

THE SOUND GOSPEL



**DENVER
REFORMED
CHURCH**

***“THE GOSPEL IS THE GOOD NEWS OF ABUNDANT LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST
IF WE SUBMIT TO HIM AS LORD BEFORE SAVIOR
IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF COVENANT THROUGH HIS CHURCH.”***

1. ALL PEOPLE

All people need God the Father’s abundant blessings of forgiveness and righteousness, earthly provision and purpose, eternal salvation and life.

(Isa 59:2; Rom 3:10-12, 23, 6:23; Psa 32:1-2//Jam 1:17; Psa 104; Pro 10:3; Psa 37:38; Ecc 2:24-25; Jer 29:11; Ecc 1:1-11//2Pe 3:1-7; Joh 5:26-29)

2. JESUS CHRIST

It is only through a relationship with God’s son, the God-man Jesus Christ who died for sin and rose again, that we can receive God as Father and His abundant blessings of forgiveness and righteousness, earthly provision and purpose, eternal salvation and life.

(Joh 14:6; 1Ti 2:5; 1Jo 2:1, 5:11; Act 4:12; 2Co 1:20; Luk 1:76-77// Col 1:13-17; Heb 2:17// 1Co 15:1-4; 2Co 5:21; Rom 4:25, 5:6-9// Joh 10:10, 27-29, 14:7-11, 23, 15:7-8, 16:25-27)

3. MARRIAGE

A relationship w/Jesus means being in marriage covenant w/Jesus.

(Jer 31:31-32 w/ Heb 8:6-13; Luk 22:14-20; Isa 54:5; Eph 5:22-32; 2Co 11:2)

4. REPENT AND BELIEVE

Getting in marriage covenant w/Jesus requires repentance and faith in Him as Lord before Savior.

(Mar 1:14-15; Mat 3:2-8; Luk 13:1-9; Act 17:30, 26:20 // Heb 5:9; Rom 10:9-10; Mat 8:1-10, 10:25-39; Luk 9:23-26, 14:25-33; Joh 12:25-26)

5. OBEY

Staying in marriage covenant w/Jesus requires faithful obedience to all God’s commands.

(Luk 6:46-49; Mat 24:45-51, 25:1-13, 25:14-30; 1Co 9:24-10:22; 2Co 5:21-7:1; Phi 2:5-16; 1Pe 1:14-19, 2:1-12; 2Pe 1:5-11, 3:14-18; Jud 1:20-21; Mat 5:17-20, 7:21-23, 19:16-30, 22:1-14 w/Rev 19:7-8; Mat 28:20; Luk 13:22-30, 16:1-17, 19:1-10; 1Jo 2:1-6, 24-3:7, 22; Joh 8:31-32, 15:1-14; Heb 2:1-4; Rev 2:26)

6. BELONG

The entire marriage covenant between us and Jesus takes place only through His church.

(Mat 28:18-20, Act 2:38-42; Eph 5:22-32; 1Jo 1:5-7)

7. DIVORCE

The marriage covenant will end in divorce and its promises will be forfeited if we are found to be unfaithful to Jesus and His church.

(Mat 6:14-15, 7:21-27, 8:11-12, 13:20-22, 18:17-20, 32-35, 24:48-51, 25:29-30; Luk 14:34-35; Joh 15:6; Rom 11:17-22; 1Co 10:1-12; Heb 3:12-14, 6:4-8, 10:19-36; Jam 2:14-26; 2Pe 1:9, 2:1, 20-22; 2Jo 1:8; Jud 1:5; Rev 2:5, 3:3-5)

8. ETERNAL DESTINY

Our eternal destiny will be determined by our deeds which demonstrate whether or not we maintained by faithfulness the marriage covenant gained by faith and lived out through His church.

(Rev 20:11-15; 2Co 5:10; Mat 25:31-46; Rom 2:6-8)

SOUND GOSPEL - OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

1. I don't need God's abundant blessings. Consider 1Jo 1:10. **2. God is not two persons only one (Deu 6:4).** This passage refers to the exclusivity of God as the only God (the only one), not to his personhood. The Bible actually teaches that God exists in three persons (Mat 28:19) each existing simultaneously as a distinct person from the other (Mat 3:16-17). It is heresy to deny Jesus' separate personhood from the Father (1Jo 2:22-23).

3. What about all the other relationships used to describe our relationship w/God? Why is marriage the controlling example? This is the dominant example in the Bible from beginning to end. All other relationships between God and man in the Bible are predicated on the marriage covenant relationship. For instance, both the Master-slave relationship and the Father-son relationship are dependent upon the marriage relationship. In other words, neither can exist w/o the marriage relationship first existing. God does not become Master or Father nor are we considered His slaves or sons until we are in covenant w/ Him. Consider for example: 2Peter 2:1-their denial of God as "Master" is only possible b/c He has first "bought them" (i.e. redeemed them into a covenant relationship where He is Master and they his slaves-see also 1Chr 17:21; Psa 74:2); Gal 4:1-7, 21-31-being a son is the result of being in covenant (the covenant w/Christ from "Jerusalem above" -v26). This is also the reason for God's words to the prophet Malachi: b/c there is covenant marriage, God has also become Father and Master (and therefore deserves to be treated as such) (Mal 1:6). **Marriage is just an analogy.** No, our earthly marriages are actually a TYPE of the one between us and Christ (Eph 5:22-32; Jer 3:1-8).

4. The phrase "Lord Before Savior" is found nowhere in the Bible. Though this is true, that doesn't mean it is unbiblical or false. We regularly use different terms/phrases (not found explicitly) in the Bible to identify/describe truths which are explicitly taught. Consider for example: the term "Trinity" or the "Hypostatic Union" or "The Lord's Table". The truth that God will only be Savior to those who first commit themselves in complete obedience to His Lordship ("Lord Before Savior") is not only explicitly—but also--- frequently taught throughout the Bible-- including the Old Testament (Gen 17:1-2, 22:16-18; Exo 19:5, 24:7-8; Lev 26:1-26; Deu 4:39-40, 6:1-3, 7:9, 10:12-13, 11:8-9, 13-15, 22-23, 26-32, 12:28, 13:17-18, 15:1-18, 16:20, 19:8-9, 26:17-19, 28:1-2, 15, 29:9, 30:9-10, 15-16; Jos 1:1-9, 2:12-14; 1Sa 12:14-15; 1Ki 2:1-4,3:6, 3:14-15; Psa 1:1-6, 5:12, 9:10, 16:5-11, 25:10, 31:23, 34:1-22, 66:16-20, 91:14; Pro 10:3; Isa 1:18-19, 48:17-19, 55:1-13, 56:1-8; Jer 3:12-15, 4:1-14, 14, 5:1-3, 11:1-11, 12:16-17, 38:20). The phrase "Lord Before Savior" would have found great reception with many of history's Christian giants. Consider for example: A.W. Pink who said, "Many are deceived into supposing that they have accepted Christ as their personal Savior who have not first received Him as Lord." Or John Gerstner who said, "Christ repeatedly makes faithful obedience a condition for salvation."

5. Requiring faithful obedience is works-based salvation. Such reasoning is like saying that a husband must be faithful to his wife to earn her kisses. Though it is true he must be faithful, it is not to gain anything--including his wife's kisses! Instead such faithfulness is the means by which he maintains the marriage relationship from falling apart or being destroyed. The same is true (then) in our faithful obedience to Christ. Faithfulness is the means by which we maintain what we have gained by faith. It is therefore not in the least, serving as some form of meritorious works by which to earn our salvation. The Bible knows no such form of salvation—even among the Pharisees. Consider for example: Luk 5:21—the Pharisees cannot say this and believe in works-based salvation since such a system essentially teaches this very thing—people "forgiving" or canceling out their sins/bad deeds by their good deeds. The Pharisees' problem was not attempting to merit God's favor, but thinking that because they had simply entered into covenant w/God (and therefore were His people) there was nothing more they needed to do. In other words, faithfulness to His commands was not required. As a result they lived unfaithful, selectively obedient lives to God. This is why Jesus calls them "hypocrites" and claims that they are no better than their unfaithful fathers who killed the prophets preaching this very message of required faithfulness (Mat 23:27-33).

6. The church is simply all those who have believed in general—or throughout history---and not a visible, organized institution. The Greek word "ekklesia" translated "church" in the New Testament always only refers to visible, organized institutions. In other words never in the Bible do we find it being used to refer to believers in general—or throughout history. This can be seen clearly by considering: who Paul is addressing when he writes letters to the churches (he writes to visible, organized institutions—1Co 1:2; Gal 1:2; 1Th 1:1); the terms used to describe the church ("household of God"—1Ti 3:15; "the Body of Christ"—Eph 4:12); what criteria defines a church in the New Testament (according to Act 11:19-26 it is more than just a group of professing believers but also elders, and a commitment to faithfulness and faithful teaching--all things which require a visible, organized institution!).

7. This is teaching loss of salvation. Though the word salvation can be used at times interchangeably w/justification in Scripture (ex. Eph 2:8), they are not synonymous and therefore it is incorrect to say that teaching the loss of justification is teaching the loss of salvation. Justification refers to our right standing w/God whereas salvation is the result of possessing a right standing w/God. Justification then, is a function of salvation and not the same thing. And though justification can be lost, salvation cannot. This distinction is made clear by understanding God's sovereignty in election. It is true to say that all those who are elect can never lose as their eternal destiny the salvation of their souls (Eph 1:4-11; Joh 6:35-44; Rom 9:1-23). This means that though they may lose their justification, they will at some point restore/maintain it before the end of their lives. For those however who are not the elect, and therefore do not restore/maintain their justification, there is no loss (in the eternal sense) of salvation since they never truly possessed it (from the standpoint of God's eternal decree in election). Therefore once more, teaching the loss of justification is not the same thing as teaching the loss of salvation since though justification can be lost, salvation cannot. Instead those who permanently lose their justification simply prove to have never been among God's saved elect. **Though I may be able to lose my justification, I can never lose my adoption as God's son or receive His rejection as my Father.** Consider: God rejected Christ, His only begotten Son at the time sin was placed upon Him (Mat 27:46); Birthrights can be forfeited due to sin (Heb 12:15-17). **God will never divorce.** Consider: We currently serve a divorced God (Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8).

8. Deeds reveal our faith not our faithful obedience (Jam 2:18). This is problematic in two ways: (one) such thinking is similar to saying that the reason a person cheats on their spouse is b/c they really don't believe they are married to them—since if they did, it would show in them being faithful. (secondly) the word "faith" in James 2:18 is referring to a person's religion (objective faith) and not the act of believing (subjective faith). This becomes clear once we consider: the context (which is true religion v. false religion-- Jam 1:27); verse 19—which becomes a contradiction if James is really referring in the previous verse (18) to subjective faith (belief) since how could he then say the demons "believe" (knowing they have no deeds by which to demonstrate it)? Is this not also why he says they "tremble"—b/c they are unfaithful to God and know what the outcome of such actions will be?). Again, James is instead referring to his religion when he speaks of faith and it being shown as valid by what he does. In other words, it is his deeds which demonstrate his faithfulness to his religion (and therefore also it's God). **What about grace?** Consider Rom 6:1-23.