

Assembly of Eloah

This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

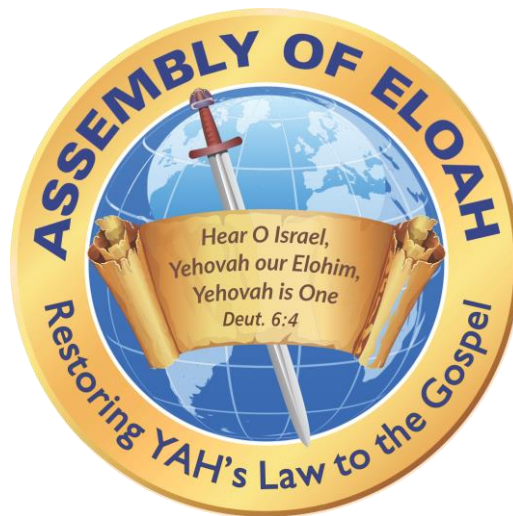
Salvation

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Edition 1



There is no more important point in the subject of Christianity than salvation itself. Salvation is the entire reason that Christianity, or any religion for that matter, exists. Every Christian is hoping that by observing his/her belief system, he/she will receive the reward of salvation. Christians need a firm understanding of what salvation is if they hope to achieve it.



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On June 20, 2006 the House of Deputies of the 75th General Convention of the Anglican/Episcopal Church refused overwhelmingly to even consider a resolution stating that Christ is the only name by which a person may be saved. The vote was 70.5% (675 votes) for discharge of the resolution stating that Christ was the only name by which one might be saved and 29.5% (242 votes) to consider the resolution. The full article can be found at: <http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=4311>

The article quoted Eugene C. McDowell, a graduate of Yale Divinity School and Canon Theologian for the Diocese of North Carolina as stating:

"This type of language was used in 1920s and 1930s to alienate the type of people who were executed. It was called the Holocaust. I understand the intent, but I ask you to allow the discharge to stay,"

This is an interesting development. A professed Christian church refuses to even consider a resolution stating that Christ is the only name whereby one might receive salvation. This paper examines the subject of salvation. Through this study, the insidiously destructive nature of the above developments will be made abundantly clear.

The Beginning

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

Gen. 1:1-2 ESV In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was

over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

His creation was perfect when He created it. God does nothing imperfectly.

Gen. 1:31 ESV And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Deut. 32:3-4 ESV For I will proclaim the name of Y^ehovah (the LORD); ascribe greatness to our God! (4) "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

Yah's creation was perfect but it became imperfect, much like Lucifer himself. Imperfection was found in him.

Eze. 28:11-15 ESV Moreover, the word of Y^ehovah (the LORD) came to me: (12) "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says Y^ehovah (the LORD) GOD: "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. (13) You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. (14) You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. (15) You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

From the day Lucifer was created, he was blameless (or perfect) in his ways.

The word iniquity here is translated from the Hebrew word 'Avon. According to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, 'Avon means perversity or moral evil. This is the

second degree of sin. Essentially, it equates to aiming at the wrong target.

But then iniquity or wickedness was found in Lucifer. We all know the story. Lucifer, who became known as Satan, rebelled against Y^ehovah. He rebelled and took a third of the heavenly host with him.

Rev. 12:3-4 ESV And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. (4) His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

He was the first part of God's creation to become imperfect. God created man and called His creation good, **tôb** in the Hebrew, **agathos** in the Greek. This is in contrast to what Christ said in Mark 10:18,

Mark 10:18 ESV And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

The perfect creation became imperfect, as we've seen in Genesis 1:26-31 that God called His creation good. It's important to note that both the Hebrew word **tôb** and the Greek word **agathos** have the same meaning.

God created mankind and pronounced His creation good. We read the story of man's downfall in Genesis 3:1-20. Satan wasn't content with being corrupt himself but he had to try to destroy mankind as well. He knew and understood the plan of God and wasn't satisfied with his role in it.

Gen. 3:1-20 ESV Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that Y^ehovah (the LORD) God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (2) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, (3) but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (4) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (7) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (8) And they heard the sound of Y^ehovah (the LORD) God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Y^ehovah (the LORD) God among the trees of the garden. (9) But Y^ehovah (the LORD) God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" (10) And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (11) He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (12) The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." (13) Then Y^ehovah (the LORD) God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (14) Y^ehovah (The LORD) God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he

shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (16) To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (17) And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (20) The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Adam, Eve and all who would come after them were cursed as a result of their downfall. In verse 29, we see the end result. Mankind was destined to return to the dust from which he was created. This was the ultimate penalty and absolutely contradicts the first lie in the Bible, which is found in verse 4.

Gen. 3:4 ESV But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

This lie has been perpetuated via the immortal soul doctrine for centuries. We are going to die and the reason we're going to die is because we have become imperfect.

Rom. 6:23 ESV For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The result of sin is death. But God had a plan. He had a plan to redeem the fallen and imperfect creation from death. God knows the end from the beginning and He knew His creation would become imperfect. Therefore, He provided a

means for reconciliation. We see His answer in Revelation 13:8.

Rev. 13:8 ESV and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

The Lamb was slain from the beginning because God knew that it would be necessary to reconcile the fallen creation to Himself. The entire sacrificial system was added as a result of sin.

Gal. 3:17-19 ESV This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. (18) For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. (19) Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

Also in Jeremiah:

Jer. 7:22-24 ESV For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. (23) But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.' (24) But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

The law referred to here is the sacrificial system. It cannot be referring to the moral law of God. What is sin?

1John 3:4 ESV Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

If sin is breaking the law, then how could the moral law have been added subsequent to the fall of Satan, the disloyal host and mankind? We see in Galatians 3:19 that the law was added as a result of breaking the law. You can't add a law as a result of breaking the law that was just added. It's logically impossible! The law that was added was the sacrificial law. The sacrificial law was added to provide a means of redemption to God. It pointed to the ultimate redemptive vehicle, which was Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Heb. 9:22 ESV Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness. As we saw earlier, the wages or result of sin is death. We've all committed sin.

Rom. 3:23 ESV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

If we've all committed sin, then we're all going to die.

1Cor. 15:22 ESV For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

The key to it all is in the second half of verse 22. God's plan is to save His creation from eternal death. The life He provides is an aonian life. It is through God's plan of salvation that this takes place.

What is Salvation?

There are two primary words used that are translated as salvation in the New Testament. The first is SGD 4991,

soteria, which is used in the New Testament 40 times. It is defined as:

1) deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation

1a) deliverance from the molestation of enemies

1b) in an ethical sense, that which concludes to the souls safety or salvation

1b1) of Messianic salvation

2) salvation as the present possession of all true Christians

3) future salvation, the sum of benefits and blessings, which the Christians, redeemed from all earthly ills, will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the consummated and eternal kingdom of God.

This word is a noun and we can see by its definition that it is salvation itself.

The second word is 4992, **soterion**, which is used in the New Testament five times. It is defined as:

1) saving, bringing salvation

2) he who embodies this salvation, or through whom God is about to achieve it

3) the hope of (future) salvation

This word is an adjective and, as we can see by its definition, it describes the act of saving, He who brings salvation or hope in salvation itself.

Salvation is a rescue or redemption but from what must we be redeemed?

Gal. 3:13 ESV Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—

for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

There are two important points to be gleaned from this verse in Galatians. First, we see that we are redeemed by Christ who, as we saw earlier, was slain from the foundation of the world for this purpose. Christ is the vehicle through which we receive redemption, much in the way the offender received forgiveness through the sin offering. The important thing to remember is that God the Father is our redeemer. He redeemed us by providing the needed sacrifice that provided that redemption, His son.

Act. 7:35 ESV "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

Gen. 22:7-8 ESV And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (8) Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

In the same way God the Father sent Moses as a redeemer for Israel, He sent Christ to redeem all creation.

Acts 8:19-23 ESV saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (20) But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! (21) You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. (22) Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. (23) For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

John 3:16-18 ESV "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

We have been cleansed from the lawlessness that resulted in the original curse of mankind.

Titus 2:12-14 KJV Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1Peter 1:17-19 ESV And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, (18) knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, (19) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

God gave His only begotten son to be the redeemer of the world. Israel considered God the Father to be their savior.

Luke 1:47 ESV and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

God exalted Christ as our savior.

Acts 5:30-31 ESV The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. (31) God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

It is through Christ's sacrifice that we become sons. Prior to Christ's sacrifice, we were slaves but now we are considered sons through adoption by the Holy Spirit.

Gal. 4:4-7 ESV But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, (5) to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (6) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

We are joint heirs with Christ and we will inherit the kingdom from our Father together, as brethren.

Rom. 8:16-17 ESV The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Redemption

God the Father, through Christ's sacrifice, is reconciling His children to Himself.

1Cor. 15:27-28 ESV For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. (28) When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Eph. 4:6 ESV one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

We have been redeemed through that sacrifice. As we saw earlier, God the Father is our redeemer. In looking

closely at the word redeemed, this becomes crystal clear.

Luke 1:67-71 ESV And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, (68) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people (69) and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, (70) as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, (71) that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;

There are two words together translated as redemption in verse 68 of Luke 1. The words are SGD 4160, **poieō**, and SGD 3085, **lutrosis**, and is only used here when referring to the God of Israel, Y^ehovah our Father. **Poieō** is a verb and simply means **to make** or **to do**. **Lutrosis** is a noun and means a ransoming, redemption, deliverance, especially from the penalty of sin. So we find here the proof that Y^ehovah our Father is our true redeemer because he made or provided our redemption. This is important to remember. It's also important to remember that Jesus gave his life for us willingly. Let's not discount the loving sacrifice he made for us.

The other words translated in the New Testament as redemption are SGD 3084, **lutroō**, which means to ransom or redeem; SGD 1805, **exagorazo**, which means to buy up, ransom, to rescue from loss; SGD 59, **agorazo**, which means to go to market, by implication to purchase, specifically to redeem. All of these words have the implication of buying back. We have been rescued from loss of life by our God through Christ who paid the ransom.

This redemption was pointed to by the legislation regarding the firstborn of Israel and the setting aside of the Levitical priesthood.

Exo. 13:12-13 ESV you shall set apart to Y^ehovah (the LORD) all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be Y^ehovah's (the LORD's). (13) Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

When He established the Levitical priesthood, God redeemed the firstborn of Israel with the Levites.

Num. 3:11-13 ESV And Y^ehovah (the LORD) spoke to Moses, saying, (12) "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, (13) for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am Y^ehovah (the LORD)."

They were set aside for a holy purpose, just as we are. The Levitical priesthood pointed to the priest, that would come afterward, of a priesthood that was after the order of Melchizedek, not having genealogy that entitled him to be a priest. The significant difference between the two is that unlike the Levitical priesthood, the priesthood of Melchizedek was not established through genealogy.

Num. 3:14-15 ESV And Y^ehovah (the LORD) spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, (15) "List the sons of Levi, by fathers' houses and by clans; every male from a month old and upward you shall list."

The Levites were registered by their genealogy.

Heb. 7:14-17 ESV For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. (15) This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, (16) who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. (17) For it is witnessed of him, **"You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."**

Another priest like Melchizedek has arisen. Like Melchizedek, He is not established as a result of his genealogy. Melchizedek was a priest prior to Levi being born. We are part of that priesthood of Melchizedek and Christ is our high priest. We have been redeemed and set aside for a holy purpose, just as the Levitical priesthood was.

Once Saved Always Saved?

So far we have seen why we need salvation. We have seen from where that salvation comes. Is salvation something that is given once and once it is given, one always retains it? This is the belief of many. Once salvation has been received, what is our responsibility? Can we lose our salvation?

The New Testament is rife with admonishment in regard to us taking care not to lose our salvation. Christ told His disciples that once we start down the road, we can't long for what used to be our way of life. Otherwise, we aren't worthy of the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:62 ESV Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

We are promised a crown of life.

James 1:12 ESV Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

And how do we know we love Him?

1John 5:2-3 ESV By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

The crown that James referred to here is the same crown that Paul wrote about in his second letter to Timothy.

2Tim. 4:7-8 ESV I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Paul knew that if he fought the good fight and persevered, he would receive the crown that he so diligently sought. He mentions finishing the race. By implication, there must be a possibility of not finishing the race. We see this also in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

1Cor. 9:24-27 ESV Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. (25) Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (26) So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. (27) But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Paul admonished the Corinthians to discipline themselves so they would not

be disqualified from the race that leads to the crown of life and righteousness. This discipline involves obedience to His laws and statutes. It involves the bearing of the fruits of the spirit which grow through continued obedience and practice of God's laws.

Paul stated that we should not run as one who runs for the sake of running but run in such a way as to win the race. That means we should run as if we're trying to finish first. This coming in first is of a dual meaning. First, we run with zeal as if we want to finish the race first. We are admonished no to be lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.

Rev. 3:14-16 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. (15) "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! (16) So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

The second meaning refers to the first resurrection. We should be running the race so that we secure our position in the first resurrection, which is the better resurrection.

Rev. 20:6 ESV Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Peter exhorted the elders of the Christian Jews of the dispersion to care for God's flock so they might receive the crown of glory.

1Peter 5:1-14 ESV So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2)

shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (11) To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (12) By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. (13) She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. (14) Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

This particular passage is extremely important. It's directed to the leadership of the church. The leadership of the church has the responsibility to shepherd the flock of God. The word translated shepherd here is *poimainō*, a verb. Thayer defines *poimainō* in the following manner:

- 1) to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep
- 1a) to rule, govern

1a1) of rulers

1a2) to furnish pasture for food

1a3) to nourish

1a4) to cherish one's body, to serve the body

1a5) to supply the requisites for the soul's need

The leadership of the church is to care for, nurture and provide for the flock. Those in leadership are not to lord it over (*katakurieuō* in the Greek) the brethren. *Katakurieuō* is defined by Thayer as:

- 1) to bring under one's power, to subject one's self, to subdue, master
- 2) to hold in subjection, to be master of, exercise lordship over

The leadership is not to subject the church to oppressive rule or rule over the brethren as a master. We have one head and that head is Christ. The leadership is to care for the body of Christ in a manner that is conducive to Christian development, not subject the brethren to intimidation and abuse.

The Philadelphian church is admonished to hold on to what they have, so no one takes their crown. They have limited strength, in other words, they are not a large, powerful organization. They do, however, keep God's word or commands and have not denied His name. They also keep His command to endure. Christians must endure to the end to receive the salvation that Y^ehovah our Father makes available through His Son and our elder brother Jesus the Christ.

Rev. 3:7-11 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. (8) "I know your

works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (9) Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. (10) Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. (11) I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

So we can see that it is indeed possible for us to fall short and lose the crown that has been given to us. If we don't keep the faith once delivered, we will not finish the race.

Jude, in his letter to all the sanctified, exhorted the faithful to hold on to the faith once delivered. Our faith should be the same faith as Christ and the Apostles. If our belief system is not the same as theirs, then we aren't holding on to the faith once delivered to the saints. There is a stern warning in Jude's letter to us, the sanctified.

Jude 1:1-25 ESV Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: (2) May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. (3) Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. (4) For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (5) Now I want to remind you, although you once

fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. (6) And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— (7) just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (8) Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. (9) But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." (10) But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. (11) Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. (12) These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; (13) wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. (14) It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, (15) to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (16) These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. (17) But you must remember, beloved, the

predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. (18) They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." (19) It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. (20) But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, (21) keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (22) And have mercy on those who doubt; (23) save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. (24) Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, (25) to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Conclusion

In conclusion friends and brethren, we can see that because the creation, both the physical and a portion of the spiritual, became imperfect, our Father Y^ehovah had to provide a means of reconciling His creation to Himself. That reconciliation or redemption came in the form of His Son's life. Christ emptied himself of his divine nature and became like us for the sole purpose of redeeming all of creation and providing salvation to the imperfect.

We, as Christians, have an obligation to keep the commands of God the Father and to endure to the end. We have to adhere to the faith of the saints that have gone before us. We cannot look back from where it is we came, but must continue to stay focused on the real prize. That prize is the crown of life, righteousness and glory that is so

mercifully given to us by our Father Y^ehovah through the sacrifice of Christ, our head, high priest and elder brother.

We must endure, fight the good fight and finish the race. Let's run the race not just to finish, but with the aim of finishing first, with all zeal, so that we won't lose our crown but will be found worthy to stand before the Son of God at His return.

Those who say there is another name by which we might be saved are anti-Christ and are children of their father, the devil.

Amen, Y^ehovah