

Baghdad to Tibet and even China that were fully Nestorian through the fourteenth century. Today the Assyrian Church of the East is a remnant of this movement (although its bishop recently repudiated Nestorianism in 1976). Modern Alexandrian Christologies can be found today among some Christians in Ethiopia, Egypt and Syria. And Antiochene Christologies today can be found in northern Iraq and Iran. But at Chalcedon a major rift was complete: many Middle Eastern churches (Coptic and Syriac) and the Western churches (Greek and Latin) had parted ways.

a profound existential quality. The notion here is that the Father and the Son are significantly separate, the Father is problematic and perhaps angry, and Jesus has stepped in to be our defender. Therefore if we meet Jesus in heaven, he will give us cover when we meet the Father.

But this misses the basic point of Nicaea. Jesus came to reveal the Father, not appease an implacable Father. "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*" (2 Corinthians 5:19). When we come to heaven we will meet Jesus Christ—who is the presentation, the revelation of God to us. And if we ask "What about the Father?" we will receive the same answer that Judas received in John 14. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?" (John 14:9-10).

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WHAT IS SALVATION?

Keith L. Johnson

A few years ago, I drove through the worst thunderstorm I have ever experienced. I was on a two-lane highway late at night, and even though I knew the road and every landmark on it by heart, I felt lost. The beams of my headlights seemed to vanish in the sheets of rain, and I could barely see the road ahead. Limbs, leaves and other objects were flying through the air. The sound was intense, with the roar of the rain and the plinks of hail rattling the metal of my car. I thought for a moment that I was in the middle of a tornado. I considered pulling over, but the road did not have a wide shoulder, and I worried that someone might crash into me from behind. I tried my best to follow the reflective lights along the side of the road as my headlights caught them, but I quickly lost confidence. Was I actually in the right lane? Do yellow reflectors mark the *edge* of the road, or the *center* of it? In the moment, it was hard to remember. My only help was the lightning flashes across the sky, since they brought enough illumination to help me gain my bearings. I remember praying for help, my hands gripping the steering wheel tightly as I made my way home.

As I reflect upon this experience, I wonder if my feelings that night are similar to how many believers feel about their Christian lives a lot of the time. We know that the Christian faith is centered upon God's act to save us from sin and death through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Yet we also know that God's act carries implications for our everyday lives. After all, the earliest believers called Christianity "the Way" (Acts 9:2), and they knew that the Christian faith was just as much a way of life as

it was a set of beliefs. But following the way of Jesus is *hard*. Jesus himself said that his followers must “deny themselves and take up their cross daily” (Luke 9:23).¹ Paul likewise often described the Christian life as a struggle, insisting that we must work hard to imitate Christ and “press on toward the goal” to which we have been called (Philippians 3:14). This goal and the difficulty it involves sometimes leads to frustration and even fear. As the debris of our daily lives whirls around us, we wonder: didn’t Jesus promise “life to the full” (John 10:10 NIV)? If so, why do many of us still struggle with obedience on a daily basis? Shouldn’t salvation mean freedom from sin and evil rather than a life spent fighting against them? Why are we still struggling to find our way through the darkness? Why would Christ expect us to “take up our cross” and follow him if salvation is by *grace*? And why does following Jesus often seem like we’re driving through a storm, holding on to our faith for dear life?

These kinds of questions require good theological thinking. We will be able to work through them only when we can connect God’s act to save us directly to our daily experience of the Christian life. We surely need to understand why we need salvation, the identity of the one who saves us and how salvation happens. Yet we also need to have a clear sense of both the purpose of our salvation and the concrete difference that “being saved” actually makes for our daily lives. The connection between God’s act of salvation and our everyday lives will help us know why our obedience to God matters. It also will give us hope and courage as we follow the way of Christ in the midst of the storms that come our way.

Why do we need salvation?

The best way to understand our need for salvation is to compare our present situation to God’s original intention for us. God created us in his own image with the task of exercising “dominion” over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28). Among other things, this task meant we are designed to reflect God’s qualities and character by affirming what he affirms, denying what he denies and manifesting his righteousness and holiness in our words and deeds as we work, play and rest. This kind of life would glorify God because it would “image” God’s own love, joy and peace in our posture toward him, one another and creation.

Because of our sin, however, we live in contradiction to God’s intention. Rather than embracing God commandments, we disobey them and go our own way. This not only leaves us guilty of disobedience, but it also alienates us from God. Our sinful actions effectively call God’s character into question, because they demonstrate that we do not trust that what God has said is true. Through our sin, we make ourselves God’s “enemies” (Romans 5:10), and we deserve God’s judgment. God exercises this judgment, in part, by simply turning us loose to pursue our twisted desires (Romans 1:24). The consequences of our self-rule are disastrous: relationships meant to be intimate exist under strain, work designed to be enjoyable becomes burdensome, and the dark spiritual “powers” confront us at every turn (Ephesians 6:12). Worse still, God’s ultimate judgment against our sin is death (Romans 6:23). The first death is physical, and this is followed by the “second death,” which takes the form of an eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:14; 21:8).

As sinners separated from God, the cloud of death hangs over every area of our lives, and we exist in desperate need. We need to be reconciled to God so that we can live in relationship with him once again. The guilt acquired from our sin needs to be forgiven and then taken away, so that we no longer stand condemned. We need to be freed from the burden of the evil powers that stand against us, and we also need to be transformed so that we actually reflect God’s qualities and character in our being and in the way that we live our lives. Finally, we need victory over death in both its forms so that we might live with God eternally.

How does salvation relate to “the gospel”? What is the gospel?

Due to our sin, we need salvation. The Greek word behind “salvation” is *soteria*, a term used when something that has been broken, lost or sick is restored and made whole again; it describes an act of deliverance to safety. The term “gospel” comes from *euangelion*, which was used in the ancient world when a herald made a proclamation of “good news.” While the two terms are closely related in Christian theology, they are not interchangeable. We can get a picture of their distinction and relationship by looking at one of Paul’s best-known statements: “I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith,

to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Here the gospel leads to salvation, which comes as a consequence of it.

The gospel is the good news about the identity and action of Jesus Christ. Paul describes it as the "gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:3-4). The *news* is that God's Son has come in the flesh as the true heir of David, the long awaited Messiah of Israel. This news is *good* because of God's Old Testament promises that he would use Israel's Messiah to bring salvation to all peoples by atoning for their sin and giving them new hearts capable of obeying him. This is precisely what Jesus accomplishes in his role as "the Christ" ("the Messiah").

His actions are described by Paul in one of the clearest summaries of the gospel:

That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8 ESV)

The key saving actions in this passage are that Jesus "died for our sins," was "raised on the third day," and then appeared to the apostles who now testify about who he was and what he did. According to their testimony, recorded throughout the New Testament, Jesus brings salvation because his death and resurrection free us from the guilt and condemnation resulting from our sin, reconcile us to a right relationship with God and mark the defeat of death and the evil powers. This salvation becomes "effective through faith" (Romans 3:25), so that anyone who has faith in Jesus can be saved regardless of who they are or what they have done. Faith comes through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by Christ and his Father to testify to Christ so that we may believe in him (John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 4:13).

It is important to keep the distinction between the gospel and salvation in view, because a blurring of it can lead to confusion about what salvation involves. For example, sometimes Christians talk about the "the gospel" as if it were identical to "how we get saved." This tends to shift our focus away from the *substance* of the gospel (Jesus' identity and actions) to the *consequences* of the gospel (salvation for those who believe). When this happens, we might start to see salvation as the result of "having the right beliefs about Jesus" rather than the result of who Jesus is and what he has done. In reality, the gospel is not about what *we* do but what *Christ* has done for us. His actions demand a response of faith from us, but it is not our response that saves us, but Christ himself.

What must we do to be saved?

The answer is simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). To believe is to have *faith*, and salvation comes "through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). Faith involves our assent to the claims underlying the gospel, particularly the claims about who Christ is and what he has done for our salvation. Since this assent involves a "conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), it takes the form of *trust*. The Holy Spirit enables us to trust God by supplying us with God's own wisdom so that we "may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God" and trust in Christ even if we do not yet fully comprehend who he is and what he has done (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). This kind of trust involves our hearts, emotions and actions as well as our minds. Faith is not simply believing things *about* Jesus but believing *in* Jesus by trusting that he truly is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) and committing to "walk just as he walked" as his disciple (1 John 2:6). In this sense, faith is an ongoing total commitment to Christ rather than a one-time intellectual decision about him.

What does it mean to have faith in Christ?

We can summarize the concept of faith in three points. First, since faith involves belief in the gospel about Jesus, we have faith when we actually *hear and respond* to the gospel. Or, as Paul puts it: "faith comes from what

is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). This helps explain why, after Jesus' death and resurrection, the apostles immediately traveled around the world to share the gospel with everyone who would listen. "How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard?" Paul asks (Romans 10:14). Of course, this idea raises difficult questions, especially when we consider the cases of infant children or those who are mentally incapacitated. In these instances, the church traditionally has found comfort in the goodness and justice of God, while also emphasizing that these exceptions do not in any way undermine the reality that the proclamation of the gospel to nonbelievers is the central mission of the church.

Second, the fact that faith is an ongoing commitment to Christ means that faith and salvation are linked to our *repentance*. To repent is to recognize one's sin, confess it to God and abandon it to pursue a life of obedience. Repentance reorients our lives: we once were headed toward death, but now we are headed toward eternal life with God. This new path affects our self-identity and the way we live on a daily basis. "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus," Paul says. "Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies" (Romans 6:11-12). Our new life in Christ prompts us to grow into the reality of who we are because of our relationship to him. This growth is constant, and it means that our repentance is not a one-time event but an ongoing posture marked by our act of "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3:13). We do both of these things through the Spirit, who guides and empowers us along the way (Galatians 5:25).

Third, the centrality of faith helps us place our *actions* in the right perspective. Christians clearly are commanded to do good deeds in the pattern of Christ and his apostles. "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me," Paul says, "and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Among other things, these actions involve growing in the knowledge of God, following after Christ in obedience and displaying the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Yet as we do these things, we know that they are the result of our salvation rather than the source of it. Our virtuous actions stem from God's work

in and through us, so we can never take credit for them: "this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). God is the sole source of both our salvation *and* its consequences in our lives.

Predestination and Election. *Predestination and election are closely related terms that describe the relationship between God's eternal being and divine will and our salvation through Christ and the Spirit within human history. Predestination has a wider range of reference, as it is used to refer to God's sovereign determination over all events in line with his divine wisdom and nature. Election is used more specifically to refer to God's decision and plan about our salvation. Taken together, these doctrines emphasize that our salvation by God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is not an accidental or haphazard event but the result of God's specific plan, since God "accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will" (Ephesians 1:11). Both of these terms have been the subject of intense debate throughout Christian history, especially with respect to the question of how our human freedom and will relates to God's divine plan.*

What role does the Holy Spirit play in salvation?

God gave humans life when he created them, but with their fall into sin, humans chose to embrace death instead. This choice is reflected in each one of us, both in our darkened minds and our failure to honor God with our actions (Romans 1:21). Our salvation by God includes the gift of a "new spirit" who renews our minds and enables us to live in obedience once again.

God promises this gift in the Old Testament when, faced with Israel's repeated disobedience to the law, God tells the Israelites that he will enable them to follow the law by giving them his own Spirit: "I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to

observe my ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:27). With the arrival of Jesus, John the Baptist announces that this promise has been fulfilled, because Jesus is the one who "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). Jesus claims this promise for himself by saying that he would ask his Father to send his disciples the "Spirit of truth," who would come to dwell within them (John 14:16-17). He fulfills the promise after his resurrection, when he tells his disciples, "I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This power arrives at Pentecost when all the believers are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Shortly thereafter, when Peter preaches the gospel for the first time, he includes the gift of the Spirit in his description of what salvation involves: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (Acts 2:38-39).

Peter's sermon helps us see that, whenever we talk about salvation, we should refer to both the victory over sin and death that Jesus Christ won on the cross *and* the new life that comes to us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is a *trinitarian* event. Paul provides a helpful example in this regard throughout his letters. He proclaims "Christ crucified," but he also makes sure to say that this proclamation is a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4; see also 1:24). He explains that faith comes as a gift of the Spirit, because "no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord!' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). He also says that the Spirit serves as a "seal" of our salvation (Eph 1:13; 4:30), which is a reference to the ancient system of placing a wax or clay seal on something to signify ownership or authenticity. His point is that God's gift of the Spirit gives us confidence that the God "who began a good work among [us] will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6). We can have this confidence even in the face of death, because we know that the one "who raised Christ from the dead will give life to [our] mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in [us]" (Romans 8:11). The Spirit serves as a "pledge of our inheritance toward redemption" (Ephesians 1:14), and he helps us anticipate our future redemption by transforming our minds

(Romans 8:5), producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:16-25) and enabling us to use the gifts God has given us to build up and serve the church (1 Corinthians 12:7-10). For all these reasons, the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit for our salvation are intimately linked, so that we cannot talk about the one without the other.

How does Jesus' crucifixion save us from sin and death?

This question relates to the doctrine of the atonement, which explains how Christ's death on the cross reconciles sinful humans to God. The key is to start with the personal nature of our sin, God's wrath against it and our need for repentance and forgiveness. The New Testament often describes our situation in legal terms: every human stands guilty of sin before God and faces the "day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Romans 2:5). However, the good news is that "while we still were sinners Christ died for us," taking the consequences of our sin upon himself so that "we will be saved through him from the wrath of God" (Rom 5:8-9). "For our sake," Paul says, "he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus Christ's death on the cross saves us because Christ stands in our place as our substitute: he takes our sin and God's wrath against it as if they were his own so that we might be free from them and stand in right relationship with God. In this way, Christ's substitutionary death for us becomes the path to our righteousness and eternal life.

But how does this substitution actually work?

The best way to explain how Christ's death on the cross saves us is to look at the way the New Testament writers draw upon the sacrificial ceremonies of Israel to explain and interpret it. We find the details of one such ceremony in Leviticus 16. God had made himself available to Israel by residing in the tabernacle, which held the ark of the covenant upon which was the mercy seat. He commanded Aaron the priest to bring a bull and two goats to the tabernacle to offer a sacrifice of atonement for Israel's sins. He instructed Aaron to sacrifice the bull for his sins and

those of his family, one goat for the sins of Israel, and then sprinkle the blood of both in front of the mercy seat. The symbolism is clear: Aaron's act of placing the blood of the sacrifices between God and himself indicates that the bull and the goat were substitutes for Aaron and the people, because they had received the judgment for Israel's sin in Israel's place. After Aaron had made this offering, God then commanded him to bring the remaining goat before the altar and place his hands upon it while confessing Israel's sins. This action marked the transfer of the iniquities to the goat, who was then released into the wilderness, taking Israel's sins away. The result was forgiveness: "from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30).

These are the kinds of images Paul has in mind when he says that God put Christ forth as a "sacrifice of atonement by his blood" and that God "passed over the sins previously committed" (Romans 3:25). The difference between those earlier offerings and Christ's sacrifice is that Christ's death is sufficient for every sin for all time. This is the point the author of Hebrews makes when he argues that Christ "entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12 ESV). His substitution for us means that even though we are sinners, we can "have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19 ESV). By taking our sin and God's wrath against it upon himself, Christ frees us from their burden and restores our relationship with God. Peter summarizes it well: Christ "bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

What are the implications of Christ's atoning death for our daily lives?

From the starting point of substitution, several implications of Christ's atoning work can be brought forth to help us understand the difference it makes in our daily life. For example, the New Testament often describes Christ's saving work in terms of God's conflict with the principalities and powers who stand against humanity (1 Corinthians 2:6; Ephesians 1:21). Through Christ's death, God has "rescued us from the

power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13). So, even in the storms of life, we rest in the confidence that God has "disarmed the rulers and authorities" by taking our sin and punishment in our place (Colossians 2:15). Christ's substitutionary death also frees us from the burden of our individual sin. Jesus uses this imagery when he says that he has come "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45), and Paul does as well when he notes that we were "bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). The implication is that Christ's death reconfigures our relationship with God by removing any debts we have incurred and opening the door to forgiveness. His death also carries ethical implications for us by providing us with an example to imitate as we attempt to "live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). We bear witness to Christ by living our lives in the pattern of the cross, "carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:10). In this sense, Jesus' crucifixion is not simply a way for us to escape death; it shows us the path to true life.

But how can we be saved if we're still sinful?

Not only does Jesus Christ take our sin and the penalty for it upon himself, but he also makes it possible for us to exist in right relationship with God. The church's explanation for how this happens is found in its doctrine of justification, which is the doctrine that works out the implications of Jesus Christ's obedient life and sacrificial death for our salvation. As discussed in the previous question, even though Jesus always obeyed God's law and "committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22), he took our sins and their penalty in our place by dying on the cross for us. This substitution leaves us with a "not guilty" verdict as we face God's judgment with respect to our sin. Yet being "not guilty" is not the same as being righteous. This is where Jesus' obedient life comes in. As our sin is debited to his account, Christ's active righteousness is credited to our account. Through this exchange, we are "made righteous" (Romans 5:19). This fulfills God's promise that the Messiah of Israel would "make many righteous" as well as "bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11), and it marks

our justification before God. The fact that we did nothing to deserve or earn this justification means that it comes to us as gift of God's grace. And since God gives this gift to "all who believe" (Romans 3:22), our justification is by *grace* through *faith*.

Since our justification comes by faith rather than through our works, it happens instantaneously rather than gradually, taking the form of an immediate declaration of innocence. This helps explain why we are able to stand righteous before God while also remaining sinners through and through. The fact that God declares us righteous even though we simultaneously remain sinful does not make our standing before God counterfeit, but rather, it emphasizes how closely our salvation is linked to Christ himself. The righteousness that we have before God is *Christ's* righteousness rather than our own, and we have it only because we are in union with him. This idea is expressed throughout the New Testament

Adoption. The metaphor of *adoption* provides a helpful way to think about salvation, because it captures both the relational and the legal aspects of our new status in Christ. Just as an adopted child receives a new and intimate relationship with the adoptive family, believers relate to God intimately and without fear, as a child relates to a father (Romans 8:15). We share in the full benefits of family membership, including the right to an inheritance: "you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God" (Galatians 4:7). And this new status and inheritance comes with responsibilities, because our adoption into God's family means that we should begin to resemble this family. In our case, this looks like being "conformed to the image of [God's] Son, in order that he might be firstborn within a large family" (Romans 8:29).

by the phrases "in Christ" or "in him" (see, for example, Ephesians 1:3-14). These phrases indicate that our own existence can no longer be defined apart from what Christ has done for us and how he relates to us in and

through his Spirit. "I have been crucified with Christ," Paul says, "and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:19-20).

What difference does God's justification of us make for how we live?

Our justification by Christ carries implications for how we act, because it is impossible to be in union with Christ without also becoming *like* Christ. Paul talks about this as the process of taking off the "old self" and putting on the "new self" (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:22-25). It is clear, however, that the good works that result from this transformation are the *product* of our union with Christ rather than the means of it. Paul summarizes it well: he stands righteous before God only because he can be "found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith" (Philippians 3:9 NIV).

One of the great benefits of God's justification of us by grace through faith is *confidence*: since our righteousness comes from Christ rather than ourselves, we can be sure that our standing before God is secure. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1 NIV). Our justification in Christ also provides motivation for our task to share the gospel with nonbelievers. Since we no longer have to work for our own benefit in order to secure our own salvation, we are free to work for the benefit of others by making sure they have heard the good news. In this sense, justification by grace through faith is the fuel for the mission of the church. It also puts our Christian life in perspective. As fallen sinners, we will often fail and disappoint when the storms of life come our way. Yet we do not proclaim good news that focuses on who we are or what we do, but on who *Christ* is and what he has done for us.

Where does the resurrection fit into our salvation?

If a human is both soul *and* body, then the salvation of a human must

involve the body as well as the soul. The ultimate salvation of our bodies will happen in the final resurrection when God will raise them from their graves. This is part of God's final victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Our resurrection will follow the pattern of Christ's resurrection, which Paul calls the "first fruits" of the more general resurrection to come (1 Corinthians 15:20). Christ's resurrection was *bodily*, as shown by the fact that he carried the scars of his crucifixion, ate food and could be physically touched (Luke 24:39-42; John 20:27). And yet his body also had remarkable properties, as demonstrated by his ability to appear suddenly in the middle of locked rooms (Luke 24:36; John 20:19). From these accounts, we can discern that our resurrected bodies will be physical like our current ones yet also transformed in some way. Paul discusses the nature of this transformation when he explains that Christians die with a "physical body" but will be raised with a "spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). It is important to pay attention to the original Greek terms here to avoid confusion. Paul is not drawing a contrast between a material body and a non-material body, as might seem to be the case from the English translation. The word behind "physical" is *psychikos*, which indicates a body that is powered by normal human *psyche* or soul. The word "spiritual" is *pneumatikos*, drawn from the root *pneuma* ("spirit"), which Paul uses here refer to a body powered by God's own Spirit. His point is that the power that animates our resurrected bodies will be different from the power that animates our current bodies. While our current bodies live by the power of our own human souls and thus are liable to sin and death, our resurrected bodies will live by the power of the Holy Spirit and so will not fall prey to sin or death.

This distinction helps explain what Paul means when he says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:50). He is not saying that our resurrected bodies will be "ghost-like," but rather, his point is that our bodies will be given unique properties enabling us to live in eternal fellowship with God. Even though Paul admits that the nature of this transformation remains a "mystery" to him (1 Corinthians 15:51), he remains fully confident that our resurrection will be like Christ's own resurrection: "we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like

his" (Romans 6:5). This insight, as well as Paul's claims about the Spirit's role in our resurrection, helps us to understand the importance of his claim that "you will reap eternal life from the Spirit" (Galatians 6:8). Our eternal life in our resurrected bodies will be a *transformed* life, because we will live always and at every moment through the power of the Holy Spirit and the mediation of Christ—all to the glory of God the Father.

What difference does our future resurrection make for our lives in the present?

As Christians, we live in anticipation of our resurrected life to come by committing to "walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). This fits with God's Old Testament promises about the Holy Spirit, and it reinforces why we can never take credit for or boast about our works. At the same time, Paul points to the resurrection as the reason why we should be "excelling in the work of the Lord" and why we can know that our "labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). The fact that our bodies will be raised from the dead shows that our pursuit of holiness in our bodies *matters*. It does not matter for our standing before God, since Christ secured our relationship with God on our

Legalism and Antinomianism. The doctrine of justification helps us avoid the errors of legalism and antinomianism (or, lawlessness). We fall into *legalism* when we think our relationship with God depends upon our obedience to God's law. *Antinomianism* is the mistake of thinking that God's grace abolishes God's law by rendering its standards irrelevant. These errors mirror one another, because they both stem from a faulty view of salvation. God does not abandon his moral standards when he saves us, but rather, he changes our relationship to these standards by freeing us from guilt through Christ and by empowering us to obedience through the Spirit. Through Christ and the Spirit, we have both a clear sense of God's holiness as well as the confidence that God himself will enable us to reflect his holiness the way we live our lives without fear of condemnation when we fail. The end result is "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6).

behalf through his own body. Rather, our actions matter because they bear testimony to what God has done, offering an embodied witness of praise and gratitude to God. Indeed, the scars on Jesus' resurrected body will forever glorify God as they testify to his victory over sin and death. His example prompts us to examine our own lives in light of the pattern of his life, so that when we dwell with God in the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1-27), the marks on our resurrected bodies will bear testimony to what God has done for our salvation.

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WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Jeffrey W. Barbeau

Imaginative visions of divine spirit fill our culture in literature, music, television and film. In George Lucas's *Star Wars*, characters are drawn to good or evil by the Force. Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker, and many other characters square off in a cosmic battle of good versus evil by using—or misusing—a power that pervades the entire universe. More recently, in James Cameron's international sensation *Avatar* (2009), a similar spiritual power connects all living things. Plants, animals and other creatures form a living eco-system permeated by a single, spiritual force.

Surrounded by such diverse images, Christians face two extremes. Some live in a state of “fear of the Spirit” or *pneumatophobia*. Some say that an intellectual study of the Holy Spirit is tantamount to attempting to capture the wind. In order to avoid falling prey to emotionalism, these Christians would rather ignore the question altogether or limit the conversation to the sparse and sometimes confusing language of Christian creeds. By contrast, other Christians prefer the very “obsession with the Spirit” that others fear, living in a state of *pneumatomania*. These believers speak about the Holy Spirit constantly and link almost every happy occurrence to a supernatural encounter with God. Most do not handle snakes or drink poisonous strychnine (though some, erroneously interpreting Mark 16:17–18, have regrettably tried just that), but they act as if their every wish can and will be fulfilled by the power of the Spirit. The rigorous demands of these Christians can make other believers feel that if they haven't had a unique and powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, they may well not be Christians at all! With *pneumatophobia* and