

THE NARROW WAY – “I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE”

By Averine Pennington, December 7 – 10, 2021

As I draw nearer to the close of my personal journey upon this earth, I reflect on all I have learned along the way. My walk with the Lord has been one of ups and downs. I confess, it has not been an easy road, but well-worth every mile I have traveled with my Lord as I endeavored to live for Him and always seek His truth. I have previously shared much of my testimony on 444prophecynews, so I will try not to be redundant. I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was six years old, so He and I have been through a lot together over the ensuing decades.

I began my Christian walk in a United Pentecostal Church. My Mama was a very godly woman and she made sure that her children went to church anytime the doors were open. You don't get to choose the family you are born into. That decision is in the hands of the Almighty. So the church my family attended became my church also. Let me just say up front that I am so grateful for my upbringing. However, from the viewpoint of a young child, our church services were 'intense'. I wasn't sure what adjective to use, but that one seemed to fit best. Yes, I grew up with my friends calling me a 'holy-roller' and it was a moniker I accepted with honor, but it certainly made me different from most of my classmates at school who attended more sedate and traditionally stoic denominations. In our church, from the time the worship started with fantastic music and singing until the altar call was over, God's glorious presence rained down. It was not uncommon to hear frequent testimonies of what God was doing in the lives of the congregation. I saw with my own eyes miraculous healings take place. I knew in my heart of hearts that the Holy Spirit had free reign. I personally experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit and that is something that changed my life forever.

Last week I was having a conversation with my youngest granddaughter when she surprisingly began asking questions about heaven and hell. Now I love talking about heaven, but when it came to telling her about hell, I found myself watching what I said. I didn't want to scare her and give her nightmares or upset her mother for discussing something I shouldn't. Folks, I grew up hearing about heaven and hell! There was no such thing as a church nursery in my day. From infancy and up, kids heard every word the preacher said from the pulpit including scary messages about hell, fire, and brimstone. I knew from a very young age that there was a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. That truth contributed to my decision to ask Jesus to come into my heart in the first place. I was convinced that Jesus loved me, and I wanted to go to heaven someday to live with Him forever. I certainly did not want to burn in hell for eternity where the devil and his demons were going to be. Even a child knows that you'd be crazy to choose hell! I don't know why people try to protect their children from spiritual things. Jesus said not to forbid the children to come unto Him. If we do not educate them in the things of God, they will surely be educated in the things of this evil and wicked world. God's heritage, His innocent children, have been entrusted to our care. It's a great responsibility that should not be taken lightly.

As mentioned, I would not trade my Pentecostal roots as they helped me to establish a deep and lasting relationship with my Savior. However, as I began growing in my faith and immersing myself in the Bible, I began to question some of the doctrines of my church, especially the focus on 'man's works' to obtain righteousness. There were a lot of dos and don'ts . . . rules relating to what you wore, where you went, how you behaved, that you dare not break. Most of these rules could be biblically supported, but some were extreme and very hard to live by. As a teenager, I began to attend the Assembly of God Church

nearby with some of my friends. My parents allowed this change as I think they feared my dissatisfaction would lead me to stop attending church altogether. I don't think there was ever much chance of that as I was 'sold out' to the Lord, but I was searching for truth. The Assembly of God church had much the same beliefs I was raised with, but not so many stringent rules that seemed unattainable. I enjoyed worshipping at my new church and being a part of a great youth group. I became very involved in ministry there and remained a part of that fellowship until I was grown and moved away from home.

After graduating from high school and while attending business college, I met and married the love of my life in 1971. Now, my husband had been brought up as a Baptist which presented a bit of a dilemma. He tried attending my church a few times, but He was very uncomfortable in an environment where people raised their hands to praise the Lord, clapped their hands, prayed out loud all together, hollered 'Amen' from the congregation in the middle of the sermon, prophesied, spoke or interpreted in tongues, or gave words of knowledge from God. That was not something he had ever experienced in the Baptist denomination. I had another major decision to make if I had any hopes of my husband going to church with me. I began attending the Baptist church with him. It was different than what I was accustomed to . . . much calmer, quieter, and very traditional. I missed the excitement and zeal of worshipping in my old church, but his church preached something that sounded like a dream come true . . . a doctrine called the 'Security of the Believer.' I was drawn to that teaching like a moth to light. That was something I wanted so much to believe and hold on to for dear life. Oh, to know that once I chose to believe in Jesus, I was His forevermore! Nothing and no one could pluck me from His hand! I wrote down every scripture that seemed to back up that doctrine and stuck the piece of paper in my Bible. I was consoled and comforted to know that once I was saved, I was always saved! I wanted to believe that was the kind of God I served . . . that nothing and no one could ever separate me from His love. I was content and felt established in my faith. My husband and I served the Lord together in several Baptist churches for what now seems a lifetime.

FAST FORWARD to the middle of the night, just after 3:00am on April 17, 2019. I was awakened from a sound sleep by a very loud audible announcement that said, 'A VOICE FROM HEAVEN!' I have shared that experience before, but let me just say again, I have never been the same since. That 'awakening' was both physical and spiritual! It was as if all that had gone before, my whole life, all those years of serving Jesus Christ . . . with right or wrong doctrine . . . that chapter was finished! MY JESUS spoke to me in an audible voice and called me for His kingdom purposes! He said 'Come away with me. . . from now on I will teach you, I will show you who you are in Me, I will reveal to you the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, I will give you dreams and visions, I will equip you to work in My harvest field, I will train you as a warrior in my end-time army, I will refine you as silver, I will prepare you to be My Bride.' Now, I did not hear all that at once but in bits and pieces as the Lord so willed. Accomplishing all of that has been a process over many months, and it continues unto this day. In fact, I think even writing this article is part of the process. The Lord is depending on me to be obedient. Someone who reads this needs desperately to know the Truth. If that person is **YOU**, I pray my testimony helps you find what you are seeking.

The Lord has laid it on my heart to share with you one of the most important revelations that He helped me to understand during His refining process. He did not give me the answer on a silver platter, I had to seek it out myself by searching His Word and letting His Holy Spirit interpret what I was reading. Gone are the days when I blindly rely on man's teachings and interpretation of scripture. Man is fallible, God

IS NOT! We must divorce ourselves from the doctrines and traditions of men and seek **ONLY HIS TRUTH**. I knew in my spirit God was requiring me to decide once and for all time where I stood on this particular issue. No more changing my mind. I had to settle in my own heart what I believed and what I did not believe . . . what foundation I would choose to stand on. I knew my decision was pivotal. The conclusion of my heart-wrenching deliberation would determine my destiny going forward and just how much God could use me for His purposes. I will not lie to you, it was truly a struggle. When you have believed something so long, it becomes part of the fabric of your life . . . a core value if you will. Some may call that a 'sacred cow' which is immune from criticism or opposition. I had convinced myself that it would pretty much be a sacrilege to even question God's ability to hold on to me. I so strongly believed in the 'Security of the Believer' that I taught it to my children! I taught it to other people's children that I worked with in youth ministry over the years! Dear Lord, dare I now admit that I made such a tragic mistake, such a grave error in rightly dividing the Word of Truth!

One morning shortly after my 'awakening experience,' while on my knees in prayer, I begged God for discernment regarding this doctrine most commonly known as 'Once Saved, Always Saved.' The mere fact that I had doubts about it, raised a huge red flag. Yes, I remembered the handful of scriptures I had written down and stuffed in my Bible years ago when I was in my twenties. But what if I had been wrong in my understanding of His Word back then when I was a less mature Christian? Those same scriptures were still there in black and white. By themselves they could be interpreted in such a way as to support that doctrine. But God's Word is **LIVING!** It is entirely possible to read as black and white text without accurate understanding. The Scriptures do not truly come ALIVE until the Holy Spirit opens up your understanding by interpreting 'God's meaning' to what you are reading. Jesus explained this concept once to his disciples. He said he spoke in parables for a reason. Not everyone can hear God's voice, only those with ears to hear. Did I have EARS TO HEAR back then when I made such an important decision, or was I just reading text on a page and relying on my own logic for understanding? I am by no means a Bible scholar, but in all my years as a Christian, many times I would come across scripture in both the Old and New Testament that clearly seemed to refute OSAS. I know God is not the author of confusion. So on that day with tears in my eyes, I told God I wanted to know the truth, no matter how painful it might be to hear. As if on cue, the following scripture was dropped into my spirit:

Matthew 7:23-14 - "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; 14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

I immediately had the understanding of what the Holy Spirit just whispered into my spirit. I wept a long time, but I finally had my answer. The doctrine of 'Once Saved, Always Saved' is most definitely **not THE NARROW WAY**. It is the easy way our enemy made so attractive to the multitudes. **It is a DECEPTION!** Many people who genuinely believe in Jesus Christ have been deceived into thinking that the only thing they must do to inherit eternal life is say a one-time quick prayer of repentance, confess their belief, and they are automatically guaranteed a 'golden ticket' to enter heaven.

That is exactly the kind of thinking Satan wants the children of God to have. He is the father of lies! He knows that if he can mix a little bit of truth with his lies, it's a whole lot easier to swallow. If he can convince you that just a little bit of religion will save you, he's got you hooked for life! Satan knows God's Word better than we do. He wants your relationship with the Lord to be as shallow as possible because he knows God's commandments. When Jesus was asked which is the great commandment, He

responded, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God **with all thy heart**, and **with all thy soul**, and **with all thy mind**.” Now, please know that I am not saying that those who adhere to OSAS do not love the Lord. Remember, that is the doctrine I have lived by for close to 50 years, yet I love the Lord with all my heart! There are probably millions of Christ’s followers who are in the same boat I was. What I do know is that the OSAS doctrine provides an excuse for ‘lukewarmness’ in the body of Christ, for not seeking a deeper relationship with the Lord. After all, now that you are holding that ‘golden ticket’ provided by God’s grace, OSAS means you can now live your life any way you want with little to no regard for God’s ways. Don’t you think Satan knows what God will do to those who are found lukewarm? Just so you know, I have been unable to find the term ‘Once Saved, Always Saved’ anywhere in God’s Word. By interjecting this man-made concept into the churches, which over a long period of time became accepted as church doctrine, that old serpent the devil has been able to deceive generations of believers. We have underestimated our enemy to think we are immune to his clever tricks. I asked myself, ‘Why would God allow me to believe this lie all these years, knowing how much I truly love Him?’ I can’t blame God. I have no one to blame but myself. The answers were there all the time, right in plain sight in His written Word. I am the one who allowed my ears to be tickled by what I wanted to hear. It sounded so good to me that I did not bother to seek God further regarding the matter. I blindly followed the crowd who entered through the **WIDE GATE** and were happily strolling along the **BROAD WAY** that leads to destruction. Dear God, so many are on it, including my own family . . . a direct result of my own blindness! A case of the blind leading the blind! OSAS is what many have been taught all their lives in Christian churches. It is a doctrine that has received mainstream acceptance in many entire denominations. It has been made a part of their STATEMENT OF FAITH. For many, it is so integrated into their Christian beliefs they would not ever think of questioning its authenticity. They have believed it all their lives. They will argue with anyone who opposes their viewpoint. It is a hill they are willing to stand on and fight to the death to protect.

If you are reading this and that is what you are thinking, I want you to know I understand what you are feeling! I was on that same hill with you until the foundation started to crumble beneath my feet and there remained no solid ground to stand on! It was terrifying and liberating all at the same time! We have reached a point that there is precious little time remaining to get your spiritual house in order. Jesus is coming very soon! He does not want His children to remain blinded by the Deceiver. Our Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Soon it won’t matter what you believe . . . for it will be too late for anyone to change their mind. While there is yet time, please seek the Lord regarding the doctrine of OSAS. Don’t take my word for it, I’m only human. I challenge you to ask God. **He does not want His children to believe a lie.** He will point you to the truth if you sincerely want to know it. But He also gives you free will to choose your own path in life. Like the prodigal son, sometimes we are allowed to learn the hard way that we have taken a wrong turn in life and need to find our way back HOME! If you should be traveling on the Broadway that leads to destruction, please, please, turn on your heavenly GPS and take the next U-Turn that will lead you back to the NARROW WAY. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Choose LIFE!

My friends, belief is just the first step, but there is so, so very much more to having a relationship with Christ. Please do not think you can stick that ‘golden ticket’ of God’s grace somewhere for safe-keeping and then go about living your life anyway you like with no real commitment to Jesus Christ. Salvation is not complex, even a child can understand it, but it is not secured by belief alone. It requires true repentance of all sin and not just once, but your walk must be in a state of repentance. God knows you

are not perfect, and even when you try your best you will make mistakes. Satan takes those opportunities to accuse you before God, but Jesus as your mediator stands up on your behalf in the courtroom of heaven. If you have confessed your sins, Jesus covers them with His precious blood. **As often as the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, ask our Heavenly Father for forgiveness. And just as your sins are forgiven when you ask, you must also forgive all those who have ever wronged you.** You must truly endeavor to follow Christ with everything that is in you. **You must also obey His Voice.** If you have unconfessed sin or unforgiveness of others in your life, you cannot hear His voice clearly. Keep the channels of communication open so you will have no difficulty in following wherever the Lord leads you. Do not follow another voice. He is the Good Shepherd. Let Him be your guide and you will not stray from the Narrow Way.

I know that many reading this post will be furious. You will be saying, 'Who does she think she is to question my beliefs. She's just spouting off her own opinion and trying to force it upon others. Well, let me just say whatever comment you're thinking of, I have probably already heard it. I know this is not what people want to hear. But I want you to know from the bottom of my heart that I am compelled to write this to you because I love you and am concerned for your soul. I know you may say, How can she love me, she doesn't even know me! Your right, I don't know you, but I can assure you that Jesus loves you and He has given me His heart for souls. I can barely drive into town anymore and see all the traffic going to and fro, with most of the occupants of those vehicles having no thought to where they will spend eternity. Sometimes I can barely drive for my tears. There is such an urgency to reach you with the messages God wants you to have. His message is strong!

"GIVE IT UP! STOP BELIEVING THE LIE! Don't be so full of yourself, so proud that you can't admit when you've made a mistake! Do you seriously want to tell ME that YOU KNOW MORE THAN GOD! HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE THE ALMIGHTY GOD! TIME TO CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY!"

(I've never had this happen before, these words were not from me, my fingers literally flew across the keyboard as I typed them. I am trembling from the force of His fury! That was truly a supernatural experience . . . as if He was reading along over my shoulder as I typed and just decided to take over the keyboard at the appropriate time. I am in awe!)

(I am urged to continue with the following:)

Let me give you an example of someone who believed a lie. Saul of Tarsus was so full of righteous zeal against the followers of Jesus, that He persecuted them. He described himself as being a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was stuck in the law and considered himself to be doing a good thing to suppress anything that came against what he believed. He wanted to stop the followers of Jesus so badly that he had the Jewish leaders issue him letters giving him authority to search out the believers and have them thrown in prison or even killed. In one instance the scripture recounts that Saul held the coats of those who stoned Stephen while they committed murder, consenting to their heinous act. Saul thought he was in the right! No one could convince him otherwise. That is, until one eventful day on the road to Damascus, Saul had an encounter with our resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ. During that encounter, he found out how very wrong he had been. **Saul did not know what he did not know, but once Jesus**

revealed Himself to Saul, there was no way Saul could ever unknow what he now knew! Saul was struck blind on the road and had to be led the rest of the way to Damascus. He was blind for three days and when the scales were removed from his eyes he said, **“I was blind but now I see.”** That remark was not just about the restoration of his physical vision. It had a much deeper meaning. Saul was a changed man. He was given spiritual eyes. His entire perspective had changed by receiving the truth. That same Saul became known as Paul the Apostle, and he went on to become a great evangelist bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

I want to testify to everyone reading this article that **“I was blind but now I see.”** I can never go back to believe the lie I once believed. Yes, I know I am saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. I know that it is in the righteousness of Christ alone that I stand and not through any works of my own doing. Though I have faithfully followed Christ to the best of my ability all of my life, I erred in believing a lie and teaching it to others. I have repented and I know the Lord has forgiven me, but I am so sorrowful to think I may have led others astray or caused a precious child of God to stumble by believing the same lie I did. **I pray that the Lord will take MY MESS and turn it into a MESSAGE for His glory.** Please seek the Lord regarding this matter. It is a very important issue that you need to settle, just between you and God. I will attach a few scriptures that helped me to make my decision but please read them in context to get the full meaning. And listen with ears to hear what the Holy Spirit may whisper into your heart. I know there will not be very many who take this message to heart . . . only a few . . . Jesus forewarned of that a long time ago. **NARROW IS THE WAY** which leadeth unto life, and **FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT!**

I will leave you with this thought. You cannot take advantage of God’s grace by accepting the **GIFT** and neglecting to accept the **GIVER OF THE GIFT!** Please make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life by accepting Him. He is the precious gift our Heavenly Father gave as a sacrifice for the sins of the entire world . . . yours, mine, and the other 7 plus BILLION people on planet earth. Please do not neglect so great a salvation, for your freedom from the wages of sin was purchased at a very great price!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES (KJV):

[Note: These scriptures are in no particular order. For the sake of time, on some verses I will type synopsis only, please search these out for yourselves!]

Prov. 2:1-5 – searching for the knowledge of the truth

John 14:6 – Jesus saith unto him, “I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Ezek. 18:24-32 – righteous man who commits iniquity

James 1:12-27 – 12) receive the crown of life, 16) do not err, 22) doer of word, 25) perfect law of liberty

James 5:12 – swear not/yea be yea, nay be nay/lest fall into condemnation

1 Cor. 10:12 – thinketh he stand take heed lest he fall

1 Cor. 10:21 – cannot partake of the Lord’s table & the table of devils

Heb. Chp.3 – 1) *[addressed to]* ‘holy brethren’ partakers of the heavenly calling, 6) hold fast 8) harden not your hearts, 10-11) generation that erred/shall not enter into my rest, 12) take heed lest any have evil heart of unbelief, in **departing from the living God**, 14) partakers of Christ if hold beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end

1 Tim. 3:6-7 – *[re: special office of leadership but indicates propensity to fall]* 6) lest lifted with pride fall into condemnation of the devil 7) must have good report **lest fall into reproach & snare of devil**

Luke 6:39 – can the blind lead the blind? shall not both fall into the ditch?

1 Cor. 9:22b-27 – [Paul’s speaks of being partakers in a race] 24) run, to obtain, 25) strive to obtain crown, 26) *[Paul also fighting to win the race]* 27) bring body into subjection lest by any means when he had preached to others, he **should be a castaway**. *[takeaway – crown not obtained until race completed & possibility exists even he could not make it to the finish line]*

Matt. 7:19-24 – 19) tree not bearing good fruit hewn down & cast into fire, 20) by their fruits shall know them, 21) **not everyone that sayeth, Lord, Lord shall enter kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of the Father**, 23) will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity, 24) he that heareth & doeth is wise man that built his house upon a rock

Jer. Chp.2 - *[written about God’s chosen people, Israel/spared them NOT when they forsook their God]* 7) brought them into plentiful land but they defiled it & made His heritage an abomination, 8) priests, pastors, prophets transgressed, 9) yet the Lord pleaded with them & their children’s children *[following generations]*. 11) changed their gods/changed their glory for that which did not profit 13) His people committed two evils: forsook their God, the fountain of living waters, & hewed them out **broken cisterns that could hold no water**, 14) why is Israel spoiled? 20) God broke their yoke [freed them]/they promised not to transgress but then played the harlot, 21) planted a noble vine, good seed, **how then art thou turned into degenerate plant of a strange vine** 37) thou shalt go forth thy hands upon thy head *[woe is me]* for **the Lord hath rejected thy confidences** and thou shalt not prosper in them.

Galatians 4:9 – But now, after you have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 5:19-21 – *[lists ‘works of the flesh’ – any of this unconfessed sin in your life?]* adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry [stubbornness is as], witchcraft [rebellion is as], hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; 21b) . . . as I have told you in times past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**. (takeaway – if you believe in Jesus but continue in willful sin without repentance, you are not OSAS, you **will not** inherit the kingdom of God. You can not pick and choose which part of God’s Holy Word applies to your situation. Its not EITHER/OR, it ALL APPLIES!)

11 Tim. 3:15-17 – [in fact, read the whole chapter, it is a picture of today . . . begins with ‘This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come . . . we are there] 15) **the holy scriptures (plural)** are able to **make thee wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus 16) **All scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; 17) That the man of God may be perfect (complete) thoughly (completely) furnished unto all good works.

Rom. 8:5-9 – 5) they after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, they after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6) carnally minded is death; spiritually minded is life and peace 7) carnal mind enmity against God, 8) they in the flesh cannot please God 9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, **if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.** [do you know that you know that you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the Spirit of Christ dwells in you?]

Rom. 8:16-17 – 16) **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:** 17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. [have you experienced the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit? If not, you may want to talk to God about it]

2 Peter 2:19b-22 – 19b) of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage 20) For if **after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome,** the latter end is worse with them than the beginning 21) For it had been **better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have know it, to turn from the holy commandment** delivered unto them 22) But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Phil. 3:12-15 – [excerpt from the testimony of Paul] 12) **Not as though I had already attained,** either were already perfect (complete); but I follow after [pursue], if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13) Brethren, **I count not myself to have apprehended:** but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14) **I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.** 15) Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, **God shall reveal even this unto you.** [if you are not like-minded to what Paul has shared in his testimony, just ask God to reveal His truths to you and help you understand]

Col. 1:22-23 – And **you that were sometime alienated** and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet **now hath He reconciled** 22) In the body of His flesh through death, **to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight:** 23) **If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,** which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Col. 2:6-8 – As we have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him 7) Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments [principles, doctrines] of the world and not after Christ.

1 Cor. 6:9-10 – Know ye not that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: . . . [again, the remainder of these 2 verses gives list of what constitutes unrighteousness. Those on the list without repentance shall not inherit]

John Chp.15 – [Jesus is the vine, we as His followers are the branches. We **MUST ABIDE IN THE VINE!**] 6) **If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch,** and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Rom. Chp.11 – [Paul is sharing the mystery of God’s plan to bring the gospel to the Gentiles – see v.25 by using the example of an olive tree] 17) And if the branches (Israel) be broken off, and thou (Gentiles), being grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18) Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19) Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, and thou standest by faith. **Be not highminded, but fear: 21) For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.** 22) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but **toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.** 23) And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

Matt. 22:36-40 – Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37) Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38) This is the first and great commandment. 39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Rev. 3:14-16 – And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

1 John 2:1-6 – My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2) And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world 3) And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4) **He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** 5) But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. 6) He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

1 John 3:10-11 – In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.** 11) For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning that we should **love one another.**

Isaiah 55:11 – So shall my word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Gen. 26:4b-5 - ...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; 5) Because that Abraham **obeyed my voice**, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Jer. 7:23 – But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice**, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Jer. 9:11-16 – (judgment sent because the people of Israel had forsaken God’s laws, obeyed not His voice, walked after the imaginations of their own heart, and after other gods)

Heb. 4:1 – Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Heb. 4:11 – Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief [disobedience].

Heb. 10:26-31 – For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27) But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28) He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; 29) Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified [set apart], an unholy thing, and hath done despite [insult] unto the Spirit of grace [Holy Spirit]? 30) For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. 31) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

John 10:27-29 – **My sheep hear my voice**, and I know them, and **they follow me**: 28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and **no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand**.

These last few verses are often used in support of the OSAS doctrine. Let's explore them a little closer. First, please see **vs. 27** again. You must be able to hear the Lord's voice in order to follow Him. After your profession of faith in Christ, if you do not bother to draw close by developing a personal relationship with Him, you will not be able to hear His voice. If you cannot hear His voice, do you think there might be a possibility that perhaps you are not truly of His fold? For example, you may be introduced to someone you've never met before. You now know their name and maybe a little something about them, but if you do not make an effort to develop a relationship with that person, they are merely an acquaintance and not a friend. Taking that a step further, if you do not become intimate with that person, chances are you are not going to ever fall in love with them. **Jesus loves you so much that He died for you and He wants you to love Him!** How is that going to happen if you only **know OF Him**, but do not truly **know Him**?

Herein lies one of the dangers of the OSAS doctrine. There is a big difference between having a 'head knowledge' of Jesus Christ and having a 'heart knowledge' of Jesus Christ. My husband's testimony is a great example of this. He went to church all his life and one Sunday when he was a young boy, after hearing a sermon about God separating the sheep from the goats, his Dad leaned over and asked him, "Do you want to be a sheep or a goat?" Well of course, he didn't want to be a goat so he went forward and talked with the preacher and told him that he wanted to give his life to Christ so he could be a sheep. They said a little prayer together and he was baptized. From that time on, he assumed that was all there was to it! He was **SAVED** and on his way to heaven someday. Years later He met me. Of course, he told me he was a Christian. I probably would not have even dated him otherwise. He truly thought He was a Christian! After we got married, it became obvious to me that something was amiss. You just know when Jesus is truly a part of someone's life. Sometimes it would just be little things . . . like he didn't want me to sing 'It Is Well with My Soul,' while washing the dishes, or he wanted us to go to a movie that was inappropriate. He didn't want to go to church with me anymore and I had to go alone. It's a long story, but praise God, about 8 years later my husband became born-again and there was no doubt he was a changed man! In John 3 you can read where Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Furthermore, He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, **HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**" The very next chapter of John tells of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. In their conversation He said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of

Him, and He would have given thee 'living water.' Whosoever drinketh of this water [from Jacob's well] shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him **SHALL BE IN HIM** a well of water springing up into **EVERLASTING LIFE.**" [see John 3:3-5 & 4:10-14]

I shared my husband's salvation experience because I know there are perhaps millions of people all over the world with similar stories. What if the experience He had as a little boy had been all he had to base his salvation on . . . a foundation built on sand? What if he had no further opportunity to have that 'life-changing' experience when he truly became a new creation in Christ . . . a foundation built on the solid Rock? The difference is like night and day! Shortly after He accepted Christ as His Savior, I caught him bellowing out a song while in the shower. You guessed it . . . he was singing 'It Is Well with My Soul.' We had a good laugh together! Think how many people have been deceived by the OSAS doctrine and may miss heaven by 18 inches . . . the approximate distance between your head and your heart. That's alarming!

Now let's look at **vs. 28.** 'THEM' in this verse is referring to **His sheep.** So if you have been deceived into **only thinking you are a sheep** as in the story above, it is not talking about you as qualifying for eternal life or being safe in His hand.

Now the biggie, **vs. 29.** This is the primary verse used to validate OSAS! Keep in mind the 'them' is still 'His sheep' so you have to truly be His sheep to qualify for this to apply to you. But let's discuss the part about no man being able to pluck them (His sheep) out of the Father's hand. Can we all agree that our Heavenly Father, the Lord God Almighty is more than able to protect His sheep? Yes, no man can force Him to let go of you! But there is one little thing we have to keep in mind. God gave you something special when He created you . . . it's called FREE WILL. Though He is more than able to hold on to you He will NOT keep you prisoner. He will not force you to love Him. If you insist on leaving, He will let you go. (Remember the parable of the prodigal son?) It doesn't mean He will stop loving you. Nothing can ever separate you from His love. He will be waiting with open arms for you to repent and return back to Him. *[Let me just say, there is a sin that is without repentance, but that topic is not for today. Please refer to my post on 444prophecynews posted mid-January, 2021 entitled "Repentance Required."]* I believe that John 10:29 speaks to **'ABIDING' in Him** (see also Ps. 91). YOU are the only one that can remove yourself from the Father's hand, by your choice alone.

Wow, I have written another epistle, but this one has some very important information that I hope will make a difference for the kingdom of God. I pray it will lead many who may be confused about the OSAS doctrine to seek answers in God's Word and ask God to reveal Truth to them. We have not because we ask not. As you can see from what I've written here, when I did ask, He gave me quite the download. The scriptures I have included are barely the tip of the iceberg. There are many passages scattered throughout the entire Bible that refute OSAS if we just take the time to look for them, read them with the Holy Spirit as our guide, and take the blinders off our eyes. I'm so grateful to have come to the knowledge of the truth. I have had my 'Damascus Road' experience. My prayer is that all who read this and search for themselves will soon be able to say, 'I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE.'

Yours for the Harvest,

Averine