



James O. Jones, Jr. is the Founder and Director of *Light of Life Ministry* out of Nashville, TN. He served as a pastor for fifteen years in the Southern Methodist Church with some additional time spent in non-denominational work. He currently serves as the Director of Christian Education of the Southern Methodist Church and Director of Continuing Education for Southern Methodist College. His greatest ministry love is that of teaching, and he has devoted most of his adult life to the study of God's Word and teaching the truths found there. In April 1982 he married Barbara, a now retired elementary school teacher of 32 years, and together they have three children, and at this printing, seven grandchildren.

### About Light of Life Ministry

*Light of Life Ministry* was established in the Spring of 2006, legalized in May as a State of Tennessee Non-profit Corporation, and officially approved in June as an IRC 501c3 Religious Non-profit Organization by the Internal Revenue Service. The goal of this ministry is to establish teaching centers in as many Churches, communities, and homes as possible for the purpose of:

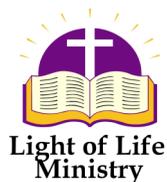
Helping Christians become effective witnesses to the lost through training and example.

Teaching sound doctrine in a small group environment, especially through the Wesley Institute of Bible and Ministry Training.

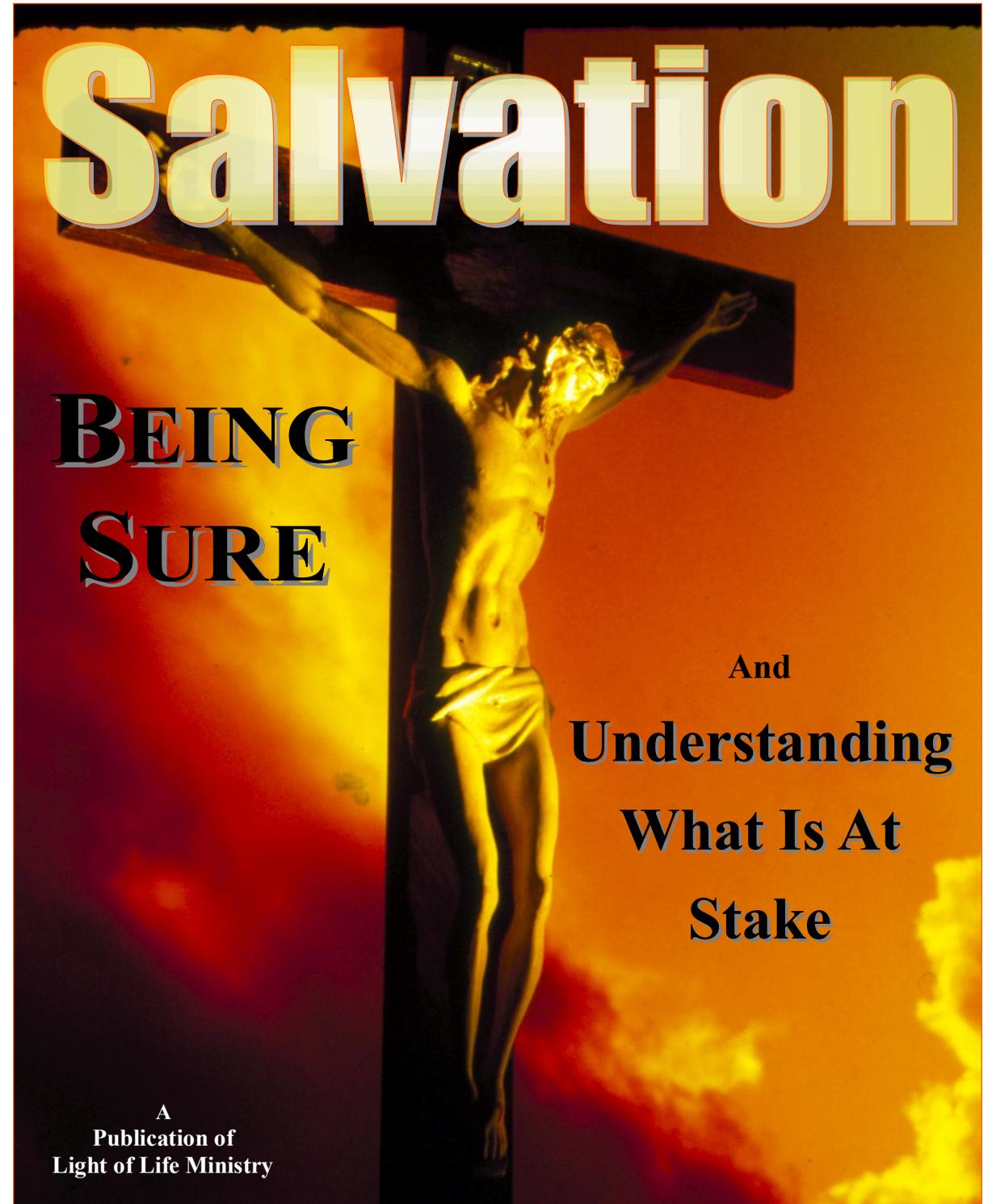
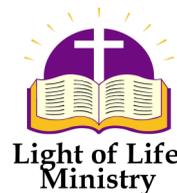
Preparing others to become home-cell Bible teachers, Sunday School teachers, Small Group Leaders, etc.

Discipling those won to Christ in all the above, so the whole process can be repeated.

*Light of Life Ministry* is designed to work with a church when it so desires or to work independently when necessary. Either way, the focus is to witness, teach, train, and disciple. If you would like more information, or desire to be added to the Ministry mailing list, please contact us at the address, email address, or phone number below.



Light of Life Ministry  
P. O. Box 50792  
Nashville, TN 37205-0792  
615-662-8168  
jjones@lolministry.org



# Being Sure!

## Understanding What Is At Stake

By J. Oliver Jones

There is nothing we will ever do in life that is more important than making sure of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It will be through this relationship that we will either enter into our eternal reward or be cast into the eternal lake of fire. This decision, this choice, is much too vital for simple assumption.

### I. Sin – Our Condition

For All Have Sinned  
and Come Short of the Glory of God!

**Romans 5:12-21 (NLT)** *When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. And though there was no law to break, since it had not yet been given, they all died anyway—even though they did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. What a contrast between Adam and Christ, who was yet to come! And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but we have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins. The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness makes all people right in God's sight and gives them life. Because one*

*person disobeyed God, many people became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many people will be made right in God's sight. God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful kindness became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful kindness rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

A working definition of sin is, "the transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what God's law forbids." This transgression can occur in thought (1 John 3:15), word (Matthew 5:22), or deed (Romans 1:32).

Sin is taken a step further by Jesus, who teaches that we do not need to actually commit a sin to be guilty of it when He states, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

#### What is the Result of Sin?

*For the wages of sin is death.* (Romans 6:23)



*That you present your bodies a living sacrifice* – "bodies" as used here is a part used for the whole, in other words, we should present our whole being or our whole person as a living sacrifice. This contrasts the OT sacrificial system of killing an animal and presenting it to the Lord, with the NT concept of presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord. It is the idea of living for Christ, not dying for Christ, that Paul has in mind here.

**Holy** – dedicated to God; set apart – separation from sin and conforming to righteousness. The theme of Holiness ties well with our heritage as Wesleyans. If we are to give ourselves to God, our offering needs to be holy, both positionally and practically.



**Acceptable unto God** – meaning of *acceptable* is "well-pleasing," as it is translated in other passages of Scripture, i.e. 2 Cor. 5:9 NKJV, Col. 3:20 NKJV, Titus 2:9 NKJV, etc.

**Reasonable** – some translations interpret this word as meaning "spiritual," however, the thought within the context is more that of *reasonable* or *rational*. In light of the "mercies of God" (or in light of the cross), and in light of God's provision, it is reasonable and rational for us to present ourselves for service to God.

**Service** (Greek word *logiken*) – In Barclay's commentary on Romans, an interesting development is given of the history of this word. He states that the noun comes from the verb meaning "to work for hire or for pay." This was not slavery, but a voluntary undertaking of work as for an employer. It later came to mean "a service to which a man gives his whole life," or that to which one dedicates his whole life. Finally it came to be the

word distinctively used of the *service offered to the gods*. In the Bible it never means human service; it always speaks of service to and the worship of God.

#### Jones Paraphrase of Romans 12:1

*Because of all that has been previously declared, and in light of the cross of Christ, I entreat and implore you to offer your whole being and dedicate your whole life as a living sacrifice, a life that is voluntarily lived totally for Christ, a life that is separated from the sins of this world, and set apart unto the righteousness of God, a life so lived that it is well pleasing to God; for this is both a reasonable and a rational service to our loving God and Savior who has given for us His very life.*

#### So then, how are we to serve?

1. We are to serve in the Context of ...  
**Spiritual Fruit - Gal. 5:22-24**
2. We are to serve in the Confines of ...  
**Spiritual Gifts - Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12**
3. We are to serve under the Conditions of...  
**Spiritual Warfare - Eph. 6:10-17**
4. We are to serve with the Conviction of...  
**Spiritual Victory - 1 John 5:1-4**

#### Conclusion:

### Surrender – Our Challenge

Surrender is always a challenge, and it looks different for each one of us. We all agree that the non-believer must surrender to Christ for his or her salvation. But that is not the only time in our lives we must revisit the issue of surrender. Our sanctification and our service will require surrender as well. "Of what?" you may ask. Of any and all things that do not help conform us to the image of Christ, of all things held onto too tightly, and of all things that hinder us from running the race with endurance (Heb. 12:1) for the purpose of winning the prize (1 Cor. 9:24). What is it that you need to surrender? ♥

<b>Justification</b> Romans 5:1-11	<b>Sanctification</b> Romans 6:1-10
<b>Positional (standing with God)</b>	<b>Experiential (personal holiness)</b>
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Subjective</b>
<b>Right standing with God</b>	<b>Conformity to the image of Christ</b>
<b>Always full and complete</b>	<b>Progressing toward completion</b>
<b>Christ's righteousness</b>	<b>Personal righteousness now</b>
<b>Absolute righteousness now</b>	<b>Absolute righteousness in future life</b>

Justification and sanctification, while they are clearly distinct, cannot be separated. You cannot have one without the other. In other words, justification (right standing with God) will be followed by sanctification (conforming to the image of Christ). There is no one who can conform to the image of Christ without first being justified, as this is required to receive the Holy Spirit. And without the Spirit, we are still ruled by our sinful nature and cannot do that which is pleasing to God (good works). Likewise, there is no one who can become justified through his or her good works since good works are a result of sanctification.

Two aspects of sin...two aspects of salvation to deal with sin - God certainly has left nothing to chance.

#### God's Command to Be Holy

- **Because it is written, be holy for I am Holy.** (I Peter 1:16)
- **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts.** (Romans 6:12)
- **Awake to righteousness, and sin not...** (I Corinthians 15:34a)
- **Be angry and sin not...** (Ephesians 4:26a)
- **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.** (I John 2:1a)

## IV. Service – Our Call

**All Believers are Called to Serve.**  
**We Will Focus on Serving in the Church**

Romans 12:1(KJV) *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

**Let us examine Romans 12:1 more closely:**

*Therefore, by the mercies of God* – “therefore” connects to the entire previous context as it has been a development of “the mercies of God.” Leroy Forlines in his commentary on Romans states, “We would be repeating the essence of what Paul says if we made it read, ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, in light of the cross...’”

*Beseech* – to desire or to entreat. It appeals to a person's sensitivities and better judgment rather than trying to control through a decree. This same word is used when Paul said to Philemon, “Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal (beseech) to you, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” (Philemon 8, 9 NKJV)

**Through Love - Serve!**

*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:9-11 NIV 1984)*

#### How is Our Sin Remedied?

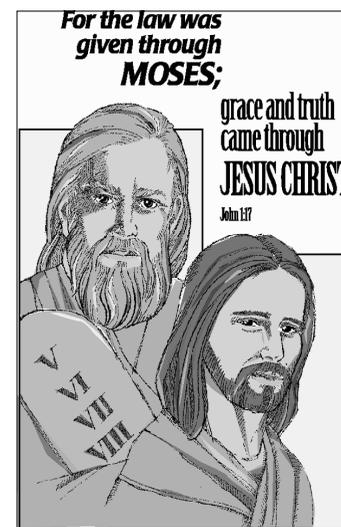
**Is it by doing good works?** The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:9 that it is “not by works so that no man can boast.”

**Is it through the offering of sacrifices as did Israel in the Old Testament?** The writer of Hebrews (10:4) says, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

**Is it by the keeping of the Law?** Again Paul states, “But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God's Book of the Law.’ Consequently,

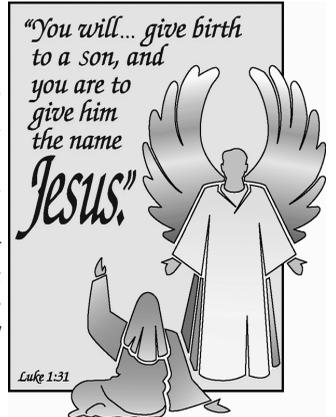
it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law.” Galatians 3:10-11

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” Romans 3:20.



#### So how then is our sin to be remedied?

The answer is given to us by the angel Gabriel as he spoke in a dream to Joseph concerning Mary, “And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name JESUS: for he will save his people from their sins. (Matt. 1:21)



## II. Salvation – Our Choice

**The Bible often calls on man to choose – to make a decision to go one way or another.**

Through Moses – “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:” (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Through Joshua – “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

Through Elijah – “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, ‘How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.’” (1 Kings 18:21)

#### Free Will and the Sovereignty of God

As Arminians we believe in man having free will to choose. While God is sovereign, He has chosen to allow man to accept or reject His grace, and in so doing He still accomplishes His perfect and sovereign plan.



### Salvation – Assurance or Assumption

It is essential that on the matter of salvation we have assurance and not assumption. Listen to these words of Jesus. Notice especially vv 22-23.

**Matthew 7:13-23** *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. <sup>15</sup> “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them. <sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*

**The Bible says we have assurance of our salvation by two means:**

**The Word of God** – Romans 10:8-10 *But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

**The Witness of the Spirit** – Romans 8:15-17 *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage*

*again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

The Apostle John wrote (1 John 5:13), “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**”

### Salvation – Works or Grace

Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Ephesian Church (Ephesians 2:8-9), “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*”

So what part do works play in our salvation? Again Paul gives us the answer in the very next verse (vs 10), “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”

James said, “*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*” (James 2:19-20)

### III. Sanctification - Our Course

**It is the Heart and Will of God for His People to be Holy as He is Holy.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (NKJV)** *Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God...*

Sanctification means to be made holy or to be set apart, as set apart from the world and consecrated to God. In an ethical sense it means the progressive conformation of the believer into the image of Christ (2 Peter 3:18), or the process whereby one’s life is made morally holy. It begins at our conversion – our regeneration (2 Corinthians 5:17) and is completed when we see Christ - our glorification (1 John 3:2). R.C. Ryle said concerning this. . .

### The Difference in Justification and Sanctification

There are two aspects of sin: guilt and depravity. The guilt aspect of sin is the consequence of active sin in a person’s life and is what makes that person deserving of punishment. Sin as depravity is the result of Adam’s fall and is the power in a person’s life that causes him to commit sin. There are also two aspects of salvation designed to deal with the two aspects of sin: justification and sanc-

tification. Below we will compare and contrast these two aspects of salvation and hopefully come to see how they are so intimately related.

**Justification** settles the problem of guilt. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for the sins of mankind through His death on the cross. We receive the benefit of that payment when we repent and accept Christ to become one with Him. We are justified when God places the righteousness of Christ on our account and marks our sin as "paid in full." Romans 8:1 states that "*there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*" Justification is totally an instantaneous act of God on our behalf. There is nothing we can do within ourselves to be justified.

**Sanctification**, on the other hand, deals with the problem of depravity as it changes our experience with sin. It is the declared purpose of God that we should become holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). To this purpose He has ordained (Romans 8:29) that all believers will be conformed to the image of Christ. In other words, we will become Christ-like in our thoughts, words, and deeds. This is a process. It begins at conversion and will become complete at the resurrection when we shall see Jesus *face to face and be like Him for we shall see Him as He is* (1 John 3:2). While our sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit within us, it involves a person's will. We must choose to do what we know is right. The chart on the next page will help in contrasting and comparing these two aspects of salvation.