

*That He may open the "perfectly sealed" book
and deliver you from all iniquity*

Revelation 22:10

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Romans 16:20

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...

Romans 9:28

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

2 Peter 1:12

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

IN THE MOMENT OF PRESENT TRUTH

THE INTRODUCTION

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(All bracketed [] words inserted into the following scriptures are the author's paraphrase.)

WHY THE STUDY

Hi, my name is Scott Stanley and I think before we get into this study, it would help if I could give you a little bit of my history and help you understand why making a series of studies like this is important to me. I know there are thousands of Bible teachers out there – pastors, evangelists, teachers – why, then, would I want to make another study? I myself have hundreds of studies on audio cassette, videos – why do another one? I think it's important to reach out to those of you who suspect something just isn't right in where you are right now – you're already sensing that God has more for you. I know I lived like that all of my Christian life – I always knew there was something more.

I was raised in Oklahoma, a Southern Baptist, and by the time I reached the age of 28, I was into alcohol and drugs, just a variety of abuses, until I finally came to the place where I had reached the end of my rope, and I cried out for God to save me and He did – December 1st, 1979 – I will never forget that day. Crying out to the Lord, asking Him to come into my life, He answered that prayer in a mighty way, and it was then that I took serving God seriously. I picked up a Bible and I began to study and, I mean, I devoted myself to studying the scriptures and seeking the Lord. Over the years, I worked my way through the maze of denominational teachings – I have gone from one denomination to the next

throughout my Christian experience – because, as I would study, I would outgrow the group I was with. You see, I learned early that Christianity in this country is three thousand miles wide, but it's only half an inch deep. I told that to a dear friend of mine the other day, and he said, "Why do you think it's so deep?" It's terrible, what is happening in this country – how people take the name of God and they claim to be serving the Lord, and yet they don't spend any time with Him – they simply go to church and they let someone behind the pulpit tell them what to believe. I see a danger in that.

One reason for making this study, like I said, is to reach out to those of you who suspect something isn't right – you know God has something more for you; you know that in your heart, you just sense that. I can't remember how many times I would say that: "*There's got to be more; there has to be more to it than this.*" And as I continued to study, the Lord continued to move me from one place to the next. You see, I don't want you to get the idea that I am down on denominations, because I'm not – I believe denominations have a role to play in God's plan. I see them as a positive thing, except for one point: It is the creed a person has to adhere to when they join up with the denomination. You see, I don't believe one person, or one group of people has all of the truth, but I do believe the day is coming – whether it is while we're still on this planet or after we enter eternity, sometime – God is going to reveal all of the truth to His children.

I want as much of it as I can have right now, and if I am tied to a denominational creed, I have just anchored myself to the earth – *I can't go beyond their creed.* You can, but it is traumatic at times to pack up and leave these people that you love – you've got all of these friends there; you've been worshipping with them for years. The Lord brings a truth to you and you begin to realize you're not in harmony with these people anymore, and you know you've got to move on – that's traumatic. I have done that several times and I finally realized, because no group has all of the truth, I am not going to tie myself to any group – I am just simply not going to do that. I want you to consider Elijah, being taken to heaven in a flaming chariot: If that man were to come back to this planet, would he need to belong to any particular denomination before he could go back to heaven? The answer to that is *no*. The relationship that he has with his God is what I want – I want a personal relationship and I want salvation to be a *personal* thing for me. It isn't a *group* thing. Groups can help – listen, groups are stepping stones to lead you on to higher ground but if you ever anchor yourself to a group, you've just made a major mistake because it is really difficult, at times, to leave that group.

So, this is a bit of my history, and I'm telling you that throughout my Christian experience, I knew *there is something more* – there is something more out there; God has something more for me – and I think as we go through these studies, you will begin to realize a little bit more of what God has for us. We're going to cover a variety of subjects in these studies, but we're going to begin with foundational Christianity. Now the reason I say that to you is because even though it's foundational, I think you're going to discover – you're going to begin to start uncovering errors in what you've been hearing from the TV evangelists, and from your pastor maybe, but everything I'm going to share with you will be Bible based. I read the King James Bible – sometimes when I read it, I will insert my own words to try to help explain a verse, but by God's grace, I'm not twisting that verse to make it say what I want it to. I use a series of books based on the Strong's Concordance, using Strong's numbers. I use Greek and Hebrew books, interlinears, different dictionaries, lexicons and, by the grace of God, allowing the Bible to help define the words – seeing how it's used throughout the scripture helps a lot.

SALVATION

So, I'm going to begin this study talking about the word "salvation." In 1979, I was "saved" – I cried out to God and He "saved" me. I went to work the next Monday – it was on a Saturday night – the next Monday, when I went to work, I was flying, and I began to tell everyone I worked with, "Hey, I got saved." One fellow I said that to, who was an atheist, challenged me, and he responded back to me by saying, "Saved from what? Just what do you think you were saved from?" That question rang in my ears for years to come. I can remember searching the scriptures to find: *Well, what am I saved from? Well, I'm saved from hell; well, I'm saved from wickedness; I'm saved from God's wrath* – but somehow that didn't settle the question for me. What do you mean when you tell someone you're saved? Can you give me a verse that defines "salvation"? I don't mean one that says *if you believe this or if you do this, you'll be saved* – I mean do you know of a verse that defines what salvation is? Well, I want to read you one – this is found in 1 Peter 1:9:

1 Peter 1:9

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Now I want you to consider this with me: *Receiving the end of your faith* – that word "end," the Strong's number is 5056 in the Greek, 5056 – it means *the completion, the end result, the goal*. Let me stick with this word "completion" – *receiving the completion of your faith, the salvation of your soul*. What is "faith"? To understand "salvation" then, we need to know, what is "faith"? Already, some of you are thinking, Hebrews 11:1:

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Consider this verse with me – "faith" is the *substance and evidence*. Those two words "substance" and "evidence" are nouns. The word "faith" is a noun – the verb of it is *to believe*. *"Faith" is the result of believing*.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith cometh [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

In other words, the word of God, as you receive the word of God and believe, the result of that is "faith," and the "completion of your faith" – or what if I said *the understanding God is giving you* – the "completion of your understanding" is *the salvation of your soul*. Does that mean I have to have a complete understanding before I'm saved? No. Consider this: You plant a seed of corn and you see this cornstalk begin to grow – its small, and it gets bigger and bigger until it bears fruit, and then finally that fruit matures. That little cornstalk, regardless of how small it is, was perfect every day – it was receiving the light coming from heaven, and it was perfect every day. It didn't reach a completed perfection, though, until that fruit matured, but every day it was perfect. That is how God sees us.

If you are living up to the light that you have, and growing, you are as perfect to God as you can be, and if you were to die, He would resurrect you – any stage along the line, any stage of growth along the line, you have a sincere heart, you're struggling to know, you want to know God's perfect will for you – He would raise you; you are "saved" in that sense. But "salvation" means something else – "salvation" is *coming into a complete understanding*. You see, that's why I was telling you, I want to possess as much truth as I possibly can. I know not any one group has all of it, and if I anchor myself to that bunch, I can only go as high as they let me with their creed. If I can stand away and say, "All right, Lord, You teach me what You would have me know," that seems spiritually healthier to me. The day I gave my heart to the Lord, I was as saved then as I am now. The difference between then and now is, now I have a deeper understanding of the things of God – now I am more sure in my stand with the Lord.

Everything that I'm going to share with you, I can prove it from this book – the Bible – and I will do

so, and I pray that the Lord will strum that chord in your heart, and you'll realize, *hey, there's truth in this... there is truth in this*. "Salvation" is *the completion, the end result of faith*. "Faith" comes by *hearing*, hearing by the word of God. That word "w-o-r-d" in Romans 10:17, "word" – hearing by the "word" of God – there are two words in the Greek that have been translated "word." Ninety-nine out of a hundred times, when you see w-o-r-d, it's either going to be *rhema* or *logos*. "Rhema" is *a sound with meaning*; it's a word, a *spoken* word – it's spoken. "Logos" is *a concept* – you see, it's two different things, but it too is *spoken*. You see, a parrot can speak a *rhema*; he can make a sound that has a meaning – but he cannot come up with a *logos* on his own, with a "concept" on his own. What those two words have in common though, like I said, they're both spoken – both have to be spoken.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith cometh [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word [*rhema*] of God God is trying to teach you. As you receive what He brings to you, and believe – the end result of that is "faith." The "*completion of your faith*" is the *salvation of your soul*. That tells you something about salvation then. I know God is going to change our bodies in the resurrection – in the "twinkling of an eye," we're going to change – but that change is an *outward* thing. What we read in 1 Peter 1:9 (the completion of your faith) is an inward thing – it's between your ears; it's happening *between your ears*. It's something taking place in your mind as you grow in knowledge, as you grow in understanding – you are going through a process of change. Now, I'm trying to keep away from saying that "salvation" is a process. Salvation *has* a process of growth – like I say, when I cried out to God, I believe He saved me and He would have raised me at any time, but He is putting me through change.

Have you ever considered that *thoughts produce feelings and feelings move you to action? Thoughts produce feelings, and feelings move you to action*. If your actions are not accurate; if your actions are wrong, it begins with your thoughts, see? The thoughts need to be changed. "Faith" is *a change of thought* – God is giving you truth; you believe it – the result is "faith." It is changing your understanding; hence, it changes your actions. Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 13:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith.... If you read all of those scriptures, he tells you that God has given apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors. He has put these people in our lives for the strengthening, the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry – till we all arrive... *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the unity of understanding*, he says, *and of the knowledge of the Son of God*. Now this is something we're going to get into in a future study, but I'm going to show you where this "knowledge of the Son of God" – it isn't the knowledge you possess *about* Jesus; it's *Jesus' knowledge given to you*... I want you to consider that. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God*.... Remember Galatians 2:20:

Galatians 2:20

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth [lives] in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by* the faith *of* the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

If your Bible says "faith *in* the Son of God," it's wrong – look it up and you'll discover the King James is right. You live by the faith *of* the Son of God – see, it makes perfect sense – Ephesians 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God." See, the knowledge He possesses – *unto a perfect man* – how perfect? Now, listen... if thoughts produce feelings, feelings action – how perfect? *The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. You cannot be more perfect than that – that is a complete understanding. Our Heavenly Father is going to bring us into the image of Christ, inwardly – we will be like Him. How do I know that? Well, if I'm going to be "in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," I've got to *think* like Him. Again, now let's just tie these things

together: Till we all arrive in the unity of the faith of the knowledge of the Son of God; the completion of my faith is the salvation of my soul; faith comes by hearing; hearing by the word of God – and Ephesians 5 tells us Christ is going to cleanse and sanctify us using the water of the word. Get those two words: He's going to *cleanse* you and *sanctify* you using words.

Ephesians 5:26
"cleanse" and "sanctify"
using words

Where is salvation happening? Between my ears – as the words come and I receive and believe, the result is faith. We will arrive in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. We will be the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

If you only knew the battle that I went through when I began to see that truth, and how the denomination I was in stood against the fact that God can have a perfect people before the second coming of Christ! What do you think? Do you think it's possible for God to deliver you from your drinking and drugs, and smoking and cussing, and the anger – all these things that the Lord's already delivered you from, *and yet He can't finish you?* See, I had terrible, terrible problems in my life – I cried out to God and many of those things stopped immediately – *and He can't finish me before Christ comes?* He can't bring me to a state, now listen, of understanding – thoughts produce feelings, feelings action – He can't give me enough thought to perfect my action? If you don't believe He can, *your God is too small* – **God can do anything!** Let me tell you a little secret: Before Christ returns, before the literal second coming, God will have a people, an army, on this earth – living in righteousness, living in His perfect will and living in true, pure holiness. That is **truth** – I want to be in that place. I'm going to prove to you how it can happen.

Now, let me take a few minutes and express to you, in so far as I understand it, the meaning of "sin nature." Now, ask someone, any denominational person, "What is the sin nature?" and they can tell you when it started; they can tell you the results of it, but no one seems to be able to define it. And it isn't until you're able to *define* it, that the Lord is able to work with it and eradicate it out of your life. There are verses in the New Testament where the apostle Paul talks about the death of the "old man." What else could that "old man" be if it isn't *your sin nature* – the old self, the old man. To explain this to you, I'm going to ask you to turn to Luke, chapter 1, reading from verse 15:

Luke 1:15

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost [or *Holy Spirit*], even from his mother's womb.

What I just read is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist, and it's key to understand that he is going to be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. In this same chapter of Luke 1, we see the fulfillment of this prophecy, but let me show you something that got by me for years. Still in Luke, chapter 1, starting at verse 41:

Luke 1:41-44

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost [Spirit]:

42 And she spake [spoke] out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou [are you] among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy [your] womb.

43 And whence [*from where* or *whence*] is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy [your] salutation sounded in mine [my] ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Now consider with me: The prophecy is that John the Baptist will be filled with Holy Spirit, and we see the fulfillment of it when Mary walks in, speaks her salutation, and Elizabeth is filled with Holy Spirit. Then Elizabeth proclaims that the baby in her womb leaped for joy at that salutation. Babies in the

womb have no vocabulary – you don't even start developing a vocabulary until you're about one year old, and then it takes years – so it's interesting to use this word "joy" and apply it to a baby in the womb after having heard words. You see, John had never heard Mary's voice – John did not know what Mary was saying – Elizabeth did. And when Mary spoke, Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit; joy filled Elizabeth, and it was given to the babe in the womb. That is how that prophecy was fulfilled.

What is God showing us there? That *a baby in the womb receives the emotions of the mother*. Now consider it. Consider when a woman is pregnant and she's having arguments with her husband – let's say the husband packs up and leaves, and he makes that woman feel unwanted – he makes her feel "less than." That emotion is being given to that baby. The baby, though, has no vocabulary so that feeling of not being wanted is put on the shelf, so to speak, and by the time he is mature enough to understand those feelings, those feelings he had from the womb are so buried deep within him that he doesn't really understand *why* he feels the way he does about certain things.

Let's take this concept back to Adam and Eve: How do you think Eve felt after she sinned? How do you think Eve felt when death entered into the world? Let's say the leaves start dropping off the trees, animals are killing one another – how did she feel? I don't think I could verbalize how she felt. I think that feeling of horror gripped her soul, of what she had done – and I know what I'm getting ready to say, the term I'm getting ready to use is surface, but I'm going to use it throughout these studies. She did not think she had any "value" to God, and that feeling of having no value was given to the babe in her womb. Cain was a murderer; Abel overcame that to the point where he could trust God and serve God in truth but, in Genesis, God tells us that Eve is "the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20). Now consider with me: Does the Lord reveal something to me about myself (and I know I'm no different than the rest of you)? All of my life I have done what it took to fill the emptiness in me of not knowing my value to God.

Now let me explain: Imagine the poor peasant girl dressed in rags, filthy, sitting on the curb, all the town's people ignoring her or verbally abusing her – and imagine the golden carriage pulls up and everyone stops, and out steps the king himself. And everyone kneels and bows, and the king passes by everyone and walks up to this peasant girl, and he says, "You know, I pick you to marry my son," and he reaches out and stands her up. Do you think at that moment she cares about the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker? Do you think she cares what they think? Absolutely not! The king himself has chosen her, and suddenly she has *value*. That, to me, perfectly describes what God is doing to His church.

You see, when you don't know your value to God, and – now listen to me – you're born into this world with two major problems: *You don't know your value and you don't know God*. Because you don't know your value, that has created an emotional wound and you try to find value either in drugs, alcohol, in your friends, sex, your job, you have to make so much money, you have to have new cars, you've got to fit into those leather pants, you've got to keep your hair color a certain way – because that's what gives you "value." That's how you have value in this world – you're a good athlete, you're a good singer, you're religious, you know the Bible – you see, all of those things give you value, but if that's where you are, *you're not getting your value from the king*. You're not getting your value from God, and what God wants to do is to convince you of your value. Now listen, how does He do that? Well, you have to learn about God. See, the two things: *You don't know your value and you don't know God* – so in order to heal the wound, He has to give you doctrinal understanding concerning Himself, hence, the Bible.

We can learn things about God that will help us understand our value to Him, and He will be able to convince you of the value that you have. When He does that, that old way of thinking, the lie that you're born with that you have no value, is eradicated – and God will begin to start building on that truth.

THE EFFECT OF THE CROSS

You see, the Lord has to give us a new foundation which is only found in Jesus Christ, but remember what Paul stated in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 17:

1 Corinthians 1:17

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

You see, it's possible that what you're hearing about the cross is not having the proper effect on your understanding— that's why you are not overcoming in every area of your life. It's possible that the cross isn't having the proper effect on you. Now notice that Paul says: "God sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Consider with me: When you go get in that water to be baptized, literally, when you go get in that water, you're doing that because of something that was told you. The *water of the word* has come into your mind, which puts you in the water in that tank at church. You see, in your mind, you are fulfilling – you are acting on something that was expressed to you. Now, I don't know about you, for me, each time I was baptized, when I came out of the water, I was a member of a "denomination" – and I was told, *This water is your watery grave, and you go into the grave, you come out a new person, see, and now you're a member of our church and you adhere to our doctrines.* Paul says in Ephesians 4, that *there's only one baptism*, and in Romans 6, Paul says *you are baptized into Christ's death*, and he says that *your "old man" dies*. Let's read this together, Romans 6, verse 1:

Romans 6:1-7

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid [or, *may it never be*]. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein [in it]?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [or *immersed*] into Jesus Christ were baptized [immersed] into his death?

4 Therefore [Because of that] we are buried with him by baptism [immersion] into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [or *rendered inactive*], that henceforth [that from now on... from henceforth] we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Are you having that experience in your life? Can you say, "Hey, I'm free from sin"? Can you say, "Hey, my sin nature is gone"? Well, let me tell you something – when you come to the place that you understand God and you know what happened at Calvary, and it's having its proper effect on you, what I just read in Romans 6 will be more of a reality to you than you ever dreamed, more than you ever imagined. *Thoughts produce feelings; feelings move to action.* When you have the proper understanding, the cross will have its proper effect.

CLOSE

The Lord is revealing truth like never before. I believe with all my heart, Jesus' second coming is going to happen in my lifetime. Let me tell you something, I *know* that it is. How do I know? Because before He returns, we're all going to arrive *in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* – and that perfection, I am beginning to see take place in my life. I'm not saying I'm perfect; I'm not saying I've reached this completed perfection – I'm telling you that fundamental changes are happening to me because of the truth God has given me, and I can see what's happening in my own heart and know the end is near.

Remember in Revelation (Revelation 12:12), how Satan "knows that he has but a short time"? Listen, if he knows it, *we* know it. Even the man sitting on the barstool will tell you the end is near. Everyone has that sense, but I see it because of what's happening in the church – not because of what's going on in the Middle East, not because of some governmental thing taking place. I see the Lord is soon to come because of what He's doing in my heart, hence, another reason for these studies. I'm reaching out to you; I'm simply asking you, if you have a sense that things are not right where you are, if you, after listening to this tape, believe God does have something more, there is something more out there, then I ask you – listen to these studies with an open heart, have the courage to take the next step and get off of the "stone" you're on, and move to the next concept, and let's get across this thing – and let Ephesians 4:13 be a reality in your heart.

We're going to be studying the Godhead and trying to understand what took place at Calvary. These things are fundamental Christian doctrines, and yet, because of the denominations' "creed," they cannot receive it because some of these things will probably contradict a statement of belief. So, my challenge to you: Who are you going to stand with, a denomination or Jesus Christ? Who are you going to stand with? When you hear the truth, can you follow? *When you hear the truth, can you follow?* The 144,000 – that's a subject we'll cover in the studies, in Revelation 14, they're described in Revelation 14 – whoever you think that is, it states about them: *They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.* I pray to do that now. Start right now and don't let anyone get in your way of receiving the knowledge of Christ and walking in His faith, and allowing your heavenly Father the pleasure of teaching you of His love.

I guess, really, the basis of all of these studies is this: *For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.* That is the basis of this ministry – God loves you; He is speaking to your heart and He is going to heal you if you'll open up and let Him have it. Open the door of your heart; let Him come in, and let Him fill you with Himself, and take away that emptiness that you've carried from the womb. I pray that God be glorified in these studies and in your life as we move forward.