

Lordship Salvation, Part 2

Disclaimer – One should not conclude from this study that it excuses sin in the life of the believer. It is intended to point out that spiritual maturity is not bestowed instantly at salvation. We all need to grow spiritually, especially new believers, and that takes time and training. Meanwhile, all of us are capable of slipping into carnality, and we do so more often than we would like to admit.

We left off last session after establishing that there is a huge difference between faith and works, and that salvation is by faith alone in what Christ did on the Cross, with no contribution to the process by human works, either before or after salvation. Those of the Lordship Salvation persuasion argue that unless someone demonstrates his works after salvation, he is not truly saved, or he is about to lose his salvation. Neither is true.

As pointed out in the last session, grace can be abused by believers, even mature believers. The classic example of such a failure is King David. He was clearly a mature believer from childhood, as shown by his faith when, as a young teen, he faced Goliath. His subsequent life, including being hunted by King Saul, who wanted to kill him, also demonstrated his faith that God had plans for him. And then ...

As the king of Israel enjoying prosperity, he saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof of her home, and everything changed from there. He was captivated by her beauty, summoned her to the palace, and raped her. I say “raped” because he was the king and she was a servant. He had all the power. She was already betrothed (legally married) to Uriah the Hittite, one of his army officers, fighting against the Ammonites (2 Samuel 11). But the marriage had not yet been consummated, and she became pregnant by David. His solution: arrange her husband Uriah’s death.

Does any of this sound like the actions of a mature believer or even an immature believer? It shows that any of us can fall into carnality.

1 John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Did David lose his salvation? Was it even at risk? No and no! He recovered about a year later, around the time of the death of his son by Bathsheba. That was part of his discipline in response to his failures.

My point is: if you only saw David's life from that fateful moment when he saw Bathsheba bathing, you might think that he was a lost heathen of the lowest kind.

We all have a sin nature, both before and after salvation. Along with it, we also have a God-given free will, which we often use to make foolish and carnal decisions, both intentionally and unintentionally. Therefore, we are held accountable for all sins we commit.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Note that last point, "cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness." It suggests that we can confess our known sins, and God will forgive those confessed sins, **along with** any others we have forgotten or didn't realize we had committed.

Indwelling Holy Spirit

This story highlights another point we need to remember. We should recognize that there is a significant difference between the time before the Cross and the period after Pentecost. The key difference is that sin was not judged until the Cross. This fact influenced how God could relate to sinful humans during these two periods.

Before sin was judged, God was compelled by His own righteousness to keep His distance from unrighteous man. Furthermore, prior to Pentecost, believers did not have the Holy Spirit's indwelling as we do today. Before judgment, sin was temporarily forgiven through sacrifices at the Temple and, earlier, at altars. This was temporary, and the sins were only "hidden" from God's view under the blood of the sacrifices, but only for a year. The sacrifices had to be repeated annually on Yom Kippur. God resided in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, symbolically separated from sinful man by a curtain or veil. He could relate to us through our prayers, as shown by the

smoke rising from the Altar of Incense just outside the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the Temple. With the Cross and the judgment of sin, that barrier between God and sinful man was destroyed, as symbolized by the tearing of the veil in the temple.

Matthew 27:51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

From that point forward, God could relate directly with sinful humans through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, first given to believers on Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus.

There was no universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit before that time. However, there was something called “induement,” meaning being endowed with some power or ability. The Holy Spirit granted power and abilities beyond human limits to certain individuals, such as Abraham, Moses, the prophets, and some Old Testament kings, to act on God’s behalf and as His representatives on Earth. This indued ability is not the same as the indwelling we enjoy today and was temporary, as seen in a prayer by King David when he finally acknowledged his carnality with Bathsheba.

Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and **take not your Holy Spirit from me.** (Emphasis added)

My point in all this is that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Not even mature believers are immune from sin. However, all believers do have access to a power source that protects us from sinning—if we willfully choose to use it. You all know the passage.

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Follow the leading of the Spirit with faith in His power, and you will not sin — at least as long as you stay in that “walking” condition of faith in the indwelling Spirit’s guidance and His strength to resist sin.

Paul understood how easily it was to fall into carnality when he said in Romans:

Romans 7:15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

There are consequences to sin.

Just because sin is common among mankind, don't think for a moment that you can get away with it. David paid a high price for his sin with Bathsheba. Not only was the child of his adultery taken from him (2 Samuel 12:15-23), but one of his daughters was raped, and his son led a rebellion against him.

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

Sometimes, a Christian may sin so seriously that God judges that sin with quick physical death: “a sin that leads to death.” Ananias and Sapphira serve as examples of that (Acts 5:1–11).

James 5:19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Proverbs 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short.

Proverbs 11:19 Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.

Any believer who continues in sin can eventually become a threat to God's plan and face the possibility of being removed from this life through the principle of the sin unto death. However, this does not affect that sinner's eternal life. It will impact their rewards, if any, in eternity as granted at the Bema judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Our conclusion is that any suggestion about a person's salvation cannot be based on observed behavior because all believers—whether new, immature, or mature—are capable of slipping into carnality.

What we can do for new believers, especially, is to help them grow—disciple them. Barry has a solid grasp of this urgent need. The writer of Hebrews emphasizes this in chapter 5.

Hebrews 5:11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

The believers in this church had not matured spiritually. They were still spiritual infants and needed to be disciplined with basic doctrine (milk) to grow into spiritual maturity, where they could consume “solid food” (advanced doctrines) and develop the discernment “by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

We are not born again with full understanding of what is expected of us as children of God, let alone as spiritually mature believers. Maturity requires training and testing to grow and become all we are called to be.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Emphasis added)

We are called “for good works.” God has work for us to do. But a believer who never grows will not fulfill that purpose and may appear, for all the world to see, as if they are lost or a poor example of a Christian. Lordship Salvation makes no allowances for such a failed believer, except to assume the sinner is either not saved or about to lose his salvation.

A Little House Cleaning

Disciple – What is it?

There is significant disagreement about what exactly a disciple is. Some say a disciple is a follower, but not necessarily a believer. In other words, someone who is merely curious but not yet convinced.

In the Bible, the word "disciple" (primarily from the Greek *mathētēs* in the New Testament, meaning a learner, pupil, student, or follower) refers to someone who **follows** the teachings of a master or teacher, **commits** to learning from them, and tries to **imitate** their life and ways.

In the Gospels and Acts, it most often describes a follower of Jesus Christ as someone who **believes** in Him, **learns** from His teachings, **rests** on His sacrifice, **imbibes** His spirit, and **imitates** His example. It goes beyond mere intellectual agreement; it involves a committed relationship of following, obedience, self-denial, and transformation to become more like the teacher (Jesus).

This term, disciple, appears about 261 times in the New Testament (mostly in the Gospels and Acts), far more often than “Christian,” which is

mentioned only 3 times. This suggests that in the early church, being a believer was essentially the same as being a disciple.

Here are some foundational passages that illustrate or define the meaning:

- **John 8:31** — Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.” *(This shows that true discipleship involves ongoing obedience and abiding in Jesus' teachings.)*
- **Luke 9:23** (also Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34) — And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” *(Discipleship requires self-denial, bearing one's cross, and daily following Jesus—it's a costly and total commitment.)*
- **Luke 14:26-27** — “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” *(Jesus emphasizes that allegiance to Him must surpass all other relationships and priorities; otherwise, one cannot be His disciple.)*
- **John 13:34-35** — “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” *(Love modeled after Jesus' sacrificial love is the defining mark of His disciples.)*
- **Matthew 28:19-20** (the Great Commission) — “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” *(Jesus commands His followers to make more disciples by baptizing and teaching obedience to His commands—discipleship includes evangelism, baptism, and ongoing instruction in obedience.)*
- **Luke 6:40** — “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” *(The goal of discipleship is to become like the teacher—Jesus—through training and transformation—to produce mature believers.)*

In summary, a biblical disciple is much more than a casual believer or student; it is a committed follower who learns from Jesus, obeys Him, is transformed into His likeness, and takes part in His mission (including

making more disciples). “Transformed” is a process, not a one-time event. This remains the main calling for Christians today.

In the Bible, the term "disciple" broadly refers to followers of Jesus, but the most well-known and frequently mentioned examples are the Twelve Disciples (also called the Twelve Apostles), whom Jesus personally selected and trained during His ministry. These men are listed in the Gospels (with slight variations in order and some names), and they form the core group of His closest followers.

The standard list of the Twelve Disciples comes from passages like Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13.

1. **Simon (called Peter)** — A fisherman; became the bold leader of the apostles (Matthew 16:18; John 1:42).
2. **Andrew** — Peter's brother; also a fisherman; often brought others to Jesus (John 1:40-42; John 6:8-9).
3. **James (son of Zebedee)** — A fisherman; part of Jesus' inner circle with Peter and John; called a "Son of Thunder" (Mark 3:17; first apostle martyred, Acts 12:2).
4. **John (brother of James)** — A fisherman; also a "Son of Thunder"; traditionally identified as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" and author of the Gospel of John (John 13:23; John 19:26).
5. **Philip** — From Bethsaida; helped bring others (like Nathanael) to Jesus (John 1:43-46; John 12:21-22).
6. **Bartholomew** (possibly also called **Nathanael** in John's Gospel) — Introduced to Jesus by Philip (John 1:45-51).
7. **Thomas** (also called Didymus, meaning "twin") — Known for doubting the resurrection until seeing Jesus (John 20:24-29).
8. **Matthew** (also called Levi) — A tax collector before following Jesus (Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-28).
9. **James (son of Alphaeus)** — Sometimes called James the Less to distinguish him (Mark 15:40).
10. **Thaddaeus** (also called **Judas son of James** or **Jude**) — Asked Jesus a key question at the Last Supper (John 14:22; Luke 6:16).
11. **Simon the Zealot** (or Simon the Cananite) — Possibly a former revolutionary (Luke 6:15).
12. **Judas Iscariot** — The betrayer who handed Jesus over for 30 pieces of silver; later replaced by Paul (Matthew 26:14-16; Acts 1:18-20).

These twelve were explicitly chosen by Jesus after prayer.

Luke 6:12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. ¹³ And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵ and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

These were sent out to preach, heal, and cast out demons (Matthew 10:1-8; Mark 6:7-13).

Jesus had many more followers beyond these twelve. The Gospels mention larger groups of disciples, such as:

- The 70 (or 72) disciples sent out in pairs to preach and heal (Luke 10:1-20).
- Other named individuals like Joseph of Arimathea (a secret disciple, John 19:38), Nicodemus (John 3:1-21; John 19:39), and women such as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and others who followed and supported Jesus (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41).
- Post-resurrection, the term "disciple" applies even more broadly to all believers (Acts 6:1-2). In Acts 11:26, "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

The Twelve stand out as the primary examples of Jesus' disciples—ordinary men from varied backgrounds (fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot) who were transformed into bold witnesses after following Him closely and witnessing His miracles, death, and resurrection.

It would seem that disciples were not just followers but also believers in Christ's teachings. In other words, they were believers.

However, there is a passage in John in which some of Jesus' disciples struggle to understand His teachings about the Last Supper and about "eating" His flesh and "drinking" His blood. They find this teaching difficult and choose to turn away.

John 6:60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ... ⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Could it be that they are not believers? Or is it possible that they are believers, but a teaching previously unknown to them is outside their understanding of the Messiah and unacceptable to them? Consider that much of what Jesus was teaching initially aligned with their understanding of the promised Messiah, which they understood as someone who would bring glory to Israel, raise an army, and kick out the hated Romans. But later in His ministry, Jesus shifted to speaking in parables and of His death, things His followers did not associate with the Messiah. As a result, many began to question their commitment to this “potentially false” Messiah. Either is possible, but the previously cited Scripture tends to favor the latter understanding. They were looking for the “kick butt” Messiah, and Jesus was looking more and more like something they did not associate with the Messiah.

POP QUIZ!

With this understanding of the meaning of “disciple,” I challenge you to explain Judas Iscariot. The question is whether Judas was saved or lost, and you will get to vote on that.

In this little exercise, I will act as the defense attorney, prosecutor, and judge. You will be the jury. Listen to the evidence presented, and we will vote on conviction or acquittal at the end.

How to vote – Click on “React” with the heart icon at the bottom of your screen, then click on “Reactions” and scroll down until you see the thumbs up and thumbs down hand icons. A thumbs-up is a vote “yes” — he was saved, and a thumbs-down is a vote “no” — he is in hell.

Explain Judas

The debate over whether Judas Iscariot was saved is ongoing among Christians, but most Bible interpretations suggest he was not. Here's why:

Prosecution – Key Biblical evidence against:

1. Jesus' own statements – Jesus Christ spoke very strongly about Judas. In John 17:12, Jesus calls him “the son of perdition” (meaning destruction). In Matthew 26:24 – “It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” These are unusually severe statements and are often taken to imply final judgment.

2. Judas' betrayal and heart condition – Judas didn't just make a mistake; he deliberately betrayed Jesus. Matthew 26:14–16 “Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.” Other passages suggest deeper issues: John 12:6 says he was a thief.

3. His remorse vs. repentance – After the betrayal, Judas felt regret (Matthew 27:3–5), but this really only suggests remorse, not true repentance. He returned the money but did not turn to God for forgiveness and ultimately took his own life. This contrasts with Peter, who also sinned grievously by denying Jesus but repented and was restored. Matthew 26:75 says, “And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.”

4. Luke 22:3 clearly states that at the Last Supper, “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.” This shows that Satan indwelt and controlled Judas from that moment on.

5. In John 6:64, Jesus said in reference to Judas, “But there are some of you who do not believe.”

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Judas is an example of someone who had close proximity to truth and power but lacked genuine saving faith. Therefore, we must conclude from this evidence that Judas was not saved and will spend eternity in Hell.

Defense – Key Biblical evidence for:

(This is a minority view among commentators.)

Regarding our worthy prosecutor's charges:

1. Jesus calls Judas the “son of perdition.” Could this simply refer to the fact that he is destined for destruction, which is what the Greek phrase means and refers to the sin unto death inflicted on wayward believers, not to destruction in Hades?
2. True, Judas stole money and was a sinner, but then aren't we all? This proves nothing concerning his eternal state.
3. Contrary to what the prosecution claims, Judas does seem to have shown remorse in his acknowledgment of his sin. His remorse was most clearly demonstrated by his suicide.

Matthew 27:3 Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, **he changed his mind** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, ⁴ saying, **“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”** (Emphasis added)

In the Matthew 27:3-5 passage cited by the prosecution, it says Judas “changed his mind.” That is the Greek word *metamelomai*, which means to have a change of mind – to believe one thing and then to come to believe in another instead. Judas initially believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but like many others, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, he became disillusioned when Jesus failed to raise an army and revolt against the hated Romans. Judas expected a political Messiah, but Jesus Christ taught suffering, servanthood, and a spiritual kingdom.

Judas later recognized his mistake and understood that Jesus was innocent. He then “confessed” his sin by saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” This clearly shows the actions of someone who realizes their sin and confesses it. Later, 1 John 1:9 describes this very act of confessing our sins and seeking forgiveness.

And did not Peter deny Jesus three times? He merely “wept bitterly.” We do not consider him among the lost because of his failures.

4. Regarding the statement by Jesus that Satan entered Judas, it must be understood that prior to the Cross and Pentecost, there was no universal indwelling of believers by the Holy Spirit, and thus nothing to prevent Satan from entering Judas, who by his own actions invited him in.

5. Regarding the statement in John 6:64 that Judas did not believe, could this not simply be a reference to the fact that, like so many others, he had simply lost faith in the fact that Jesus was the Messiah?

6. Furthermore, some argue that Judas was saved because he was chosen as one of the twelve and called a disciple.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you must conclude from this evidence that Judas was indeed saved, and you will meet him in Heaven.

Judge: “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, how see you? Guilty or not guilty?”

Do not vote yet. The jury will retire to the jury room to consider the evidence before voting. Okay, what do you think? Anyone swayed one way or the other by the evidence?

How to vote – Click on “React” with the heart icon at the bottom of your screen, then click on “Reactions” and scroll down until you see the thumbs up and thumbs down hand icons. A thumbs-up is a vote “yes” — he was saved, and a thumbs-down is a vote “no” — he is in hell.