is merely an element in the narrative showing that the foolish virgins were unprepared for the delay...

The **point is not** these girls' *virginity*, but simply that ten...*maidens* [were] invited to the wedding. (Vol. VIII at 512, 513).

So the Paulinist cannot permit any secondary meaning to the word *oil* or the word *virgin*. They try to recast the *virgins* as simply *maidens*. The reason is that *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* states it is aware that otherwise a condition exists upon the virgin being accepted in the kingdom: "there must be behavior acceptable to the master, the discharge of allotted responsibilities." *Id.*, Vol. VIII at 512.

If we accepted the obvious that the *virgin* represents a Christian, and the *oil* represents the Holy Spirit, we would have a dilemma. The Paulinist would have to accept that Jesus expressly taught that a Christian will not go to Heaven absent "behavior acceptable to the master, the discharge of allotted responsibilities." Jesus would contradict Paul. ***Rather than ever question their paradigm thinking that assumes Paul is an inspired writer, these Paulinists would prefer taking the outrageous step of saying Jesus had no parabolic intent in a parable.*** This, of course, leaves the parable utterly meaningless. This is frankly shocking.

In fact, it is deplorable that a Bible commentary would insist that there is no "need" to see "hidden meaning" to the significant objects of this parable such as the *oil* and the *virgins*. A parable precisely calls an aware Christian to meditate on a symbolic meaning. We could respect the commentary if it suggested other symbolic meanings. However, to suggest that we should not try to imagine there is any symbolic meaning is shocking. *Yet, it helps us see the lengths to which reputable Paulinists must go to resist letting their paradigm viewpoint be challenged by the words of Jesus.* The Paulinist is forever jumping into foxholes to dodge Jesus' challenges to his system of thinking.

The solution in this parable is easy: *oil* is the Holy Spirit and the word *virgins* means cleansed and washed Christians.

Now let's explore the meaning behind the fact five had their *lamps going out*.

*How Revelation 3:1-3 and James 2 Relate
to the Parable of the Ten Virgins*

What does the fact five have their lamps going out mean? Do they face spiritual death despite having been a virgin? Yes, especially when you compare this to Revelation 3:1-3.

Somehow commentators have missed a precise parallel between the Parable of the Ten Virgins and what is contained in Revelation 3:1-3. Jesus tells the church at Sardis:

(1) I know your deeds; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are **dead**. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and **is about to die**,
(2) for **I have not found your deeds complete** in the sight of God. (3) Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come. (ASV)

These three verses exactly parallel the Parable of the Ten Virgins:

- The lamps of five virgins are about to flicker out and die due to lack of oil. The Sardisians likewise have something in them “about to die.”
- The foolish virgins failed to watch and be ready. The lesson Jesus draws is that “Watch, for you will not know the day nor hour” (Matt. 25:13). This is likewise the precise lesson to the Sardisians. “I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come.” (Rev. 3:3.)

It is obvious in both situations that the Spirit is present, but in both cases the Spirit is going out. In the Book of Revelation, this is explained. What is bringing about the Sardisians' spiritual death is their works **were not complete in God's sight**. In fact, Jesus says they have a reputation for being alive, but they are “**dead**.”

The picture of the Sardisians is very interesting:

- They are dead.
- Something still flickering in them is about to be quenched.
- Their works are not complete.

Let's make a reasonable inference on what these points mean. The first point means their faith is dead. The second point means the Holy Spirit is about to be quenched and depart. The third point means they have no completed works or mature fruit to show.

The threat is implicit that damnation will follow unless they "repent" and "obey." We know this explicitly from the parallel Parable of the Ten Virgins. It tells us that when the spirit departs—their lamps were finally quenched—that damnation results. They suffer weeping and gnashing, left outside. Jesus elsewhere explains this is hell itself. *See* Matt. 13:42 ("and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth").

So Revelation 3:1-3 sounds a lot like a *dead faith* without completed *works* does not *save*. Where have we ever read that before?

Jesus' Confirmation of James' Doctrines & Rejection of Paul's

Where else does the Bible say a Christian without deeds has a faith that is dead and such faith cannot save? Yes, the often resisted James 2:14-25 passage. James 2:17 reads: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James asks rhetorically "can such faith save?" which calls for a negative answer. Thus, faith without works, James says, cannot save.⁷

7. Greek scholars admit that James' meaning is that faith without completed works cannot save, *i.e.*, works are not merely a forensic proof of your already saved condition. James means works (besides faith) are indispensable for you to be saved. *See* page 261 *et seq.*

In Revelation 3:1-3, what must those with a faith that has become dead and who lack completed works do to awaken spiritually?

Revelation 3:3 says they must “remember what you have received and heard; *obey* it and *repent*.” A non-Christian does not have anything to remember. They never have been a Christian. Nor does a non-Christian receive a spark which then is later dying out in them. Non-Christians are not judged for incomplete works, but sin. Only a Christian can be in view in Jesus' words in Revelation 3:3.

Thus, because the Parable of the Ten Virgins parallels the warning of Revelation 3:3, we know the foolish virgins are Christians like those warned in Revelation 3:1-3.

Accordingly, Jesus is teaching in the Parable of the Ten Virgins that faith without works is dead. You are spiritually dying and about to have the Spirit quenched. How do we know this? Because Jesus gives a precisely parallel message in Revelation 3:1-3 that duplicates the Ten Virgins Parable in declarative statements. While in the parable we are not sure what it means to have the spirit flickering out, Revelation 3:3 tells us precisely: the *Sardisians are lacking completed works*.

Incidentally, the Sardisians' spiritual condition identically matches the third seed in the Parable of the Sower. This seed has thorns choke them. Jesus says they did not *telesphourin*. (Luke 8:14.) This means the third seed fails to produce to the end, or fails to bring its fruit to completion. (For more discussion, see “What The Parable of the Sower Confirms About Faith in John's Gospel” on page 171.)

Finally, those statements in Revelation 3:1-3 about not completing your works contain one more piece of crucial information. It says that despite their reputation for being alive they are *dead*. They have incomplete works. Something is flickering out in them. These additional facts let us see a precise overlap to James 2:17. The Epistle of James says such

faith without completed works is dead. Therefore, we realize the Parable of the Ten Virgins is the same as Revelation 3:1-3 which is the same as James 2:17.

So what do these three passages mean? They boil down to James' message that *faith alone...cannot save*. If you do not add works of charity which James mentions, your faith is dead. The Spirit is about to leave you. Quicken what little remains. If not, you will suffer spiritual death and be sent to a place of weeping and gnashing, being left outside. Jesus tells us this is the fiery furnace—hell itself. (Matt. 13:42.) Jesus' warning is to repent and obey, and bring the works assigned to you to "completion."

Why? Because Jesus can come as a thief anytime, and you will find yourself, once a pure virgin with the oil of the Holy Spirit burning, so dead and the spirit so lacking (flickering out) that it will be too late when Jesus returns. You will find yourself left outside weeping and gnashing your teeth. This is precisely the meaning of the warning of the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Jesus makes works absolutely *vital* to add to *faith* so we are ready when He returns.

What kind of works? They might primarily or exclusively be works of charity if James' illustration is a definitive application of Revelation 3:1-3. We shall later see that Jesus ***confirms it at least means works of charity*** in his Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. We will discuss that parable in the next section.

So we see that Jesus is approving James' position. Revelation 3:1-3 mentions "incomplete works" and "dead." Jesus is stepping into the debate between James and Paul. Jesus is coming down on the side of James. Jesus did this elsewhere in Revelation 2:14 on the issue of meat sacrificed to idols. Jesus does it again here. This time Jesus is resolving the faith-alone versus faith-plus-works debate.

No one wants to see this. Almost everyone prefers thinking that "incomplete works" (Rev. 3:2) has something to do with *corporate worship* practices. The mention of salvation and being blotted out of the book of life rule out such

corporate interpretations. The parallel between Revelation and James chapter 2 and Jesus' Parable of the Ten Virgins likewise proves Revelation speaks to *individuals* in churches. The Book of Revelation is not simply addressing churches who happen to have individuals.

To understand the works that Jesus is referring to in Revelation 3:1-3 that one must complete, we need to look at one more parable of Jesus. It is a parable often overlooked and ignored but focuses on works of charity. As you read this, ask yourself are such works optional for salvation as Jesus tells the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

*The Parable of the Sheep and The Goats
Proves Faith Alone Does Not Save*

Jesus tells a parable known as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. (Matthew 25:30-46.) Jesus says that one group who calls Him Lord serves Jesus' brothers in need with food and clothing. This group goes to heaven. Another group who calls Him Lord but who fails to do likewise are sent to hell.

Jesus is commanding charity to his brothers on threat of going to hell if you do not do it. Jesus is promising eternal life to those who do it. Faith that is alone does not save.

As we shall see below, Jesus' statement that charity *is crucial for salvation* is exactly repeated by his brother James. We read in James' Epistle chapter two a discussion of *precisely these same works* that a dead faith fails to do—if you see a brother in need, and you do not feed him or clothe him. James asks of such a person, “Can such a faith save him?” (James 2:14 NIV.) The rhetorical form of the question calls for a negative answer. Jesus gives a big negative to the same question in this parable.

Let's break this parable down to better understand what it promises and threatens. Does faith alone save?

- There are two types in view: the sheep v. the goats.

- The sheep are called the “righteous.” (25:37.)
- The sheep receive as an “inheritance...the kingdom.” (25:34.)
- The goats are called “cursed” and are sent “into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels.” (25:41.)

Why the different ends? Is it because one believed and the other did not? Or rather is it because among those who knew the Lord some served Him by clothing, feeding and visiting the “brothers” of the King while others did not?

Or another way of asking this is to inquire why do the sheep inherit the kingdom. Is it because they are believers who are saved despite failing to do works of charity? Was their faith alone enough? *No*.

Jesus says:

(35) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, (36) I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

The sheep confess they do not remember doing it for the Lord himself. The King explains: ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Why are the goats sent to “eternal fire”? Did they lack ever having faith? No, rather Jesus says:

(42) For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, (43) I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.

The goats confess the same error, not ever having seen the Lord in need. And the King replies:

I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me. (Mat. 25:45.)

The answer is that one group serves the brothers of the King and the others do not, by works of charity. ***One has works of charity and one doesn't.*** That is the dividing line in being finally saved, as told in this parable. ***Both the sheep and goats call him Lord, so both had faith.*** One was dead and one was alive.⁸

If, instead, you reject this interpretation, and believe only the sheep had faith, then you have the incongruous lesson that Jesus is warning people already lost (the goats) that they better do works of charity for His brothers or face hell.

8. On the significance that both groups call Jesus *Lord*, Paulinists deny it any significance. In doing so, they merely engage in *ad hoc* denial that the lost were at one time Christians. They cite no adequate proof for this reading. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*—an evangelical text—states: “There is ***no significance*** in the fact that the goats address him as Lord... for at this point there is no exception whatever to confessing Jesus as Lord.” (Vol. 8, at 522.) What does this mean? The argument appears to be that this event occurs on judgment day when *according to their interpretation of Paul* everyone must confess Jesus as Lord. However, Paul *never* said this. It is a pure *myth* he did so, by amalgamating two disparate verses together. The first is Philippians 2:11. Paul says God exalted Jesus so that “every tongue *should* confess Jesus is the Lord.” Nothing is said about this actually occurring universally at the judgment seat. The second is Romans 14:11-12 where Paul says God will examine each person at the judgment seat. There “every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God. So that every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” There confession of *sins*, not of Jesus, is in view. Some amalgamate the two verses to mean “every tongue *shall* confess Jesus is Lord” when “every tongue shall confess” at the judgment seat. Yet, the two verses cannot be combined without violence to the original *context* of each verse. Thus, the *Expositor's* is relying upon a commonly heard amalgamation of two distinct verses. This common axiom says every tongue *must* confess Jesus as Lord at the judgment seat. However, in relying upon this, the *Expositor's* is relying on a *myth*. There is no basis to suppose non-Christians are going to confess Jesus on judgment day. The truth is Jesus in the parable wants us to know not only that the sheep and the goats are both *believers* but also that mere *belief* does not seal your salvation.

The incongruity is further aggravated by the fact Jesus would be letting the saved know they are saved by doing those works *alone*. Jesus clearly says this is the dividing line between the two groups. Jesus would be making salvation depend *only* on works (of charity). Thus, it follows that Jesus wants us to understand the goats were already Christians (*i.e.*, had accepted him as Lord and Savior) but they failed to serve Him by works of charity to his followers. The formula is faith *and* works (of charity). This charitable service then becomes the dividing line in terms of who is and who is not ultimately saved among people who have faith in Jesus.

Comparison of the Parable of the Sheep & Goats to James Chapter 2

The fact that Matthew 25:30-46 appears similar to James chapter two is not in one's imagination. They are virtually *verbatim copies* of each other. Again, I have not seen a single commentator noticing this.

James writes:

(14) What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? ***can that faith save him?*** (15) If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, (16) and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so ***faith, if it have not works [ergon], is dead in itself*** [*i.e.*, if alone]. (James 2:14-17, ASV.)

Now compare this faith that is not completed because it lacks works of charity and thus cannot save in *James* with Jesus' words in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. In that parable, Jesus threatens damnation for lacking charity. The parallels are striking:

Parallelism of James 2:14-17 & Parable of the Sheep & the Goats

TABLE 6.

James	Jesus
“brother or sister without clothes...” (James 2:15.)	“I needed clothes and you did not clothe me.”(Matt. 25:36.)
“brother or sister without... daily food...” (James 2:15.)	“For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat.” (Matt. 25:42.)
“faith without works....” (James 2:14.)	“Lord...when did we see you hungering...or naked....?” (Matt. 25:44.)
“is dead [and] can[not] save.” (James 2:14.)	“Be going...into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25: 41.)

Thus, we see Matthew 25:30-46—the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats—is identical in message and content to James 2:14-17. It resolves any doubt that James’ mention of works was to merely *prove* you have faith. The parable prevents any attempt to say we are seen as righteous by God by faith alone without having to do any of the crucial deeds of Matthew 25:30-46. Good intentions to one day have such works is not enough. (This was also the point of the Parable of the Ten Virgins.)

In response to such clarity, Paulinists attempt to marginalize Jesus and James. Their goal is simply to save Paul. They say James is merely a *forensic* test of works to show an inward completely-sufficient reality. Paulinists claim James really means that works only *prove* we are already saved. However, James makes it just as clear as Jesus’ parable that faith alone without ***these identical deeds of charity*** does not save. Works are part of the salvation formula, not a forensic proof of an earlier salvation that was permanently sufficient without adding charitable works.

Thus, face the fact even as Luther did: James contradicts Paul. (See page 247.) And thus so does Jesus contradict Paul in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

What makes the contradiction by James of Paul intentional and self-evident is James goes on to say faith plus deeds *justifies*. And *yes*, James uses the same Greek word Paul uses for *justifies*. James also uses the very same figure, Abraham, as Paul does, to give this lesson.⁹

Thus, it is false to teach that we “prove” we are saved through faith by works of charity, but we could still be saved by faith and be derelict in works of charity. Rather, we are saved by (among other things) doing works of charity to **complete** our faith. That is how Jesus and James wanted us to see the risk and the requirement. Works of charity are not optional, nor mere proof of faith. Faith alone does not save. James says it is “faith... working with [our] works” (*synergei tois ergois*) that saves us. (See Footnote 22, page 261.) Those works are dependent on our prayer relationship to Jesus (John 15:1-6), but they are not thereby no longer our personal responsibility.

Why Is Charity So Central in God's Word?

Why would charity toward others be so crucial to salvation, as Jesus says? We could do an entire Bible study on this. It appears that charity toward others is the most significant way you mark departure from your old life of sin. Daniel can tell the king “break off (discontinue) your sins...by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. 4:27.)

Charity in the Hebrew Scriptures was frankly one of the most elevated commands to obey. One might even say it is central to Torah. It reflects obedience to God's command to *love thy neighbor* in a concrete way. Thus, the Law of Moses said if a brother of God's people is in your midst who is

9. See page 258 *et seq.*

“needy” then “thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth.” (Deut. 15:7-8.) Thirty-six times the Bible then commands the same charity must be shown to the “stranger” in your midst for “you were once strangers in the Land of Egypt.” (E.g., Deut. 10:19.)

The charity-principle is one of the most characteristic ways of doing justice in God’s eyes. God desires it more than any blood sacrifice. (Prov. 21:3; Mark 12:33.) In Isaiah 58:7 *et seq.* (NLT), God promises “*salvation* shall come like the dawn” if you bring the poor into your home, give him clothes, etc. If you are charitable, God promises if you call on Him, then “the Lord will answer.” (Isaiah 58:9.) Thus, even the issue of whether God will speed an answer to prayer depends on how charitable you are being to the poor.

Furthermore, if you are charitable, God will guide you “continually” and make you like a watered garden. (Isaiah 58:11.) God promises special blessings to those who give charity to the poor.

Thus, there is no end of verses that elevate charity above almost every other command except to Love the Lord thy God with your whole mind, heart and soul.

Jesus Says Charity Is An Essential Break From Your Life of Sin

As already noted, charity in Daniel was also linked to the end of sinning in your life. (Dan. 4:27.) As Jesus tells it, charity has this function. After repentance from sin, then you need to be charitable to enter into eternal life. At least this is what Jesus told the young rich man is how to “enter eternal life.” (Matthew 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-26.) While it may not match Pauline doctrine, Jesus was consistent about this. When Zaccheus repented of his sin and gave his wealth to the poor, Jesus assured him that “salvation has come to this house.” (Luke 19:9.)

One might say charity is a work worthy of repentance. As Jesus explains it, it is not optional. It *completes* your faith. Hence, faith plus works of charity are *essential* in Jesus' doctrine.

Paulinist Interpretation of the Parable of the Sheep & Goats

Most of the time, Paulinist congregations ignore this parable. One Christian expresses my own experience, and perhaps your own:

In my Baptist upbringing, and even after becoming a Christian, Matthew 25[:31 *et seq.*] was NEVER touched on, mentioned, taught, etc. And you'd be surprised how easy it is to gloss over it in your own studies when your own denomination, pastor, teachers, and friends don't give it any notice, either.¹⁰

Whenever the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is actually examined, because it is James 2:14-17 stated as a parable, Paulinists lose all semblance of reasonable interpretation.

Dillow endorses the view that the sheep are Christians who ministered with food and clothing and visited in prison **Jews**, Jesus' "brothers." However, they are not just simply any Jew of every generation, but only Jews living in the great tribulation period. (Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*, *supra*, at 73.) Dillow explains that if we do not choose this interpretation which imposes 'faith plus works saves' as true for a very small future historical group, then the present *standard* 'gospel' is ruined for the rest of us. Dillow says that but for

10. <http://onefortruth.blogspot.com/2005/09/sheep-and-goats-parable-or-prophecy.html> (Ninjanun comment to 9-29-05 blog).

this explanation, Matthew 25:34 means “that inheriting the kingdom is conditioned on obedience and service to the King, a condition far removed from the New Testament [*i.e.*, Pauline] teaching of justification by faith *alone* for entrance into heaven.” (*Id.*)

Thus, this spin of the parable defers Jesus' teaching on salvation by works to only those trapped in the tribulation who were never Christians pre-tribulation. Dillow believes Paul's “faith alone” doctrine remains the valid salvation formula for us pre-tribulation.

However, James said “faith alone” does not save. In fact, the words “faith alone” only appear in the entire Bible in one passage: James 2:17. And he says “faith alone” does not justify you.

Furthermore, consider how absurd it is to interpret a parable as having a distinct salvation message for only the tribulation period. Why would it change just for those in this seven year period?

So the Pauline spin of this passage ends up teaching there is a separate salvation message for a small historical group that does require works of charity plus faith. Therefore, we today are comforted that we do not have to change Paul's gospel message until the tribulation is upon us. In this view, reconciling Paul to Jesus is not necessary because Jesus' teaching applies when Christians ‘are gone anyway.’

In this manner, this parable is neatly swept under the rug to be dusted off when the time is right for non-Christians to find it. (Please note this recognizes that faith-plus-works will one day be a non-heretical doctrine; it just does not fit our time, according to Paulinists.)

This tribulation-only solution can be dismissed with just one Bible verse. Christ's ‘brethren’ does not mean ethnic Jews, let alone only Jews of a seven year future period. Jesus asked once “who are my brothers?” Jesus answered that His brothers and sisters should be those “doing the will of God.” (Matthew 12:48-50.)

If one must escape this parable with such a nonsensical notion that Jesus' brothers are non-Christian Jews of the tribulation period, Paulinism is not being held even loosely based on Jesus' words. The Paulinist view of salvation is being held *in spite* of whatever Jesus teaches.

Another example of this is Calvin's even weaker explanation of this Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Calvin claimed that when Jesus says to one group who performed charity that they will "inherit"¹¹ the kingdom, the word *inherit* means they did not receive it by works, but by a gift.¹² This is a non-sequitur. It does not follow. Jesus says the crucial difference in salvation was that some did works of charity while others did not do so. Thus, an essential factor in salvation, as told by Jesus, is *charitable works*. The concept of *inheritance* cannot erase this fact.

Furthermore, Calvin mistakenly spun this to suggest the word *inherit* implies somehow salvation is contingent on God's donative intent—His intent to make a gift. However, an *inheritance* in the Law does not rely upon donative intent. Rather, one inherits based on family relationship, without any donative intent at all. (Numbers 27:7-11.) The only relevance of intent is that a parent could always disinherit a son for disobedience. God declares He can do so in Numbers 14:12 toward us. God says to the disobedient "I will disinherit them." A son under the Law who had proven disobedient despite chastening was obviously disinherited by denying you ever knew him. This was the only way to spare the son of the Law's only other option of a death penalty. Deut. 21:18-21. The First Century legal fiction was you would say the

11. This is not necessarily a correct translation. The Greek word also means *receive* or *share*.

12. Calvin, *Institutes*, 20, 822 (III, xviii, 2) Calvin wrote: "even in these very passages [Matt 25:34-46 and Col. 3:23-24] where the Holy Spirit promises *everlasting glory as a reward for works*, [yet] by expressly terming it an 'inheritance' he is showing that it comes to us from another source [than works]."

son's disobedience meant he "denied" his parent, allowing the parent to "deny" he ever knew the son.¹³ Thus, a parent's intent only had relevance to prove the grounds to deny inheritance. An inheritance was otherwise required by Law with no intent to make a gift being involved.

Thus, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats was an example of a disinheritance warning. Do charitable works, and you will safely inherit eternal life. Fail to do them, and be forewarned—God will disinherit you. Thus, the dividing line in the Parable is clearly *works*. There is nothing in the word *inheritance* that suggests even remotely that salvation is a no-strings attached *gift*, and that Jesus is somehow suggesting salvation never turns *at all* on works.

How did Calvin reach the wrong conclusion? Calvin was confusing the law of wills and trusts (which does depend upon donative intent) with the law of *inheritance*. Calvin erred when he construed the word *inherit* to necessarily imply God was giving salvation as a gift to the sheep. Then with this error in hand, Calvin then somehow viewed the word *inherit* as overpowering Jesus' meaning that charity was crucial to salvation. For Calvin, making Jesus sound like Paul was the only priority that mattered. Letting Jesus correct Paul's doctrine was an inconceivable option for Calvin.

13. Jesus spoke of those who did many miracles and prophecies in His name but worked *anomia* that He will tell them "I never knew you." (Matt. 7:23.) Paul refers to how this works: "if we endure, we shall also reign with him: ***if we shall deny him, he also will deny us.***" 2Ti 2:12 ASV. Obviously, in both Paul's and Jesus' statements, the people who are denied were *one-time* believers. They are true sons. Otherwise, how could they have done miracles and prophecies in Jesus' name? Paul likewise refers to a collective *we* which includes himself. How do these passages help explain the legal practice of that era to disinherit a son? In the earlier time of the Code of Hammurabi, a son who was disobedient was said to have "denied his father." *The Code of Hammurabi* (2500 BC) (Translated by L. W. King)(With commentary from Charles F. Horne, Ph.D. (1915), reprinted at <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/hammurabi.html>. It does not take much deduction to realize that parents under the Law given Moses who were compelled by Deut. 21:18-21 to put their son to death for wilful disobedience would rather accept the legal fiction of denying they ever knew their son rather than see their son killed. This declaration would spare his *earthly life*, but ***cut off his inheritance***. Thus, both Paul and Jesus are referring to giving warnings of disinheritance of eternal life based on disobedience/*anomia*. (Incidentally, Paul in 2 Tim. 2:13 then undermines his own warning, which Charles Stanley has accepted as more true.)

Furthermore, while the Greek word *kleronomeo* in Matthew 25:34 (“*inherit* the kingdom prepared for you”) can mean one receives property by the *right of inheritance*, it has other meanings. These other meanings are legitimate and arguably preferable translations. The word *kleronomeo* in Matthew 25:34 means also simply *receive*, *share* or *obtain*. (*Strongs* # 2816 “getting by apportionment”; “receive as one’s own or as a possession; to become partaker of, to obtain.”) These are completely satisfactory alternative renderings. Thus, Jesus says you shall *share in*, *receive*, or *obtain eternal life* if you do these charitable works. If you fail to do so, you are sent to hell’s fire. Even if Calvin’s argument about *inheritance* were possible, it is not necessarily an accurate translation. Either way you look at this, Calvin’s point is irrelevant.

In sum, anyone can see *inherit* does not imply a *gift*. In fact, an inheritance is obtained by right of sonship and lost by disobedience. No donative intent is implied. God can make your sonship and right of inheritance depend on your behavior and attitudes. *See*. Ps. 39:9-11 & Matt. 5:5 (“the meek shall *inherit* the earth”); Matt. 19:29 (“every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall....*inherit* eternal life”); Rev. 21:7-8 (“he that overcometh shall *inherit* all things, and I will be His God and he shall be my son, but the fearful and unbelieving...and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire.”) *Cf.* Ps. 149:4 (“he will beautify the meek with salvation”).

Thus, Calvin’s spin was clearly erroneous. Nothing in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats suggests the saved sheep receive salvation based solely on grace without works.

Finally, others like Bob Wilkin who cannot reconcile the parable to Paul insist we are forced to do so regardless of the language.

[I]t follows from the discussion above that the basis of ‘inheriting the kingdom’ ([Matt.] 25:34) is good works. Since Scripture cannot contra-

dict itself, we know from a host of other passages that cannot mean that these people will gain entrance to the kingdom because they were faithful.¹⁴

Thus, the final foxhole is the *ad hoc* denial that Jesus can mean what He says because we know what Paul teaches *must* remain true.

The Meaning of the Parable of the Sheep & The Goats

We see in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus clearly teaches here the message of James chapter 2. You must do works of charity (feed and clothe) to Jesus' brothers—those who do the will of God. However, if you fail to do works of charity for those who needed food and clothing when you had the means—you will be sent to hell. Like James says, if you do not feed and clothe your spiritual brothers when you can, such faith is dead. Such faith cannot save you. ***There are perhaps no two more alike passages in all of Scriptures***, outside of Synoptic parallels.

Because James chapter 2 is a thorn by itself to the “faith alone” view, none of the major commentators has ever drawn the parallel to Matthew 25:30-46. The latter makes it that much harder to explain away James chapter 2.

Daniel Fuller encourages us to assess this Parable of the Sheep and the Goats without any preconceived ideas. He exhorts us to allow Jesus to challenge our core Pauline doctrines:

To the objection that...Matthew 25 and Colossians 3:23-24¹⁵ lead us right back to Rome and ***salvation by works***, my answer is twofold.

14. Bob Wilkin, *Has This Passage Ever Bothered You? Matthew 25:31-46 - Works Salvation?* <http://www.faithalone.org/news/y1988/88march1.html> (last accessed 11/05).

First, we must determine, **regardless of consequences**, what the intended meaning of each of the biblical writers is. We must let each one speak for himself and **avoid construing him by recourse to what another writer said**. Otherwise **there is no escape from subjectivism in biblical interpretation**. (Fuller, *supra*, “Biblical Theology” fn. 22.)

Thus, reading Jesus through the overlay of Paul is wrong. You cannot press Jesus’ words down so they fit Paul. Such conduct is reprehensible. In fact, the duty to construe Jesus free from other writers is an imperative. The very validity of other authors, such as Paul, turns on whether they *transgress* Jesus’ teaching. As 2 John 1:9 teaches us, “Whoever goes beyond and doesn’t remain in Christ’s teaching, doesn’t have God. He who remains in the teachings [of Jesus Christ], the same has both the Father and the Son.” Jesus is the standard whether Paul is valid. If you refuse to read Jesus’ meaning apart from Paul, and you are unwilling to see the differences, you are rejecting your duty to test Paul as 2 John 1:9 requires.

15. What is it about Colossians 3:23-24 which many believe implies salvation by faith plus works? Paul writes: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. **But he that doeth wrong** shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Col 3:23-25) Unless parsed narrowly, this tells someone who is serving Christ that any wrong they do “shall receive for the wrong which he had done” and emphasizes you are not given any different escape than non-Christians. God has “no respect of persons.” Matthew Henry sees this meaning: “There is a righteous God, who, if servants wrong their masters, will reckon with them for it, though they may conceal it from their master’s notice. And **he will be sure to punish the unjust** as well as reward the faithful servant.” The “no respect of persons” is also explained by Matthew Henry who states: “The righteous Judge of the earth will be impartial, and carry it with an **equal hand**...not swayed by any regard to men’s outward circumstances and condition of life. The one and the other will stand upon a [single] level at his tribunal.”

*The Salvation Message of Revelation Is
Straight From the Parable of the Sower*

Next, Jesus in Revelation once more states His core salvation theology. Jesus does this by reproofing or commending each church by the criteria that Jesus used in the Parable of the Sower. This is done ever so subtly. Thus, many commentators miss this.

There are some who left their first love. (Rev. 2:4). They correspond to the second seed that starts with joy. This seed “believes for a while” but in time of temptation falls away. (Luke 8:13.) In Revelation, these do not “produce to completion” because of incomplete works. (Rev. 3:2.)

Then there are believers at another church who are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm. Jesus explains why: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing.” (Rev. 3:17.) These correspond to the third seed which was choked not only by the cares of this world, but also by “riches and pleasures” of this life. Thus, they did not produce to the end. (Luke 8:14.)

Yet, there is one church and one seed that is viewed as on the right path. This is the church of Philadelphia which compares to the fourth seed in the Parable of the Sower. The church at Philadelphia is told “I know thy *works*,” and as a result a door is in front of them that no one can shut. (Rev. 3:8.) This church has very little “power” left, but “**did keep my word**, and did not deny my name.”

(Rev. 3:8.) This corresponds to the fourth seed which “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **hold it fast**, and **bring forth fruit** with patience.” (Luke 8:15.) There is an unmistakable parallelism between “keep my word” (Rev. 3:8) and “hold it fast” (Luke 8:15) as well as “thy works” (Rev. 3:8) and “bring forth fruit....” (Luke 8:15).

**“So because
thou art
lukewarm,
I will spew
thee out of
my mouth.”
Rev. 3:16**

Thus, Jesus has made re-appear in the Book of Revelation all the criteria for assessing the saved seed versus these lost seeds from his Parable of the Sower. Why?

Precisely because there is no more difficult passage for a Paulinist to explain in the Synoptic Gospels on salvation than the Parable of the Sower. Jesus in the Book of Revelation invokes the Sower Parable obviously to rebuff Paul's message that faith alone saves, and works matter not at all. In the Sower Parable, those whose faith died, who fell in times of temptation, or whose works were incomplete were lost. Only the one who produces fruit to the end with endurance was saved in the Parable of the Sower. Ephesians 2:8-9 is thus dead on arrival when you let Jesus teach you in the Parable of the Sower. As a result, when this completely *anti-Pauline* message in the Parable of the Sower appears again in the Book of Revelation, Jesus' purpose is evident.

What About Grace?

This is doubly-evident because Jesus at the same time in Revelation ignores the word *grace*. Because Paul previously made this his most often used term to explain salvation (Rom. 3:24; 4:4, 16, 5:2, 15, 17, 20, 21; 6:1, 14, 15; 11:5-6; 12:3, 6; Gal. 1:16; 2:21; 5:4; Eph. 2:5, 8; Titus 2:11, 3:7), Jesus' *later* prophecy of Revelation has a not-so-subtle message. If Paul's doctrine were true, why does Jesus implicitly teach in Revelation that Paul's version of grace-teaching deserves no attention? Jesus' focus is to remind us of the criteria for salvation from the Parable of the Sower. His most often used exhortation to the churches in Revelation is *repent, do the same works you did at first, obey, etc.* In Revelation, *grace* is only mentioned in simple greetings by Apostle John. (Rev. 1:4; 22:21.) By its use, John merely means *mercy*.

This does not cast in doubt the canonicity of Revelation. For Jesus in His earthly ministry never once taught Paul's doctrine of grace. The word *grace* never once is uttered by Jesus in any of the four gospels! Nor did Jesus use in a theological sense the word *grace* in Revelation even

though Paul enthroned that word with such great importance. Thus, it can be truly said that *grace theology*, as Paul explained it, had no place in Jesus' teachings. In Jesus' teachings on salvation, we find forgiveness and justification were always based upon repentance from sin, turning to God in faith, and staying on the path of obedience, *e.g.*, you had to thereafter forgive others. (Parable of the Publican and Pharisee; Parable of the Unmerciful Servant; Parable of the Prodigal Son. *See also*, Mark 9:42-47.)

Conclusion

Thus, it is evident in Revelation, Jesus wants us to forget about Paul's overly simplistic teaching of God's grace. He wants us to get back to Jesus' own repentance-oriented and faith-plus-works message of grace. Paul starkly stands for the opposite message. We know this stark difference all too well. Paul's doctrine has been drumb-beated into our subconscious from a thousand sermons. We must stop this brain-washing and wake up to reality: Paul abandoned Jesus' teaching of the keys to the kingdom: repentance-from-sin, obedience, and appropriation of His atonement by submitting to Him as Lord. Paul's words insisted that the obvious messages from Jesus' parables and blunt lessons, if taken seriously, were heretical. Rather than insult Jesus with the label *heretic*, Paulinists declare all of Jesus' parables are too hard to interpret. If any parable or teaching is too plain, they either ignore it or twist it unreasonably so it fits their Pauline doctrine. If that will not work, they do like Luther did with Revelation — he declared all the words of Jesus in Revelation are non-canonical. Calvin followed a similar approach — he ignored the Book of Revelation, never once providing a commentary upon it. This approach is no longer tenable.

We must break free from this constant thumping on Paul's doctrine in our churches. It is time to return to what Jesus taught not only in His parables but also in the Book of Revelation.