

My Testimony

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was 17 years old. I stood at the water's edge in Huntington Beach, California, as a Christian church pastor (whom I had just met) led me in a prayer. I vividly remember a warm ocean wave rolled on the beach up to our knees as I prayed for forgiveness, opened my heart to Jesus and asked Him to take control of my life. I also remember experiencing a feeling of peace and joy on the inside—unlike anything I had felt before—which lasted a few days. However, later that week I rejected an offer by a local church leader to come to a Bible study, and I was soon back to my old self.

A few years later, when I was 21 years old and serving in the United States Air Force, I was facing serious consequences for my behavior—including a court-martial, going to prison and receiving a dishonorable discharge. I had made absolute mess of my life and my future was bleak. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit was actively working to cause me to wake up, realize my situation, understand the consequences, let go of the control of my life, and turn my heart towards God. This is when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord.

Thereafter, things began to change. I was not court-martialed, was given a reduced punishment and did not go to prison. I soon joined the Christian church on the Air Force base and began to support the youth group. A couple of years later I completed my 4-year commitment and was honorably discharged. Five years later I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and was hired by a large multibillion-dollar international company where I enjoyed a 31-year career.

I turned 66 in May, 2020 and have been married only once to my best friend, wife and mother of our two sons for more than 40 years. Some may not believe this...but it is true...my wife and I have never had an argument. We both seek God, we read the Bible and pray together, we constantly poke fun at each other, we laugh and cry together, and we enjoy being with each other.

Praise God in that His word is true and everlasting...for I have learned throughout the years...He keeps His side of the bargain. Hebrews 13:5 says: **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."** For His grace...and His promises...and His love transcends all of my sin.

When evaluating the multitude of challenges and tribulations I have experienced in my life...I can see how these events changed me and cleansed me from within...a process that continues today as I desire to become less of me and more like Him.

UniqueBibleStudies.Com

More than 20 years ago I developed a compelling desire to research and write topical Bible studies. This collection is now posted on the website, and is continuing to grow as I obediently write as I feel led. Each writing is prayed over, humbly placed at the foot of Jesus (because He alone is worthy), and freely made available to all.

There have been many times when I write...and I will stop and read what is written...realize the power that's in the words and how they will touch lives...and begin to cry as I worship Him...because I know the only One who can touch a person's heart and change them from within is the Holy Spirit.

As such, I pray each person spiritually grows from each of the lessons, and shares them with others.

My Beliefs

Note: All scripture is New King James Version. Words spoken by Jesus are in red.

I believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe all persons have a sinful nature.

“As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

I believe the Son of God was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.” Matthew 1:18-25

I believe Jesus Christ lived a sinless life.

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

Because of each person’s sin, I believe Jesus Christ died a substitutionary death (to pay the price for our sin).

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:4-6

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18

I believe Jesus Christ was raised from the dead the third day, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” 1 Corinthians 14:3-4

“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12

I believe God’s love for us is expressed by His grace (giving us what we do not deserve) and mercy (not giving us what we deserve) through His Son, Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” Romans 5:8-11

I believe one must be born again to enter into heaven.

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’” John 3:1-6

I believe the 10 Commandments—which were initially written on stone—are now written into the hearts of those who are born again.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Hebrews 10:16-17

I believe Jesus Christ is the one and only means for eternal life.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

I believe there is nothing we can do to earn salvation other than exercising our faith and believing in what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

I believe there are persons who externally profess to be a Christian—but do not know Him.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” Matthew 7:21-23

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

I believe the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” John 16:7-11

I believe born again Christians are directly influenced (and indwelt by) the Holy Spirit.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” Romans 8:9

I believe born again Christians experience a progressional day-by-day (Holy Spirit directed) spiritual transformation: (1) how they view the world, and (2) changes in behavior that reflect Jesus.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” Titus 3:5-6

I believe Satan’s desire is to deceive, darken and destroy all whom he can by leveraging man’s sinful nature.

Jesus said of Satan “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

I believe the influential power and darkness of Satan is disarmed against those who are born again.

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Colossians 2:13-15

I believe those who are born again will be raised to eternal life, and unbelievers to eternal death.

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” John 5:25-29

I believe all persons who reject Jesus Christ will be judged during the Great White Throne Judgment. These are those whose names will not be found in the Book of Life and will experience eternity in the lake of fire.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15

I believe Jesus will not blot out the names of those who are born again, and He will confess their names before God and the angels, and they will live with Him for eternity.

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5

I believe all born again Christians will also be judged by Jesus Christ (Judgment Seat of Christ). This judgment is not for entrance into Heaven because our “ticket” for entrance into Heaven was paid for by Jesus. However, we will be judged for our works. That which is done for self will not endure. That which was done for Jesus will be rewarded.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

I believe we are in the last days. But more important, Jesus Christ will soon return as promised.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.” Revelation 1:7

Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Matthew 24:36-44

May God richly bless you with peace, wisdom and His continual presence.

All for the glory of God
Harold D. Thomas