

# Biblical-Philosophical Psychology 53— Experiential vs. Positional Righteousness/Justification

## Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

### T/G/B

Eschatology  
 Thanatology  
 Ecclesiology  
 Israelology  
 Dispensationalism  
 Doxology  
 Hodology  
 Soteriology  
 Hamartiology  
 Natural Law  
 Anthropology  
 Angelology  
 Pneumatology  
 Christology  
 Paterology  
 Trinitarianism  
 Cosmology  
 Theology Proper  
 Bibliology

### P.R. - 32

Hermeneutics

Linguistics

**Epistemology 6**

Metaphysics -32  
 Trans. 50

Reality –Logic 32,  
 Truth 32

9/11/2013

**1. Introduction:** 1 Thessalonians 5:21  
*But examine (δοκιμάζετε) everything; hold fast to that which is good;*

**2. FBC** addresses the Christian's crucial need for whole truth. Without exception, the church is always under pressure to conform to KD. Today the pressure is mainly in the form of anti-intellectualism and fideism. Moving into Ultimate Reality has vast implications regarding GR, SR, exegesis, Bible doctrine, and the SL. It is very encouraging to see believers care enough for truth to stick with it long enough to get it. Lack of desire for truth is always a reflection of lack of desire for the true God of the Bible. Failure to get it will leave the believer with a host of dysfunctional cognitive belief-producing operations. We must see God and the SL in the context of Whole Truth, Total Truth, Prime Reality.

**3. The spiritual life.** Our greatest need is always sanctification around the Good. This is only possible by God the Holy Spirit. This means avoidance of grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit.

Stage 3

### Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

- Metaphysical understanding of God.
- Virtuous love for God: Intellective, volitional, emotional love of God. Enduring fellowship.
- Life of “above all you could ever ask or imagine”

Holy Spirit



Bible Doctrine

Stage 2

### Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

- Nominal understanding of God.
- Through BD this believer has gained a great deal of perinoetic truth about God & the spiritual life.
- However, he continues to have some pagan views about God's *nature* due to lack of metaphysics.
- He has become more stable, but still very dependent on others for confidence in absolute truths.

Holy Spirit



Bible Doctrine

Stage 1

### Stage 1 – Christian baby = life of ups and downs.

- Utilitarian understanding of God.
- All baby believers have a great deal of pagan views of God due to pagan horizon of meaning. All baby believers are tossed here and there by kosmos diabolicus, Eph. 4:14.
- For baby believers it is primarily about pragmatism. In other words, if it works or feels good, they think it must be true.

# EPISTEMOLOGY

## Epistemology 1-5

- Topic #1: Meaning, history, and purpose of epistemology. Aim of epistemology is to identify principles of evaluation whether there is adequate reason to think that our beliefs are true (cf. George Smith, and New Atheists). Goal: to equip believers in demonstrating valid reasons for Christianity and the various doctrines. This skill also addresses cognitive belief-producing disorders, e.g., truth and logic.
- Topic #2: Types of skeptics. Need to identify the types of skeptics.
- Topic #3: Man's epistemic duties. Problem areas for Christians regarding fideism, denominations, favorite pastors, word studies, and deism.
- Topic #4: Epistemic certainty with PR. Christianity is not anti-knowledge.
- Topic #5: Overview of normal, healthy, belief-producing faculties. Is there a limit to what we can know?

## EPISTEMOLOGY 6

Topic #6: Rene Descartes, skepticism, mathematical certainty vs. philosophical realistic certainty. Making a distinction between mathematical proof and certainty (Descartes) and realistic proof and certainty.

1. Distinction between realistic proof in realistic context vs. mathematical proof in mathematical context. Even science does not pass the bar of mathematical proof: science is inductive.
2. Cartesian world of the mind and overview of how we know things.
3. Consider the things that you know and have good reasons for that knowledge, but cannot prove them with mathematical certainty.

## EPISTEMOLOGY 6

4. Epistemology deals with the validity, warrants, or the “rights” to believe certain things. In other words, what counts as epistemologically valid.
5. You can absolutely be within your epistemic right to believe in things for which you cannot prove with mathematical certainty.
6. By gaining epistemological skills, you will be able to expose the skeptics to see their self-refuting, invalid, bankrupt, and prejudicial epistemological mindsets. You will also examine your own beliefs, especially any skeptical notions or fideistic disorders you may have developed over time.

## EPISTEMOLOGY 6

7. The modern critical spirit is a result of the psychological shift as man became more preoccupied with self, which led to self-destructive subjectivism. The world was ripe for Descartes's skepticism.
  - a. Complete skepticism is irrational. How would the skeptic *know* there is an error?
  - b. Complete skepticism destroys the very knowledge that is sought, philosophical or scientific. By beginning with the denial that we can know anything, how could we ever know anything? If one doubts everything, even the ability to gain truth, by what means could one proceed?
  - c. Complete skepticism is impossible, theoretically or practically. What reason/truth could be offered that there is no truth?

## Biblical-Philosophical Psychology 52: Experiential and positional righteousness

**MIND** ←————→ **WILL**

The goal in life is to edify and enlighten the mind-will so that it sees true Good, and therefore seeks and enjoys God/Good. It is through sanctification that the first order is brought to the second order.

Before moving to the various affections and passions (“emotions”), we are taking a look at ultimate sanctification and other positional truths.

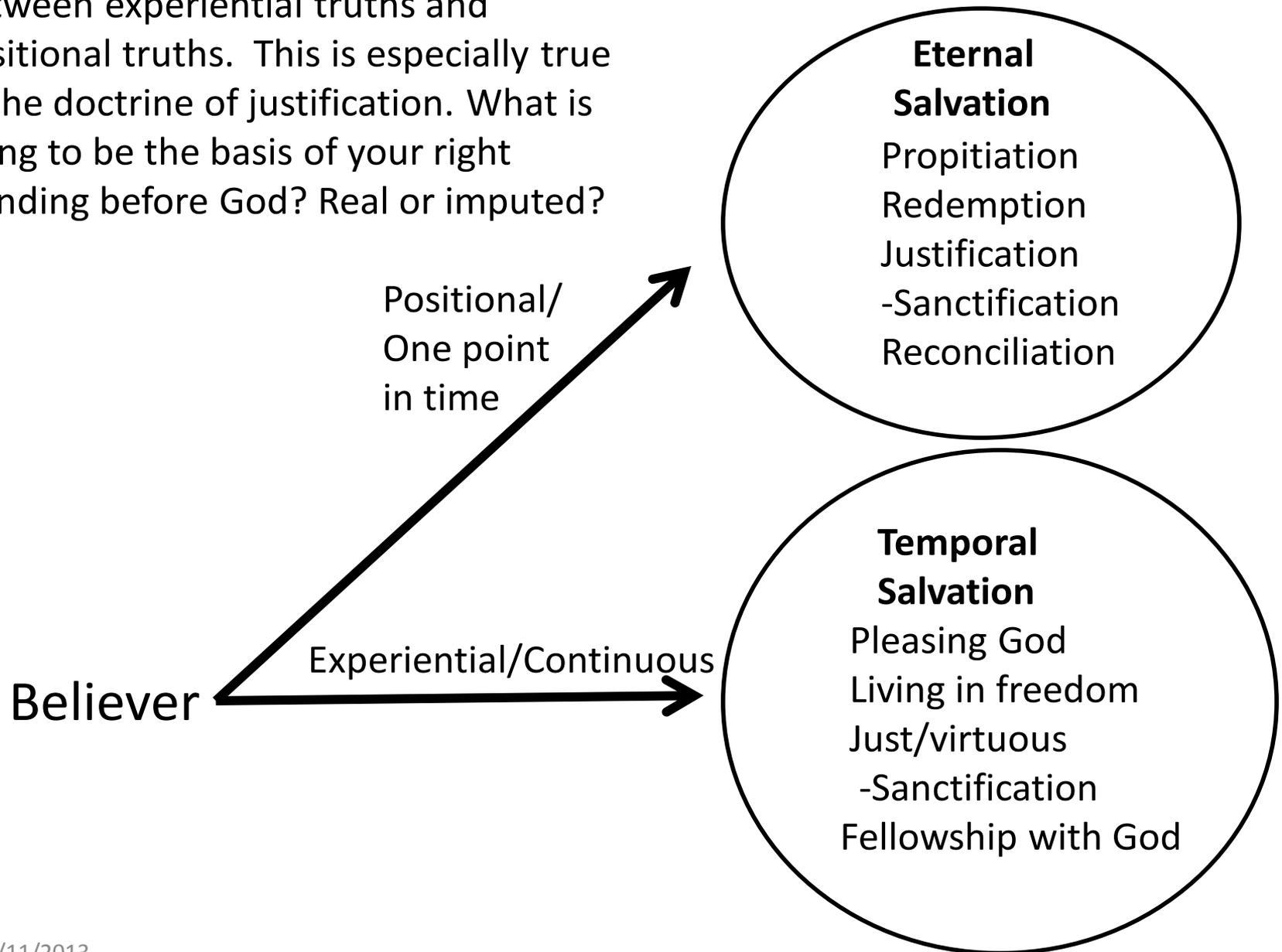
We will get back to the mind and note philosophy of mind.



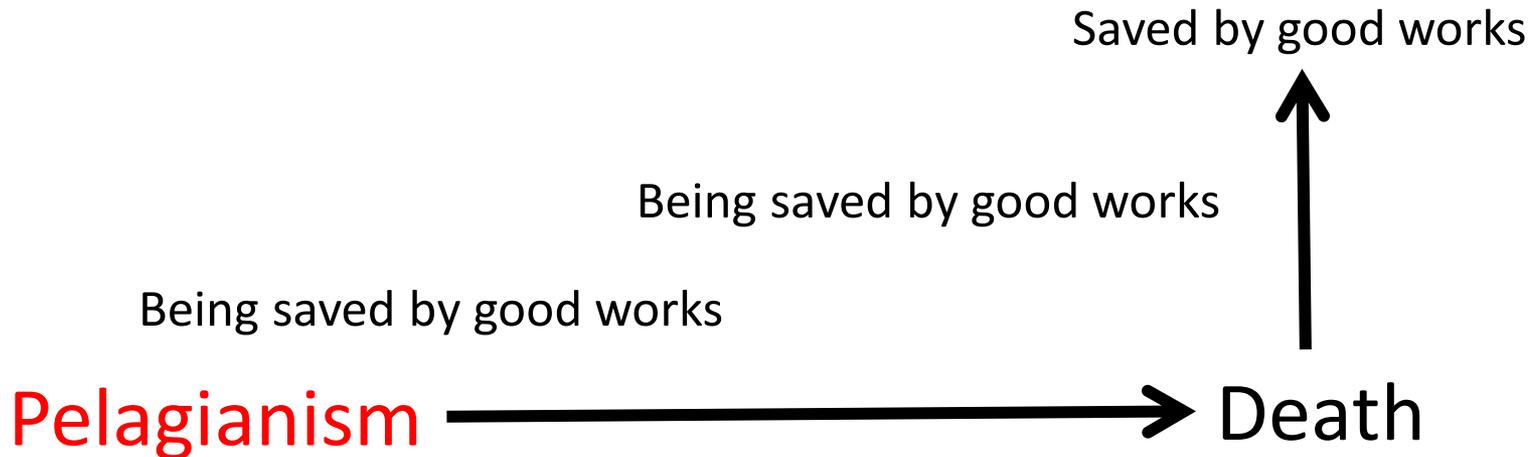
2nd Order  
1st Order  
Mental states  
Experiences  
Affections  
Passions

Before one can have a robust understanding of virtue or love, it is crucial to understand the nature of man’s affectionate and passionate makeup.

The critical need to make a distinction between experiential truths and positional truths. This is especially true in the doctrine of justification. What is going to be the basis of your right standing before God? Real or imputed?

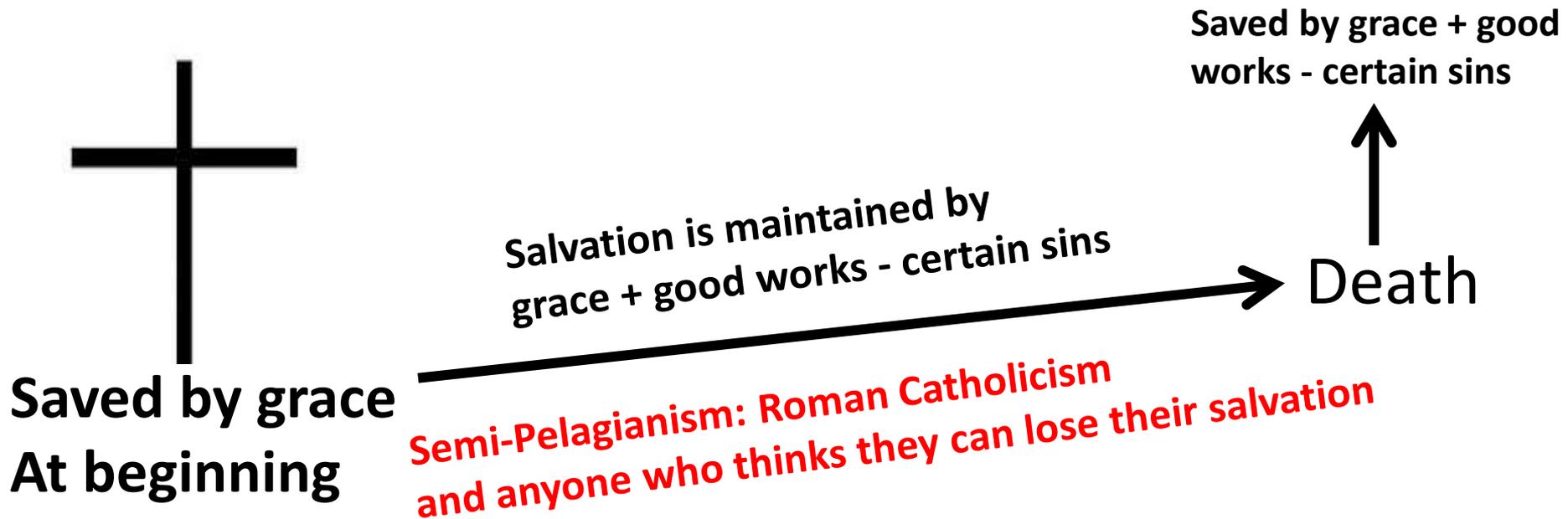


**Pelagianism: the belief that people can save themselves by their own good works.** No one in Christianity, or even in ancient Judaism for that matter, was Pelagian—in contrast to claims of the New Perspectives on Paul (NPP) on the Reformers. This is not the problem Paul faced in Galatians 1. No self-respecting Reformer or Roman Catholic ever thought Pelagianism was true.



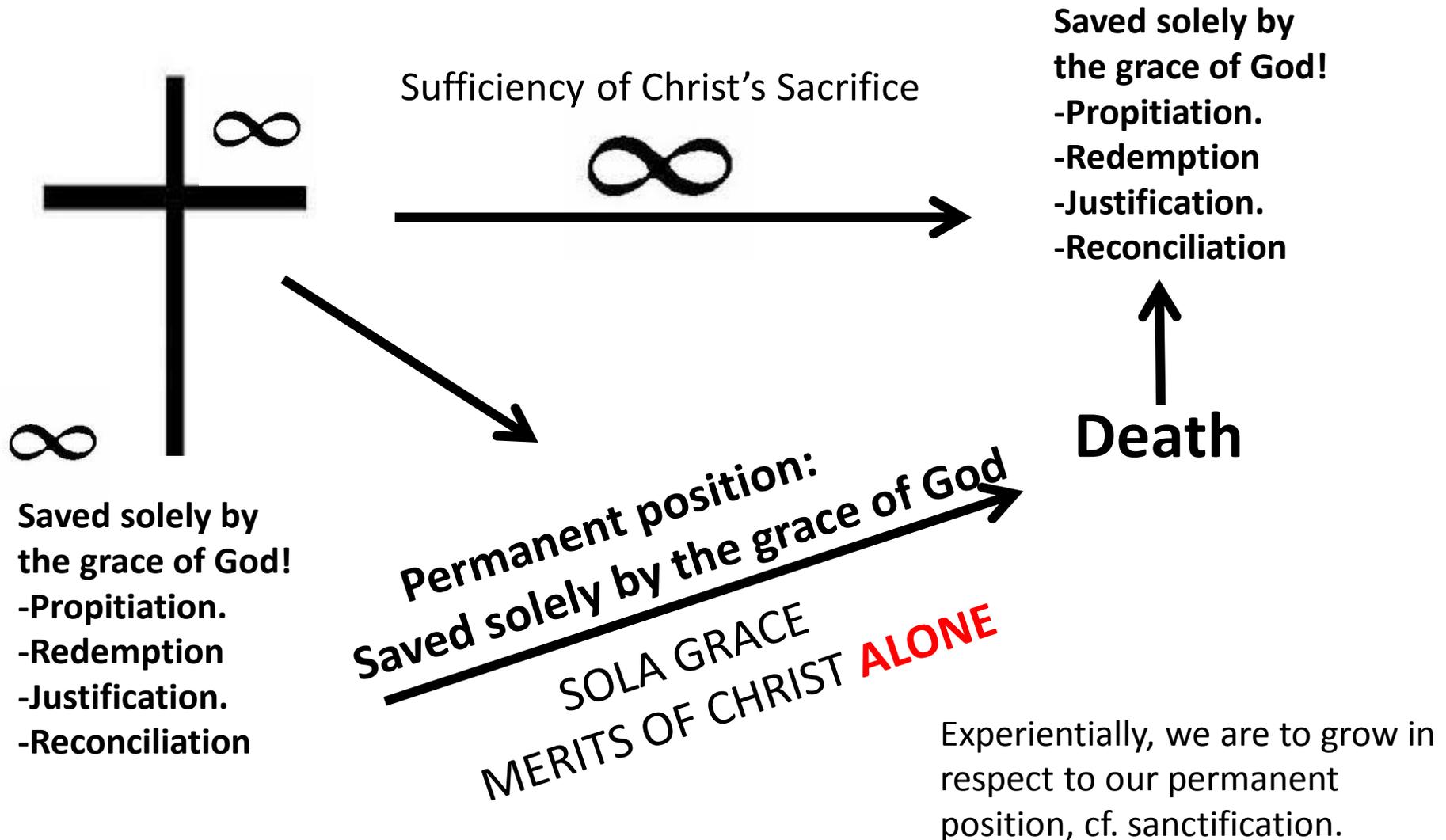
**SALVATION BY GOOD WORKS ALONE  
NO REAL NEED FOR GRACE  
NO REAL NEED THE WORK OF THE CROSS  
UNITARIANS, VARIOUS PHILANTHROPISTS**

**Semi-Pelagianism:** the belief that a person is saved by grace *initially*, but they must maintain that grace to the very end to be saved. This was the view of ancient Judaism, Romanism, and among many modern Protestants who do not understand and believe in positional truth or eternal security. This is a result of a deficient view of forensic justification, see Galatians 3 and Roman 4.



Justification by grace alone, but only at the beginning

**The Total Grace View:** total sufficiency of Christ's great work on the cross. This is the biblical and Reformed view of salvation, see Philip. 3:9; Rom. 3:19-4:8; 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gal. 3:10-14; Eph. 2:8-10.



- Discussion of other passages related to permanent positional truths, temporal experiential truths, and the heresies of semi-Pelagianism, Heb. 10:10-14; John 10:27-30; 14:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Titus 3:1-14.
- Positional sanctification translates into eternal security.

Eternal security means that those who have been genuinely saved by God's grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone shall never be in danger of God's condemnation or loss of their salvation, but God's grace and power keep them forever saved, and secure.

- Passages on the 3 aspects of sanctification.
  - ✓ Instantaneous and positional, 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11, Heb. 10:10, 14.
  - ✓ Progressive, 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:1, 10; 2 Cor. 7:1
  - ✓ Ultimate, 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23; 1 John 3:2.

- Positional sanctification and justification,
  - ✓ God declares us to be absolutely set apart and righteous, saved from the guilt of sin, and set free from any condemnation, Rom 8:1
  - ✓ We have a permanent standing before God of being well-pleasing in His sight because of the great work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, 2 Cor. 5:21.
  - ✓ We are accepted by God despite of all of our offenses, lack of worthiness, and sinfulness
  - ✓ We are loved by God and stand in a perfect position before Him in grace.
  - ✓ We stand in God's good favor because of the great work of our Lord and Mediator Jesus Christ, who took all of the curses that we deserve on Himself, Gal 3:13.
  - ✓ In imputation, all of our sins were placed on Him and all of His righteousness and obedience was placed to our account.

- More theological distinctions.
  - ✓ The logical order in salvation is propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation.
  - ✓ Regeneration has to do with our natures.
  - ✓ Justification has to do with our standing.
  - ✓ Positional sanctification has to do with our standing
  - ✓ Experiential sanctification has to do with virtues and fruitfulness.
  - ✓ Justification is what God does for us.
  - ✓ Experiential sanctification is what God does in us
  - ✓ Justification puts us in right relationship with God.
  - ✓ Experiential sanctification brings about the fruits of our permanent positional sanctification.

➤ Distinctions between our perfect standing and practical sanctification

**PERMANENT PERFECT STANDING**

- God declares righteous, Rom 4:1-3
- God imputes righteousness, Rom 4:4-8
- Occurs outside believing sinner, 1 Cor 6:11
- One time event, Gal. 2:16
- Salvation from penalty of sin, Rom. 5:9
- Changes believer's eternal destiny, Tit 3:7
- Results in having peace *with* God, Rom 5:1
- Is absolute, 1 Cor. 1:2, 30
- Solely by grace through faith, Rom 3:24

**PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION**

- God makes righteous, John 17:17
- God imparts righteousness, Heb. 13:21
- Occurs inside believer, Eph. 3:16
- Ongoing process, 2 Cor. 3:18
- Salvation from power of sin, Rm 6:11-13
- Changes believers present life, Gal 5:22
- Results in have peace *of* God, Phil 4:9.
- Can increase as believers grow, 1 Thess.
- Solely by grace with resulting works, Rom 6:14

- More on the fourfold *work of God*. Moved by His love, God in Christ substituted Himself for the sinners of the world. This is the heart of salvation and the great work on the cross. God took the initiative: He propitiated His own wrath, he redeemed us from our miserable bondage, He declared us righteous in His own sight, and reconciled us to Himself.
- ✓ Propitiation takes care of the problem of the wrath of God, Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Jn .2:1-2; 4:10.
  - ✓ Redemption takes care of the problem of being in the captivity of sin, Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9; 1 Cor. 6:18-20.
  - ✓ Justification takes care of the problem of guilt, Rom. 3:24-25; 4:5; 8:33.
  - ✓ Reconciliation takes care of our problem of alienation from God, Rom. 5:1-2; 9-11; Eph. 2:11-22; 2 Cor. 5:18-21.

## **Reasons people lack absolute assurance of eternal salvation.**

1. Because they are truly not saved, John 5:39-40, 45; Rom. 9:30-10:4. As unsaved, they are always seeking to establish their own righteousness.
2. Because they go by their feelings instead of faith in the promises of God, 1 John 5:11-13.
3. Because they seek assurance by their own walk and works instead of by Christ's completed work.

## **Reasons people lack absolute assurance of eternal salvation.**

4. Because of the influences of demonic activity, Eph 4:14; 6:12.
5. Because of prolonged carnality and lack of spiritual growth, 2 Pet. 1:8-10.
6. Because they think they have to know the exact date and time of their salvation.

## **Reasons people lack absolute assurance of eternal salvation.**

7. Because they have fallen prey to false teaching.
8. Because they reject the biblical doctrine of eternal security.
9. Because of failure to accept the word of God over personal feelings, experience and religious tradition.

## **Reasons people lack absolute assurance of eternal salvation.**

10. Because of failure to be correctly taught the word of God.
11. Because of failure to truly understand the completeness of Christ's work on the cross.
12. Because of failure to discern the nature of salvation by grace alone.
13. Because of failure to distinguish between justification before God and practical justification in time (James).

## **Reasons people lack absolute assurance of eternal salvation.**

14. Because of a failure to distinguish being a member in the family of God once and for all and a believer's daily fellowship with God.
15. Because of failure to distinguish between the present gift of eternal life which can never be lost and future rewards which can be forfeited.