

## II. The Motivation

### A. Fear

1. A legitimate motivator
  - a. Heb 4:1 ***“Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.”***
  - b. 1 Tim 5:20 ***“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful {of sinning.}”***
  - c. Acts 19:17 ***“And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.”***
2. While fear of hell is a legitimate motivator, preaching and presentations designed to scare hell out of you do not usually have a lasting result. Our fear wears off.

**ILLUS.** Our fear when confronted face to face with the bully may last until we are at a safe enough distance that we can confidently thumb our noses at him and sneer, “Na-na-na-boo-boo!”

**ILLUS.** The commitment made while lying flat on your back in a hospital bed is easily forgotten and forsaken when health returns.

### B. Love

1. The motivator that will endure the vicissitudes of life is love.
2. Parents don’t want their children to obey them because they are scared to death of their parents, but rather out of love for their parents and the desire to make their parents proud of them.

**ILLUS.** Two boys were contemplating mischief when they decided against it. The reason one boy didn’t go through with it was out of fear of what his dad would do to him if he got caught. The other boy decided against it because of what it would do to his dad if he found out.

## CONCLUSION

Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians begins and ends with an interesting phrase — “obedience of faith” (1:5; 16:26). This is what grants you the privilege of entering heaven’s gates and escaping hell’s flames; submission to that which the Lord has said, confident that His promises are sure.

We do not ask you to perform any works of the flesh, such as praying a “sinners prayer” or to perform works of penance. We simply call upon you to demonstrate your faith in the working of God in Christ at Calvary by repenting of your rebellion against Him and by being baptized into Christ, Who alone can declare you “Not guilty,” forgive your sins, and award His Holy Spirit and life eternal.

## ENTERING HEAVEN’S GATES AND ESCAPING HELL’S FLAMES

### Introduction

Knowing the truth from Scripture is no more important regarding any other topic than that of entering heaven’s gates and escaping hell’s flames. Unfortunately, there have been many popular messengers who have espoused ways of entering heaven’s gates and escaping hell’s flames which are neither authorized nor taught in the Bible. But the popularity of the messenger is not a reliable measure by which to determine truth.

There have been many sensational presentations that also convey an anti-Biblical message as to how one may enter heaven’s gates and escape hell’s flames. While these attract a lot of attention and draw large crowds, sensationalism has never been the means of determining truth. While many positive things may come from these sensational presentations and from popular speakers, it is the message that we must examine in light of the Bible.

One more principle must be nailed down concerning the determination of truth. We are impressed by large numbers and powerful movements among men; so much so, unfortunately, that we tend to use this as a gauge as to how much the Lord is blessing such movements and presentations. But when you think objectively about this, each of us can readily acknowledge that some of the largest movements among men could not possibly have been blessed by God. We would never conclude, for instance, that God blessed Nazi Germany and all the atrocities associated with it. The principle is true that the number of people who subscribe to a message has never been an accurate means of measuring God’s will or its truth and validity.

As always, our concern ought to be with what the Bible says. By what means does the Bible say one may enter heaven’s gates and escape hell’s flames?

### I The Means “By grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8)

#### A. By grace

1. A gift (Rom. 3:21-24) ***“But now apart from the Law {the} righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even {the} righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;***

- a. Undeserved (Rom. 5:8) ***“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

b. Vicarious (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21) *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, {the} just for {the} unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”*

*“He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

c. Non-negotiable — Salvation is God’s to give, ours to accept, not to negotiate..

2. Promise (Acts 2:38,39) *“And Peter {said} to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.’”*

Being a gift we do not deserve, and since salvation is God’s to grant, we have no authority to modify the terms upon which He promises to save us.

#### B. Through faith

1. Faith is the active response to a command or promise.
2. Some are promoting a means of entering heaven’s gates and escaping hell’s flames that is neither by grace nor through faith.
  - a. Some teach that salvation is obtained through the ritualistic repetition of prayers, performance of penance, and attendance to ceremonies. This is a doctrine of works and faith in man.
  - b. Others have concocted what they call a “prayer of faith” or “sinner’s prayer,” by which they claim salvation is granted.
3. But since neither of these enjoys a Biblical command, and since neither has any Biblical promises attached to them, neither is by faith, but rather by human works.
4. Salvation is determined in the mind of God, not in the mind of man. Just because men declare us saved upon the basis that we have done what they devised is not faith in Christ.

**ILLUS.—**Just like the underwear inspector said, “It don’t say Hanes until I say it says Hanes.” So it is with salvation. A person isn’t saved until the Lord says he is saved.

5. To devise our own means of entering heaven’s gates and escaping hell’s flames is not faith in Christ, but rather faith in man.

6. That only which constitutes salvation by grace through faith is baptism into Christ for the remission of sins, preceded by genuine repentance. This can be demonstrated by the repeated statements where baptism is commanded and carries with it the promise of forgiveness and eternal life.

a. Acts 2:38 — *“And Peter {said} to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

b. Mark 16:16 — *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”*

c. Acts 16:31 — *“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that {very} hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his {household}.”*

d. Acts 8:35-37 — *“And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ [And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’]”*

To teach that a person is saved upon faith that is expressed apart from baptism is to deny the need of a substitute and is a salvation by human works as opposed to faith in Christ.

7. When a person, believing that Jesus is the Christ, the one-of-a-kind Son of God, repents of the sin of rebelling against God, and comes to the appointed place where the Lord promises to give His grace gifts — that being the waters of baptism — in faith that God will keep His promise of granting salvation and its related gifts, that is salvation by grace through faith. God is providing the payment for our sins in the death of His only Son; He has promised to give us the saving benefits of Jesus’ work at Calvary; and we are presenting ourselves totally bankrupt of righteousness at the place He identified to be the redemption center — the waters of baptism — where He has promised to give us all that we need.