

⊛ ⊛ ⊛ The Reign of the Spiritual Elite! ⊛ ⊛ ⊛

*The Theology of  
Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow  
and the  
Grace Evangelical Society*

The Placing of All Believers Into Two Distinct Classes  
With Two Distinct Destinies During the Millennium  
(Thus Dividing Christ's Beloved Body and Bride)  
With the Non-Overcoming Believers Cast into Outer Darkness  
With Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

**Can a True Believer  
Totally Depart from the Faith,  
Deny the Gospel Message,  
Live Wickedly and Continually in Sin,  
and Even Reject Jesus Christ?**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Background	1
2. <i>The Gospel Under Siege</i>	3
3. <i>The Hungry Inherit</i>	5
4. Heirs of the Kingdom	6
5. Who Will Enter the Kingdom in Natural Bodies?	9
6. Observations on 1 Corinthians 15:50	10
7. The Parable of the Sower	11
8. The Overcomers in Revelation Chapters 2-3	11
9. Who are the "joint-heirs"?	14
10. Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth and Outer Darkness	16
11. Those Who Profess With Lips But Deny By Life	17
12. Can A Saved Person Totally Abandon the Faith?	18
13. Can A Good Tree Bring Forth Bad Fruit?	21
14. Keeping God's Commandments	22
15. Loving the Brethren	23
16. Can A Saved Person Have A Dead Faith?	24
17. Can A Saved Person Deny Christ?	27
18. Will only some believers be presented holy and unblameable?	29
19. Can A Saved Person Be Characterized as An Evil Doer?	30
20. Can A True Believer Continue in Sin and Persist in Sin?	31
21. Those Who "Have Part In The First Resurrection"	33
22. Children of God and Children of the Devil	34
23. The False Teacher of 2 John 9	35
24. Saved But Not Led	36
25. "Salvation Ready To Be Revealed"	36
26. Regenerate Bastards?.	37
27. Assurance of Salvation and Continuance in the Faith	39
28. Did Paul Always Assume His Readers Were Saved?	40
29. Surprises in Heaven?	41
30. Security Without Purity?	44
31. Should Personal Wickedness Hinder One's Assurance of Salvation?	44
32. Are Good Works the Essential Fruit of Salvation?	44
33. <i>"This We Believe"</i>	47
34. The Position of the Early Dispensationalists	47
35. The Position of Dr. Charles Ryrie	51
36. Two Distinct Classes of Believers	53
<b><i>For Further Study</i></b>	<b>54</b>

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

### 1. Background

Zane Hodges was Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for many years. He did a considerable amount of work in the area of textual criticism and he was a strong defender of the Majority Text. He is to be commended for his scholarly work, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Thomas Nelson, 1982).

Zane Hodges, who went to be with the Lord in November 2008, was a Bible believer and a strong defender of the great doctrines of the Bible such as the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, etc. Those who knew Zane Hodges have described him as a man of fine Christian character and devotion.

For many years Zane Hodges was one of the most outspoken proponents of a doctrinal position that insists a person can depart from the faith, deny Christ totally, persist in sin, stop being a believer, deny all the fundamentals of the faith, mock the gospel, and yet still be counted among those who are truly saved. Hodges and others have insisted that a true believer may or may not continue in the faith unto the end. According to this teaching, a person can have the TRUE ROOT (saving faith) but not necessarily have the TRUE FRUIT (good works). His books which present this position are *The Hungry Inherit*, *The Gospel Under Siege—A Study on Faith and Works*, and *Grace in Eclipse—A Study on Eternal Rewards*. Most of his books are made available through the Grace Evangelical Society (GES). Hodges also contributed to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (a commentary done by the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary). In this commentary Hodges contributed the commentaries on Hebrews and 1,2,3 John, where his views on faith and works and assurance of salvation are clearly enunciated. In more recent years he has written commentaries on *The Epistles of John* and *The Epistles of James* both published by the Grace Evangelical Society.

Dr. Joseph Dillow graduated in Science with a major in Electrical Engineering. He received his Th.D. degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. He served on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, Christian Family Life, and as a visiting instructor in Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. For over a decade he and his wife Linda have lived in Vienna, Austria, where he has served as founder and director of Biblical Education by Extension International (BEE), a biblical training ministry for church leadership in eastern Europe, Russia, and China. Many years ago he wrote an excellent book on the gift of Tongues entitled *Speaking in Tongues—Seven Crucial Questions* and he also made a significant contribution to creation science by his masterful book dealing with the vapor canopy entitled *The Waters Above*. He also wrote a book on the Song of Solomon entitled *Solomon on Sex*. His book concerning which we are critical of in this paper, is entitled *THE REIGN OF THE SERVANT KINGS—A Study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man*. In this paper, when page numbers are cited from Dr. Dillow's work, we are referring to this last mentioned book.

Dr. Dillow's book is significant for many reasons: (1) It is the most comprehensive and systematic presentation of this doctrinal position yet written (650 pages); (2) Dillow, in the beginning of the book, acknowledges that it was Zane Hodges' teaching that changed the way he looked at the book of Hebrews in particular and the entire New Testament in general. This change of thinking took place in 1973 as Dillow listened to a set of tapes by Zane Hodges dealing with the book of Hebrews; (3) Very influential men have endorsed and are recommending Dillow's book including Dr. Charles Ryrie and Dr. Earl Radmacher. Dr. Ryrie said, "This scholarly and well written book should be read by all pastors and students of the Word who are interested in the doctrines of grace... A TRULY LANDMARK BOOK!" Dr. Radmacher wrote this: "Dr. Dillow's REIGN OF THE SERVANT KINGS may well be the most significant contribution toward resolving the several hundred year debate between Calvinism and Arminianism."

Thus we have Zane Hodges who for many years promulgated this doctrine through various books and tapes and

***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

Joseph Dillow who systematized this teaching in one, comprehensive, massive volume. This teaching is being embraced by more and more believers, mostly among dispensationalists. Many of those who embrace this view have chosen as their rallying point the Grace Evangelical Society which publishes a newsletter which is sent to a readership of 9,000 and a theological journal which also has a circulation of 900. They are publishing a number of books. Robert Wilkin heads up the Grace Evangelical Society. He enthusiastically recommends the writings of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow and he has authored some of his own books, including *Confident in Christ—Living By Faith Really Works* and *The Road to Reward*.

A more recent volume which should be mentioned is *The Kingdom, Power & Glory—The Overcomers Handbook* (almost 400 pages) by Chuck and Nancy Missler. The Misslers (pages 49, 271) strongly recommend Joseph Dillow’s book (*The Reign of the Servant Kings*) and the Misslers’ book certainly reflects the same theology that is found in Dillow’s volume. I have written a lengthy review of this book by Chuck and Nancy Missler which is available upon request. However, since the Misslers’ views are very similar to those of Hodges and Dillow, this paper will answer address many of the doctrinal problems found in the book by Chuck and Nancy Missler, although I will not specifically refer to their book in this paper.

Another controversial author of our day is J.D. Faust who wrote *The Rod--Will God Spare It?*, which interesting enough is published by the same company that published Dillow's book (Schoettle Publishing Company, NC, a company which specializes is publishing books by authors who teach kingdom exclusion and in some cases, authors who teach a partial rapture). Faust holds to many of the same views as Hodges and Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society, but his position is rejected by these men because of his extreme and unorthodox views regarding millennial exclusion and millennial punishment. He teaches that non-overcoming believers will taste of the second death and then be punished in Hades for 1000 years. In light of this, many have accused Faust of teaching a "Protestant Purgatory" which he vehemently denies. However, he certainly does teach that unfaithful believers will be severely punished during the millennial.

All these men teach that Christ's beloved body and bride will be divided into two distinct groups:

<i>The Minority Group</i>	<i>The Majority Group</i>
The overcomers	The one who don't overcome
Those who inherit the kingdom	Those who are excluded from the kingdom or from its blessings
Those who reign with Christ	Those who do not reign with Christ but who are cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Faust would go so far as to say they taste of the second death and then are punished in Hades for 1000 years.)
Those who confess Christ	Those who deny Christ
Faithful believers	Believers who depart from the faith and who stop believing in Christ

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Righteous believers	Unrighteous believers (covetous believers, homosexual believers, drunk believers, adulterous believers, fornicating believers, etc.)
Believers who continue in the faith	Believers who abandon their faith in Christ
Believers who have a living faith (faith accompanied by works)	Believers who have a dead faith (faith but no works)
Believers represented by the good ground (Matthew 13--the parable of the sower)	Believers who are represented by the rocky ground and the thorny ground (Matthew 13)
Believers who are faithful and wise (Matthew 24:45).	Evil believers who are unfaithful and unwise and who will be cut asunder and appointed a portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 24:51)

Having totally divided the body of Christ in this way, they then assign different millennial destinies to these two groups, with the majority group suffering some form of punishment, either severe torment (Faust) or not being allowed to reign with Christ during the thousand year kingdom (Hodges and Dillow). Hodges, Dillow, Wilkin and Faust all agree that apostate and wicked believers will suffer serious consequences during the kingdom age, but they don't all agree as to how severe the suffering will be. All agree that these wicked believers will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth and that they will not inherit the kingdom (that is, they will not reign with Christ).

Faust is the most extreme when it comes to the degree of punishment. As already mentioned, Faust actually teaches that saved people who do not measure up and who are not overcomers will actually taste of the second death (the lake of fire) for a brief period of time, and then will be punished in Hades in the underworld for a thousand years. He follows the teachings of men like Govett, G.H.Lang and D.M.Panton (partial rapturists). Hodges, Wilkin and Dillow are horrified by Faust's extreme views, but they share a common theology with him in many ways. They differ mainly in what kind of consequences the wicked saved people (non-overcomers) will suffer.

## 2. The Gospel Under Siege

This is the title of a book written by Hodges in 1981 which sparked a great deal of controversy. It was published by Redencion Viva (P.O. Box 141167, Dallas, Texas 75214). The controversy centered around issues such as these:

1. What is the relationship between saving faith and good works? *Hodges insists that good works are not the necessary outcome of saving faith.*
2. Can a true believer totally abandon Christ and the faith even to the point where he no longer believes in Christ and denies the facts of the gospel? *Hodges insists that this is possible and even cites an example of this which will be discussed later in this paper.*
3. Can a person who habitually lives in sin [even as a homosexual or as an adulterer or as a drunkard or as a murderer] claim full assurance of salvation? *Hodges insists that this is possible because, according to his view, assurance of salvation is based upon the promises of God and has nothing to do with how a person lives. Hodges seems to teach that it is wrong to ever call into question the salvation of any person who professes faith in Christ, no matter how wickedly he may live. He may live like a child of the devil, but as long as he claims to be a child of God, we should believe him.*

## ***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

4. If a person truly has eternal life, will this life be evidenced in any way? *Hodges insists that it is possible that there will be no evidence at all. In other words, a person can KNOW he is saved but he need not SHOW that he is saved. Hodges teaches that the grace of God is able to save a person but it may or may not transform a person.*
5. Will all believers inherit the kingdom of God or only some? *Hodges insists that all believers will enter the kingdom but the wicked believers (those believers who are drunkards, homosexuals, thieves, fornicators, covetous, etc.) will not inherit the kingdom.*
6. What did James mean when he said, "Faith without works is dead"? *Hodges insists that James was teaching that a saved person can have a dead faith and have a life devoid of good works.*
7. What did John mean in his first epistle when he said, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because..." "By this we do know that we know Him..." etc.? *Hodges insists that such verses are not to be taken as "tests of life" but should be understood as "tests of fellowship." See also Dillow, p. 407. Both men teach that a true believer can habitually hate the brethren, disobey Christ's commands, practice unrighteousness and continue in sin.*

As we think about these important issues there are certain key passages of Scriptures which are at the very center of the debate. These would include the following:

1. The book of 1 John, especially passages such as 1 John 2:3-4; 1 John 3:10; 3:14; etc. which seem to be setting forth identifying marks of a true believer.
2. The passages which speak of those who do not inherit the kingdom: 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5-6; etc. Those who do not inherit the kingdom—Are they believers or unbelievers, saved or unsaved? *See our paper entitled, "Those Who Do Not Inherit the Kingdom—Are They Saved or Unserved."*
3. The second chapter of James which deals with the relationship between faith and good works. If a person is really saved will this be evidenced by good works?
4. The passages which speak of continuing in the faith, such as Heb. 3:6; 3:14; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:23; Luke 8:13,15. Is it possible for a true believer to totally abandon the faith?
5. The passages which speak of "outer darkness" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Do these passages refer to the anguish of the unsaved in hell or do they describe the great remorse of carnal Christians who do not inherit the kingdom and who do not participate in the wedding banquet?
6. Revelation chapters 2-3 which refer repeatedly to the "overcomer." Are all believers overcomers or are there two classes of believers (those who overcome and those who do not)?
7. There are many other significant passages which will also be discussed in this paper.

Actually the true gospel of the grace of God is under siege by Zane Hodges himself. In the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Autumn, 2000), Hodges wrote an article entitled, "How to Lead People to Christ, Pt. 1." In this article Hodges discusses the content of the gospel, that is, what a person needs to believe in order to be saved. Contrary to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 and Romans 10:9-10, Hodges argues that it is not necessary for a sinner to believe in the death and resurrection of Christ in order to be saved. He merely must believe that eternal life is guaranteed to anyone who

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

believes (John 6:47). Robert Wilkin also holds to this defective understanding of the gospel. John 6:47 is a wonderful salvation promise, but it is not the full gospel. There is a free grace pastor who has written a detailed book in which he analyzes the position of Hodges with respect to the crossless gospel. The book is entitled *The Gospel of the Christ—A Biblical Response to the Crossless Gospel Regarding the Contents of Saving Faith*. The author is Tom Stegall. I know the author and would recommend this book very highly. The book illustrates that even those who are a part of the free grace movement are greatly alarmed by some of the teachings set forth by Zane Hodges, Robert Wilkin and others.

### 3. The Hungry Inherit

*The Hungry Inherit* is the title of one of Hodges' earlier books. In this book Hodges sets forth the position that in Jesus' parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3-9), all of the soils except the first soil represent saved individuals. This view is quite consistent with Hodge's teaching that a person can have eternal life but not evidence it in any way. Hodges thus teaches that a saved person can be totally worldly (thorny ground) and a saved person may believe only for a time, have no root, and then fall away (stony ground). In either case, there is no fruit.

It is interesting to contrast Hodges' position with that of the Free Will Baptists. The Free Will Baptist position is that a true believer may depart from the faith and be lost forever. Hodges position is that a true believer may depart from the faith and be saved forever. The teaching of the Word of God is that a true believer's faith will not fail because of the intercessory ministry of Christ (Luke 22:31-32; John 17) and the keeping power of God (1 Pet. 1:5). God's Word teaches that a true believer may have a very serious lapse of faith (as Peter did) but not a total departure from the Lord, because "we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39). Every believer is on the ship of faith, as it were. We may fall down on the deck and we may fall very hard, but we will never fall overboard. Our faith will never fail in a final way because we have the blessed intercessory ministry of our Saviour on our behalf, as did Peter (Luke 22:31-32). The Lord prays for us, as He did for Peter, that our faith will not fail!

Manfred Kober, former professor at Faith Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Iowa, wrote an excellent paper on the Lordship salvation issue. In this paper, on page 25, he gives the following helpful formulas showing the relationship between faith and good works:

First of all we have the error of legalism (including Lordship salvation legalism):

$$\text{GRACE} + \text{FAITH} + \text{WORKS} = \text{SALVATION}$$

Second we have the Biblical teaching of Ephesians 2:8-10:

$$\text{GRACE} + \text{FAITH} = \text{SALVATION} + \text{WORKS}$$

Let's now apply Kober's charts to the teachings of Hodges and Dillow:

<b>The Spiritual Believer</b> <i>(the Heir of the Kingdom)</i>	<b>GRACE + FAITH = SALVATION + WORKS</b> (this person's salvation accompanied by works)
<b>The Carnal Believer</b> <i>(the saved person who does not inherit the Kingdom)</i>	<b>GRACE + FAITH = SALVATION — WORKS</b> (this person is saved but his life is devoid of good works) <i>This "faith" is called a "dead faith" (James 2:17,26)</i>

## 4. Heirs of the Kingdom

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: **of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Gal. 5:19-21).

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God**” (Eph. 5:5).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This righteous believer will inherit the kingdom of God and will reign with Christ during the millennium.	This unrighteous believer (even one who persists in adultery, drunkenness, fornication, homosexuality, etc.) will not inherit the kingdom. He will not share in Christ's millennial reign. He will enter the kingdom and be a citizen of the kingdom and live in the kingdom, but will not inherit the kingdom. According to this view, he will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (yet he is saved!). Faust teaches that this person will be severely tortured in the fires of Hades for 1000 years (though he does believe in degrees of punishment in Hades, that some Christians will be tortured less severely than others, some with "many stripes" and others with "few stripes").

### Observations:

Hodges says, “There is no difficulty at all in speaking of people who **live** in the Kingdom of God but who do not **inherit** that Kingdom... the heirs of the Kingdom, then, are its owners, not merely its residents or citizens” (*Grace In Eclipse*, p. 71). Dillow writes, “All Christians will enter the kingdom, but not all will rule there, i.e., inherit it... They will, having been justified, be in the kingdom; however, they will not inherit it... There is a difference between being a resident of the kingdom and inheriting it” (p.62,64,78). Dillow adds, “they will be in the kingdom but not at the wedding feast” (p.389). Faust teaches that these wicked saved people are totally excluded from the kingdom and that they will be hurt of the second death and then be punished in the fires of Hades for a thousand years.



## *“What Saith the Scriptures?”*

Hodges and Dillow divide saved people into two distinct categories—the spiritual and the carnal, the overcomers (Rev. 2-3) and the non-overcomers, the “partakers” (Heb. 3:14) and the non-partakers. However, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul makes it clear that the group of immoral people he is referring to is not the carnal Corinthians. In verse 11 he says, “and such **WERE** some of you.” In chapter 3, verse 3, Paul said to the Corinthians: “For ye **ARE** yet CARNAL.” Paul acknowledged that they were carnal and yet he did not include them with the unrighteous ones described in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Such a description only fit them when they were unsaved. That is what they **WERE**. If the Hodges/Dillow view were correct, then Paul should have said in 1 Corinthians 6:9, “and such **ARE** some of you.”

When Paul speaks of the “unrighteous” (unjust) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 he is not speaking of some carnal, unworthy, unpersevering members of the Body and Bride of Christ. No, Paul uses the term “unrighteous” (unjust) as a description of unsaved, unregenerate, lost people. This term “unjust” is clearly defined for us in the context of this chapter. In verse 1 Paul says, “Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the **unjust**, and not before **the saints**?” (1 Cor. 6:1). Paul clearly distinguishes two groups: 1) The **unjust** (the unsaved) and 2) the **saints** (the saved). These same two groups are seen in verses 9-11. In verse 9-10 we have the **unrighteous (unjust)** which are the unsaved. They will not inherit the kingdom. In verse 11 we have those who are justified and sanctified. These are the saints (the saved) who will inherit the kingdom. There is no such thing as a saint or a saved person who will not inherit the kingdom, contrary to the teachings of Hodges and Dillow.

We need to carefully follow Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What is it that makes a person **RIGHTEOUS** and able to inherit the kingdom? Is it because the saved person has persevered in the faith and walked closely with the Lord and thus has earned his share in the kingdom, as Hodges and Dillow suggest? No! In verse 11, Paul says that the reason the Corinthians are righteous and thus fit to inherit the kingdom is because they have been **JUSTIFIED!** Even carnal Corinthians will inherit the kingdom because they are seen as perfectly righteous **IN CHRIST!**

Paul’s argument is as follows:

1. ***The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10).***
2. ***Every believer has been justified or declared righteous (1 Cor. 6: 11).***
3. ***The justified believer, therefore, is not unrighteous.***

***CONCLUSION: Every believer will inherit the kingdom based solely on his righteous standing in Christ Jesus made possible only by the grace of God! [Paul was championing a free grace position!]***

Comparing Luke 18:18 with Matthew 19:16 (two parallel passages) demonstrates that the expression “inherit eternal life” means the same as “have eternal life.” **INHERIT** means to possess, to receive, to have. In Matthew 19:29, we read “inherit eternal life” and in the parallel account (see Luke 18:30) we see that the expression means “receive eternal life.” To inherit the kingdom means to possess the kingdom, to have a place and a part in the kingdom (cf. Rev. 20:6 “part”), to participate in its blessings and benefits. Those who do not inherit the kingdom are those who do not possess it, who have no part in it. They are excluded from the kingdom and its benefits.

In considering the Ephesians 5:5 passage, the very next verse speaks of God’s wrath coming upon **THE UNSAVED** because of their sins: “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things (see v.5)

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

cometh the wrath of God upon the CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE” (Eph. 5:6). If the Hodges/Dillow view were correct, we might expect Paul to discuss how God’s wrath will come upon saved people, the carnal ones who are persisting in such sins; but instead Paul discusses God’s wrath upon the children of disobedience (the unsaved).

In the Galatians 5:19-21 passage, we learn that those who persist in the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom. Hodges and Dillow teach that fleshly saved people will not inherit the kingdom, though they will enter it. But notice what Paul says in this same context about all saved people: “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

Three passages (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:5 and Galatians 5:19-21) essentially teach the same thing—the wicked (the unrighteous, those in the flesh, etc.) will not inherit the kingdom. In light of these three passages consider also Revelation 21:8—“But to the fearful and unbelieving and those who make themselves abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” It is very obvious that the Apostle John was speaking of unsaved people, not some class of carnal and wicked Christians. Putting all four of these passages together forces us to conclude that those who do not inherit the kingdom will have their part (inheritance, share, portion) in the lake of fire! James Ventilato says it this way:

After all, according to **1 Corinthians 6:9,10, Ephesians 5:5 and Galatians 5:19-21**, those who, e.g., are characterized as fornicators, idolaters, impure persons, covetous persons, sorcerers, murderers, etc.—*these all shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; and likewise, according to **Colossians 3:5 and Revelation 21:8**, those who, e.g., are characterized as fornicators, idolaters, impure persons, covetous persons, sorcerers, murderers, etc.—*upon these all comes the wrath of God in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death*.

In Matthew 25:31-46, the Lord Jesus mentions only two groups, the sheep (*saved*) and the goats (*unsaved*). The Hodges/Dillow view supposes three groups: the unsaved, the wicked saved who do not inherit the kingdom, and the righteous saved who do inherit the kingdom. The Lord Jesus taught that the goats (*unsaved*) will go away into everlasting fire—everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:41-46). He taught that the sheep (*saved*) will inherit the kingdom: “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand [the sheep, *see verse 33*], Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). There is no indication that the Lord was speaking to only some of the sheep, and there is no indication that any of the saved people were excluded from inheriting the kingdom.

This Matthew 25 passage raises an interesting problem for Hodges and Dillow, who both teach that there is no necessary connection between faith and good works. In the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46), those Gentiles who do not perform good works toward the saved Jewish remnant during the tribulation will be eternally punished and will go away into everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41-46). This indicates that there must be a relationship between a person’s faith and his works. Hodges and Dillow teach that a saved person can be devoid of good works. If the Hodges/Dillow view were correct, then why should these Gentiles who lacked good works be sentenced to eternal punishment? The passage makes sense only when we understand that true saving faith is evidenced by one’s works.

In the New Testament, numerous passages indicate that ALL BELIEVERS are *heirs* and that all believers participate in the inheritance. Consider the following: Ephesians 1:14,18; Colossians 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4 (“an inheritance incorruptible”); Acts 20:32 (an inheritance which is shared by “all” who are sanctified); Romans 8:17 (“heirs of God”); Titus 3:7 (those “justified by His grace” are “heirs”); Hebrews 1:14; 6:17; 11:7. James 2:5 identifies those who are “heirs of the kingdom” as those who are “rich in faith,” indicating that all believers are heirs

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

of the kingdom. These passages argue against dividing saved people into two classes—those who are heirs and those who are not.

### 5. Who Will Enter the Kingdom in Natural Bodies?

This has been a difficult question for those who believe in a post-tribulation rapture, but it also is a major problem for those who embrace the teachings of Hodges and Dillow. Here is the problem facing Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin:

1. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood **cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50). Hodges and Dillow understand this to mean that those who inherit the kingdom will be in resurrection bodies, not in mortal bodies. Keep in mind that in their way of thinking, the ones who inherit the kingdom are the victorious, overcoming believers in contrast to other saved people whose faith has failed, who are immoral, or who do not measure up in some other way.
2. “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Since the sheep inherit the kingdom and since mortal flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, Dillow concludes that “the resurrection and transformation of the sheep occur prior to their ‘receiving the kingdom’ and must be simultaneous with the judgment of the sheep and the goats” [*The Reign of the Servant Kings*, pages 78-79]. In other words, he believes that the sheep must enter the kingdom in resurrected, glorified bodies. This is contrary to the common dispensational position which teaches that the “sheep” represent saved Gentiles during the tribulation who will enter the kingdom in natural, unglorified bodies.
3. Hodges and Dillow recognize, and rightly so, that there will be people in the millennium kingdom in mortal bodies. Dillow cites Isaiah 65:20 and Ezekiel 36:11 as indicating that there will be physical procreation and physical death in the kingdom and he cites Rev. 20:7-10 as referring to a multitude of unregenerate men at the end of the millennium in mortal bodies who will rebel against Christ [*The Reign of the Servant Kings*, page 78].
4. If in Matthew 25 the sheep are the saved people and the goats are the unsaved people prior to the beginning of the kingdom, and if the saved people “inherit” the kingdom by ruling with Christ in resurrected bodies, then where are the saved people who will enter the kingdom in mortal bodies? Dillow has no dogmatic answer to this problem: “Since the Scriptures are silent on this problem, one must be careful how he explains the difficulty” [*The Reign of the Servant Kings*, page 78]. The solution that Dillow suggests is patterned after the fact that those who perished in the wilderness because of their unbelief had children who were allowed to enter the land of promise. Based on this Dillow says, “In a similar way, perhaps the believing children of the sheep who have escaped the judgments of the great tribulation will constitute a kind of ‘second exodus’ and will be the mortal believers who enter into the coming kingdom” [p.79]
5. Bob Wilkin, the Executive Director of the Grace Evangelical Society, wrote the following: “I do believe that the sheep at the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats will enter the millennium with resurrected bodies (in light of 1 Cor. 15 that flesh and blood cannot inherit [=rule] the kingdom and Jesus’ statement in Matt. 25 that the sheep will inherit it). If that is so, the people who have natural bodies and who have children during the millennium are the children under the age of accountability who survive the tribulation” [From a personal letter to this writer from Bob Wilkin dated 4/4/95]. So apparently Wilkin believes that the people who enter the kingdom in natural bodies are the young children and babies who will survive the tribulation being under the age of accountability at that time, and their parents could be either saved (sheep) or unsaved (goats). Dillow teaches a somewhat different view, namely, that they are the believing children of the sheep. Both apparently agree that no adults will enter the kingdom in natural bodies.

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

In conclusion, those who hold the position that only a special class of believers inherits the kingdom are forced to face the prophetic problem of how people in mortal bodies enter the kingdom.

### 6. Observations on 1 Corinthians 15:50

In 1 Corinthians 15:50, Paul is writing to church-age believers. He is about to reveal the mystery of the translation and transformation of living church saints at the time of the rapture (verses 51-53). It is absolutely true that no church-age believer will inherit the kingdom in a flesh-and-blood body. When it comes to the church, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (verse 50). Why not? Verses 51-53 explain.

Other Scriptures, however, such as Matthew 25:31-34, teach that believing tribulation survivors will inherit the kingdom in flesh and blood bodies and though they are saved, they will have corruption in their hearts, even a sin nature, which will be passed down to their children.

Dillow and Hodges err by taking verse 50 to be a truism for all saints, even tribulation saints. The truth set forth in verses 51-53 clearly applies *only* to church saints. May not verse 50 apply only to church saints as well?

Actually, 1 Corinthians 15:50 and its context argue strongly against the Dillow/Hodges view. Dillow and Hodges teach that out of all the church saints, only the spiritual elite (the “overcomers”) inherit the kingdom. Some church saints inherit the kingdom but not all. But in the very next verse, verse 51, notice the twice repeated emphasis on the word “all.” **All** will be changed and delivered from flesh and blood corruption, including the carnal Corinthians! **ALL church saints inherit the kingdom apart from corruption (verse 50) by way of the rapture/resurrection (verses 51-53).**

#### *Conclusion to the Discussion of 1 Cor. 6:9-11*

#### *Who Are Those Who Do Not Inherit the Kingdom?*

The "unrighteous" that Paul is referring to in 1 Corinthians 6:9 are unsaved people who have never been justified. They are "unjust" in contrast to "saints" (compare 1 Cor. 6:1). Contrary to what Hodges and Dillow teach, the "unrighteous" do not refer to a group of carnal believers who are eternally saved but who will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ. The passage teaches nothing of the kind. Indeed, Paul teaches that those who are saved (including the carnal Corinthians) are not unrighteous because they have been washed, sanctified and justified!

Those who profess faith in Christ but who then persist in a wicked and immoral lifestyle, such as characterizes the unregenerate, are giving evidence that they have never been born again. God's Word certainly recognizes the problem of carnality among God's saints (1 Cor. 3:1-4), but Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 is contrasting those who are unrighteous with those, including the carnal Corinthians, who WERE unrighteous but who have been justified by faith. All those who are justified by faith are righteous in Christ and will inherit the kingdom. Those who “shall not inherit the kingdom” is not a description of fleshly believers who do not qualify for kingdom rewards. Those who “shall not inherit the kingdom” are the unregenerate, whose destiny is the lake of fire.

## 7. The Parable of the Sower

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:11-15).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
The fruitful believer is represented by the good ground. This is the saved person who perseveres in the faith and who brings forth fruit.	The carnal, barren believer is represented by the rocky ground and the thorny ground. The rocky ground represents a saved person who believes at first but then falls away from the faith. The thorny ground represents a saved but carnal person who is given over to the things of the world and thus is fruitless.

### Observations:

According to this understanding of the parable the only ground which represents the heart of an unsaved person is the hard ground by the way side (Luke 8:12). The other three categories, according to Hodges and Dillow, all refer to saved people. Hodges explains his position on this parable in the book *The Hungry Inherit* and Dillow explains this parable in *The Reign of the Servant Kings* on pages 396-400.

This interpretation contradicts our Lord’s clear teaching in Matthew 7:16-20 where we are told that “every good tree brings forth good fruit.” Since there is no good fruit connected with the rocky soil and the thorny soil, how can there be a good tree? The root is corrupt!

It is correct to understand all of the saved as represented by the “good ground.” Matthew 13:23 teaches two important principles: 1) All those who are truly saved are fruitful at least to some extent (see Matt. 3:8-10; 7:16-20); 2) Some believers are much more fruitful than others. There is a big difference between 30 baskets of apples and 100 baskets of apples!

## 8. The Overcomers in Revelation Chapters 2-3

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God....He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death....To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden

***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

mana, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it... And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron... He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels... Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.... To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26-27; 3:5,12,21).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This is the faithful and fruitful believer and it is to him and to him alone that the “overcomer” promises apply. This is the saved person who conquers and who is victorious! He will not taste of the second death!	This is the saved person who is not an overcomer. The sevenfold promises given to the overcomer in Revelation 2-3 do not apply to this fleshly believer. This is the defeated Christian who, though saved, will pay dearly at the judgment seat of Christ.

**Observations:**

An excellent study to refute this view is the article by James E. Rosscup entitled, "The Overcomer of the Apocalypse" found in the *Grace Theological Journal* 3.2 (1982) pages 261-286. If you would like a copy of this article, please contact us.

Who is the overcomer? This is answered in 1 John 5:4,5— "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" According to these verses every born again believer is an overcomer. Why is this true? It is because the Lord Jesus is THE OVERCOMER and we are trusting and resting in His perfect victory (compare John 16:33). How can a person be joined to Jesus Christ and be in perfect union with Him, and not be a victor?

Hodges goes so far as to say that it is "totally illicit" (illegal!) to appeal to 1 John 5:4-5 in order to understand who the "overcomer" really is (Grace in Eclipse, p.108). Is it illegal to let God’s Word explain its own terms? Is it illegal to compare Scripture with Scripture?

1 John 4:4 also teaches that every believer is an overcomer. Revelation 21:7 refers to every saved person: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." This latter passage distinguishes between only two broad classes, the saved (see verses 3-5) and the unsaved (verse 8). The contrast is not between believers who overcome and believers who do not overcome. The contrast is between believers who overcome (verse 7) and the unsaved who are in the lake of fire (verse 8).

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Consider one of the promises given to the overcomer as found in Revelation 2:11— "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." This implies that the non-overcomer will be hurt of the second death. If the non-overcomer is a saved person (carnal, etc.), then does this mean that the carnal believer will be hurt of the second death which is the lake of fire (compare Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8)? It is obvious that every saved person, regardless of his degree or level of faithfulness in this life, can claim the promise that he will not be hurt of the second death.

John, the author of Revelation, carefully defines who the overcomer is. It should be noted that 1 John 5:4-5 is the only passage in the New Testament that specifically asks the question, "Who is the overcomer?" and then answers that question: "Who is he that overcometh the world, **but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God**" (v.5). In Revelation chapters 2-3 John records 7 promises to the overcomer. In Revelation 21, verses 7-8, there are two and only two groups mentioned: 1) the overcomers (the heirs!), and 2) the wicked unbelievers who have their part in the lake of fire. No mention is made of a supposed third group made up of saved people who are defeated failures. There are only two groups, and there is a heaven and hell difference between the two. We must conclude, therefore, that all the saved are overcomers and are exempt from the second death. It is interesting to note the similarities between Revelation 21:8 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Hodges and Dillow say that these unrighteous ones (1 Cor. 6:9-10) will be excluded from millennial joys and blessings. John the Apostle says that these unrighteous ones (Rev. 21:8) will have their part in the lake of fire. It's safer to side with the Apostle John!

Romans 8:37 is an excellent "overcomer" verse because it teaches that every believer is "more than an overcomer," indeed he is a "super-overcomer" (literal rendering of Greek). The "**we**" of verse 37 refers to every true believer (those who have been predestinated, called, justified, glorified--v.29-30). "**We are** (v.37)"--right now this is true! "In all these things"--in the midst of all the difficulties we triumph! "More than conquerors" = hyper-conquerors, super-conquerors, super-victors, super-overcomers. It refers to one who gains a surpassing or an overwhelming victory, the one who wins a most glorious victory. It is the Greek word **hupernikao** (from "**huper**"--compare the English words "hyper" and "super" and the verb "**nikao**"--to overcome, to have the victory (same word used for overcomers in Revelation 2-3). We are not just overcomers, we are more than overcomers! We are not just victors, we are more than victors! How could anyone say, in light of this, that some believers are not overcomers? No believer is less than an overcomer, all believers are "more than overcomers"! Ours is an overwhelming victory!

J.D. Faust, in his book, *The Rod--Will God Spare It?*, bases his theology of punishment for believers primarily on Revelation 2:11, the passage that implies that non-overcomers will be hurt of the second death. He agrees with Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin that only faithful, victorious Christians are overcomers. Since the overcomers are told they will not be hurt of the second death, Faust concludes that the non-overcomers (the defeated Christians or the apostate Christians) will indeed be hurt of the second death. His theory says that at the judgment seat of Christ a great multitude of believers will be hurt of the second death (temporarily experience hell!) and then will be tortured in the fires of Hades for a thousand years. Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin strongly repudiate such teaching, and yet, isn't Faust being consistent with what he believes? Faust interprets Revelation 2:11 in a simple and straightforward way (based on his erroneous presuppositions). Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin are forced into doing exegetical gymnastics with Revelation 2:11 in order to avoid having a whole host of saved people taste of the second death! All three of them are wrong, but Faust is the more consistent of the three, even though his conclusions are heretical!

For a more detailed study on this issue, see our paper, *Who Are The Overcomers?*

## 9. Who are the "joint-heirs"?

"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" (Rom. 8:17).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow, Robert Wilkin and Paul Benware</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This saved person is an heir of God as are all believers, but he is also a "joint-heir with Christ" because of the fact that he suffers with Christ.	This person is saved but not faithful and he is unwilling to suffer with Christ. He is an heir of God, as are all believers, but he is not a "joint-heir with Christ."

### Observations:

This teaching insists that all believers are heirs of God but only those believers who suffer with Christ are joint-heirs with Christ. It is only these suffering believers who will inherit the kingdom and reign with Christ during His millennial reign. Dillow says, "All Christians are heirs of God, but not all are heirs of the kingdom and joint-heirs with Christ" (p.90). This is also the position of Paul N. Benware, in his book, *The Believer's Payday* (see Chapter 2 of Benware's book).

The Bible, however, teaches that suffering with Christ affects **all** those who are saved to some degree. See John 15:18-21; 16:33 1 Thess. 3:3-4; Rom. 8:16-17; 2 Cor. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 2:20-21; 4:12-13; 5:10, etc.

The following is taken from our verse by verse study in Romans, under Romans 8:17:

There are some who teach that every believer is an "heir of God" but not every believer is a "joint-heir" or "co-heir" with Christ. They understand the "joint-heirs" to be a special class of believers who are victorious and who persevere to the end even though doing so requires difficulties and suffering. This is a misunderstanding of this verse. Paul is not talking about some special class of overcoming believers who qualify as joint heirs of Christ and who will reign with Him in the kingdom, in contrast to worldly, non-suffering believers who will be excluded from the millennial kingdom and will be cast into outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Though it is true that some believers suffer more than others, it is also true that all believers share in Christ's sufferings (2 Cor. 1:5; John 15:18-21; 16:33; etc.). Every believer is a joint-heir with Christ, sharing in both His suffering and His glory. All believers will reign with Christ in His kingdom (Matthew 13:40-43).

## *Are the Joint-Heirs of Christ A Special, Elite Class of Victorious, Overcoming Christians?*

William Newell says the following under his commentary under Romans 8:17:



## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

**If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him**---Here two schools of interpretation part company, one saying boldly that all the saints are designated, and that all shall reign with Christ; the other, that reigning with Christ depends upon voluntary choosing of a path of suffering with Him.

"That we may also be glorified together." This is the key to our question: WHO are to be glorified with Christ when He comes? In Chapter Five Paul says (and that of, and to, all the saints), "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 we read, "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed." And again (Col. 3:4): "When Christ our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also [evidently all the saints!] with Him be manifested in glory." Again (1 John 3:2): "Now are we [all the saints] children of God . . . We know that, if He shall be manifested, we [all the saints] shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is!" (Romans, pages 316-317)

Zane Hodges is among those who teach that only an elite group of believers will reign with Christ, thus dividing the body of Christ during the millennium and consigning the unfaithful, non-suffering believers to some lower realm where they are not allowed to share in Christ's glorious reign. Hodges teaches that all believers are "heirs of God," but that only suffering, victorious, overcoming believers are "joint heirs with Christ." But this is not what the text of Romans 8:16-17 actually says. Romans 8:16 teaches that we are the children (tekna) of God (and certainly this is true of all believers--John 1:12). Romans 8:17 teaches that if we are children (and we are!) then we are also heirs. As God's children, what kind of heirs are we? We are heirs in two ways: 1) we are heirs of God; 2) We are joint-heirs of Christ (see Heb. 1:2 where we learn that Christ is the great Heir).

In his excellent *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel B. Wallace translates Romans 8:17 as follows: "Now if we are children, [we are] also heirs: on the one hand, heirs of God, on the other hand, fellow heirs with Christ" (p. 129).

"If so be" (eiper) means "if so be that." It is used six times in the New Testament. It is used by Paul in Romans in only one other place, also in this same chapter: Romans 8:9--"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Paul makes a statement that is true of every believer ("you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit") and then he follows this with another statement that is true of every believer ("the Spirit of God dwell(s) in you"). Paul was saying something like this: "You are a true Christian (not in the flesh but in the Spirit) because I'm assuming that the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Let's follow the same pattern in Romans 8:17. Paul makes a statement that is true of every believer ("you are heirs--heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ") and then he follows this with another statement that is true of every believer (a true believer suffers with Christ--John 15:18-21; 1 Pet. 5:10; Phil. 1:29; etc.). Paul was saying something like this: "You are true Christians (heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ) because I'm assuming that He is IN YOU, and if He is in you, then the world who hated Him is going to hate you because you have been so identified with Him (Col. 1:24; John 16:33). Every true believer, therefore, suffers with Him. That is, those who share His glory then are those who share His sufferings now (see 1 Peter 5:10 where Peter gives no indication whatsoever that he is talking about some elite group of suffering believers as opposed to carnal, non-suffering believers; nor does Paul in Philippians 1:29).

Another similar example of "if so be that" is found in 1 Peter 2:2-3. Here we find a similar pattern. Peter gives a command to every saved babe in Christ: "Desire the pure milk of the word." He follows this with another statement that is true of every believer: "you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Peter was saying

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

something like this: "You are true Christians (true babes in Christ) and you ought to desire the pure milk of the Word because I'm assuming that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (and every believer has so tasted!). If you have truly tasted of the Lord's grace, then you are going to desire more and more and more!

When Christ was in the world, He was under constant attack from the world and from the devil. Today Christ is in His believers who are in the world, and He, in them, continues to be under constant attack. The result of this is that we share in Christ's sufferings. Paul, in writing to the sometimes very carnal Corinthians, said to them, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us" (2 Cor. 1:5 and compare 2 Cor. 4:16-18). In Romans 8:18 Paul speaks of "the sufferings of the present time" and what Spirit-indwelt believer is exempt from such?

Finally, Peter tells all believers to expect "fiery trial" and difficult testing, and to rejoice in it, "inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13). There is not even a hint here that Peter is addressing these words to some elite group of suffering believers in contrast to other believers who are unwilling to suffer for Christ. Peter was talking about the sufferings that all believers share in and partake of.

It is certainly true that some believers suffer more than others. Likewise some believers are more faithful in serving the Lord than others. Some believers share the gospel more effectively than others. Some believers walk in the Spirit more than others. No one would doubt that there are different levels of faithfulness displayed by God's children, and that many will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. And yet we must not say that some believers are exempt from the sufferings of Christ of which we are all partakers. Christ walked down the road of suffering, and we who follow Him must do the same. Suffering is not optional for the child of God in this Christ-hating, Christ-rejecting world. God's children in this world are marked by suffering (compare Hebrews 11:36-38 where this same principle is illustrated by O.T. saints).

There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His.... all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world, which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature.... This suffering [together] flows from possessing life in Him whilst passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him.... Hence, if this place of suffering in the world as it now is be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory." – William Kelly (*Notes on the Epistle of the Romans*, p.142-144).

Just as the writer of Hebrews teaches that those who are without chastisement are bastards (illegitimate children) and not sons (Hebrews 12:8), so Peter (1 Peter 4:12-13) and Paul (Romans 8:16-18; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 1:29) would say this: But if ye be without suffering, of which all are partakers (1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Cor. 1:5), then are ye bastards and not sons. But rejoice insomuch as you are sons and you are children and you are heirs of God and you are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17)! You share in His cross and you will share in His crown.

## 10. Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth and Outer Darkness

“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12).

***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 22:13).

“And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 24:51).

“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This saved person will participate in the great wedding banquet at the beginning of the kingdom age. Because of his faithfulness he will reign with Christ.	This saved person will be excluded from the wedding banquet, and for him there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This involves great anguish and remorse and regret. It even involves outer darkness!! Faust takes this teaching to the extreme. He says that these wicked believers will be tortured in the fires of Hades for 1000 years.

**Observations:**

Dillow acknowledges that the phrase "wailing (weeping) and gnashing of teeth" is used on three occasions of the experience of the unregenerate in hell (Matt. 13:42,50; Luke 13:28). However he insists that in the other four places where it is found (the four passages cited above), it is used of the regenerate in the kingdom (see page 351). Hodges agrees that saved people will experience weeping and gnashing of teeth (*Grace In Eclipse*, see chapters 8-9).

In Matthew 13:41-43 two and only two groups are mentioned: 1) the righteous (v.43); and 2) those which do iniquity or lawlessness (v.41). Also two and only two destinies are mentioned: 1) the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (v.43); 2) those who practice lawlessness will be cast into a furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (v.42).

Dillow and Hodges teach that some of the righteous (the carnal ones, the non-overcomers) practice lawlessness, whereas Matthew 13:41-43 makes a sharp contrast between the righteous and those who practice lawlessness (compare also Matthew 7:23 where the lawless ones are clearly those who are not saved). Dillow and Hodges teach that many of the righteous will be cast into outer darkness, whereas Matthew 13:41-43 teaches that the righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Dillow and Hodges teach that some of the righteous will be weeping and gnashing their teeth, whereas Matthew 13:41-43 teaches that it is the unsaved that will be doing this at the end of the age.

It is interesting that Merrill F. Unger, though agreeing with Hodges/Dillow that unrighteous believers will enter but not inherit the kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-11; etc.), nevertheless believed that the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" passages all referred to hell. See Unger’s Handbook and his discussion under Matthew 25:1-30 where he says, "The one talent servant, a mere professor, is excluded from the kingdom (‘outer darkness’) and swept away in judgment with the ungodly." [For a more detailed study on “Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth” see the paper “Weeping

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

and Gnashing of Teeth—Is This the Fate of True Christians?” (20 pages).]

11. Those Who Profess With Lips But Deny By Life

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This person professes that he knows God and his good works back up this profession. The message of his life is consistent with the message of his lips.	This saved person professes that he knows God but by his wicked works he denies Him. He is saved even though the message of his lips is contradicted by the message of his life. He is a saved person who “lives like the devil” as it were.

Dillow does not discuss this verse. Hodges (*The Gospel Under Siege*, p.96) teaches that this verse is describing those who are saved. Hodges says that this is a description of "redeemed and justified people" who were performing works that were "unsuited to a Christian profession" (*Grace in Eclipse*, pages 68-69).

It is much better to understand this verse as describing a person who merely professes but does not truly possess Christ. What does the verse itself say? Titus 1:16 says that these people profess with their lips but deny God by their works, being abominable (a strong word to use for God’s beloved children!), disobedient (used in Titus 3:3 of the unsaved) and unto every good work reprobate. The immediate context is speaking about those who are defiled and unbelieving (Titus 1:16).

This passage well illustrates the doctrine of Hodges. He teaches that a saved person can claim to know God and yet totally deny Him by his works and life-style, being totally devoid of good works. As we are about to see, Hodges will carry this teaching even a step further. Titus 1:16 teaches, according to Hodges, that a saved person can claim to know God yet deny Him by works. But Hodges also teaches that a saved person can even deny that he knows God! Hodges, as we shall soon see, gives the example of a saved person who does not even claim to know God and who also denies Him by works! How could such a person be saved? See the following:

12. Can A Saved Person Totally Abandon the Faith?

“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39).

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
The "believing believer" will persevere in the faith and his physical life will be preserved (see Dillow, p.337). His life will be saved. (See Hodges, <i>Gospel Under Siege</i> , pp. 74-75)	The saved person who does not persevere in the faith will experience "loss" or "destruction." This judgment may involve physical death for the sinning saved person (see Dillow, p. 337).

**Observations and Illustration:**

According to Hodges, the word "perdition" in Hebrews 10:39 refers to "temporal ruin" not "eternal ruin" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 807). However, the Bible consistently uses this term to describe eternal destruction in hell. See Matthew 7:13 ("destruction"); John 17:12 ("son of perdition"—of Judas); Rom. 9:22; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 2 Thess. 2:3 ("son of perdition"—of the man of sin); 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:7,16; Rev. 17:8,11. See the related term "perish" which is used in Matthew 10:28; Luke 13:3,5; John 3:15-16; 10:28; 2 Cor. 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:10; etc.

According to Dillow and Hodges, a truly saved person can depart from the faith, abandon the faith, reject the gospel, mock Christianity, stop believing, and yet still be saved. Hodges believes that a regenerate person can totally defect from the faith (total apostasy) and completely withdraw his Christian profession, and yet still be saved (see *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Commentary on Hebrews, page 795). Dillow says, "It is possible for a truly born-again person to fall away from the faith and **cease believing** (emphasis mine). He is called a carnal Christian" (p.199). *Note: The carnal Corinthians certainly did not fall away from the faith and cease believing!*

The best way to illustrate this is by using one of Hodges' own illustrations. Hodges' illustration was given in a tape series which he delivered while speaking at the Church of the Open Door which at the time was pastored by G. Michael Cocoris. The series of tapes is entitled, "Great Themes in the Book of Hebrews" (available through Redencion Viva Publishers). I believe this is the same tape series which Dillow mentions as having been so influential to him and which helped him to look at the New Testament in a whole different way. On the tape entitled "The Peril of Not Growing" Hodges discusses the great warning passage found in Hebrews chapter 6 and he gives this personal illustration:

I have a friend, and more than a friend, a man who labored with me side by side in the ministry of God's Word in the little group that has become \_\_\_\_\_ Bible chapel and this friend has fallen away from the Christian faith. He graduated from Bob Jones University and from Dallas Theological Seminary. And about the time when he and his wife left Dallas his wife contracted a very serious illness which over the years got progressively worse until she was reduced to being a complete invalid, and after the death of his wife I visited my friend (who now lives in the Midwest and who teaches Ancient History in a secular university). And as we sat in the living room together, face to face, he told me very frankly but graciously THAT HE

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

NO LONGER CLAIMED TO BE A CHRISTIAN AT ALL, THAT HE NO LONGER BELIEVED THE THINGS THAT HE ONCE PREACHED AND TAUGHT, and the situation was even worse than he described because I heard through others that in the classroom on the university campus he often mocked and ridiculed the Christian faith. As I sat in that living room I was very painfully aware that it was impossible for me to talk that man into changing his mind. It was impossible for me to talk him back to the conviction he had once held. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE for me to renew him to repentance. You want to find someone harder to deal with than an unsaved person? Find a person like that....

Oh how disgraceful for a man to have known the truth and proclaimed the truth and then to deny the truth! He has put the Son of God to an open shame! Well you say, "I guess he's headed for hell, right? I guess he's headed for eternal damnation. He's renounced his Christian faith." Wait a minute. I didn't say that, and neither does the writer of Hebrews. Let me remind you that Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" and He also said, "He that cometh to Me I shall in no wise cast out" .... God's will is that He lose no one (John 6:37-40). He has never lost anyone and HE NEVER WILL! And I grieve because my friend AND BROTHER has lost his faith BUT CHRIST HAS NOT LOST HIM. HE HAS LOST HIS FAITH BUT CHRIST HAS NOT LOST HIM! Do you believe in the grace of God?

That this was a very sad and tragic case, we would all agree. It grieves the heart of every believer to see a man totally reject the things of Christ, the very Christ he once claimed to love. It must have been a heart-breaking experience for Hodges. Here was a man who no longer even professed that he knew God! He totally denied the Christian faith. He even mocked and ridiculed the Christian faith, that is, he taught against the truth of Christianity! Hodges believes that a regenerate person can totally defect from the faith (total apostasy) and completely withdraw his Christian profession, and yet still be saved (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 795).

If Hodges were talking to this apostate, he would probably say something like this:

My friend, I know you have turned your back on the faith and I know that you have rejected all that you once believed, and I've heard that you now go so far as to mock Christianity in the university classroom. But I want you to know that you are still a saved man. You have lost your faith but Christ has not lost you. You have let go of Christ, but Christ has not let go of you.

Is it really wise to try to assure an apostate that he is eternally safe? Could it be that this man was never saved in the first place, although he seemed to be in many ways? Don't the tares look very similar to the wheat? Do not the unsaved people in Matthew 7:21-23 do certain things that might make you think they were believers? Did they not do many wonderful works in Christ's Name? Did not Judas fool many of his companions into thinking that he was one of them, when in reality he was only a mere pretender? My counsel to this person would be much different than that of Hodges. I would not want to give him any false hope or false assurance. I don't want to tell him he is safe when he might not be safe at all. I might say something like this:

"My friend, it has become clear that you have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when it comes to Jesus Christ you refuse to believe on Him, having rejected the great amount of light and knowledge which you previously had. Because of this you are in great danger because God's Word says that the unbeliever is condemned (John 3:18) and will perish (John 3:16). God's Word teaches that the unbeliever will die in his sins (John 8:24). I know of no place in God's Word that gives any kind of comfort or any kind of hope to one who repudiates Christ and rejects His gospel. To turn your back on Jesus Christ is to turn your back on your only hope of salvation."

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Hodges' friend, by his wicked departure from the living God, was giving evidence that he probably was never a true believer in the first place. He did not "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6,14) and thus he was not a true part of Christ's house. Like scaffolding, he was just a TEMPORARY ATTACHMENT (see Luke 8:13— "who for a while believe and in time of testing fall away" and compare 1 John 2:19).

**13. Can A Good Tree Bring Forth Bad Fruit?**

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15-16).

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt. 7:18).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow on Matthew 7:15-20</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This saved person produces good fruit. He is saved and shows that he is saved.	This saved person's life is devoid of good works. He is saved but does not show that he is saved (gives no evidence of saving faith). Even though his WORKS are bad, his WORDS are not bad, and therefore he is not considered a false prophet.

Consider Matthew 7:15-20. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" and "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." At face value such verses seem to be totally at odds with the teaching of Hodges and Dillow. Hodges and Dillow teach that not every good tree brings forth good fruit. Jesus was saying that if the tree is good then the fruit will be good. Hodges/Dillow teach that if the tree is good (if the person is saved) then the fruit should be good but it may or may not be good. Hodges/Dillow in essence are saying that it is possible for a good tree to bring forth evil fruit. What then did Jesus mean when He said, "By their fruits you shall know them"?

Hodges and Dillow try to get around this by saying that the bad fruit that comes forth is not the saved person's wicked works, but it is the false teacher's WICKED WORDS (wicked teaching). That is, you will know a false prophet or false teacher by his false teaching (his words, his doctrine). Thus, Hodges and Dillow insist that a saved person can bear no fruit, can persist in evil works (such as fornication, homosexuality, adultery, drunkenness, etc.) and yet still be saved. Yet this wicked saved person is not an unsaved false teacher because even though the fruit of his life is bad the fruit of his lips is good.

Yet, consider again the illustration given by Hodges of his friend who abandoned the faith. In this illustration we have, according to Hodges, a saved man who totally rejected the Christian faith. His life, since his apostasy, is devoid of good works. But it goes beyond this. This man even mocked and ridiculed the Christian faith in the university classroom. That is he TAUGHT AGAINST Christianity. The fruit of his works was evil but the fruit of HIS WORDS was also evil. He was a false teacher! In light of Hodges' own teaching on Matthew 7:15-20 this man should be judged as an unsaved false teacher (because of the evil fruit of his WORDS). But Hodges insists that this man was a saved person! This is very inconsistent! Dillow teaches that the unregenerate state

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

of false teachers is proven by their doctrine (see Dillow, p.384, his discussion of Matt. 7:16-19). Thus according to Dillow’s own criteria, the man given in Hodges’ example must be unregenerate.

### 14. Keeping God’s Commandments

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
The believing believer keeps God’s commands and thus demonstrates that he is having fellowship with the Father.	The carnal believer does not keep His commandments. This disobedient one is saved but he is not having fellowship with God.

#### Observations:

Hodges and Dillow understand this passage (1 John 2:3-4), not as a test of salvation, but as a test of fellowship (see Dillow, p.407). That is, obedience to God’s commands does not demonstrate that a person is saved, but it demonstrates that a person is having fellowship with God. According to this view, disobedience to Christ’s commands is not necessarily a mark of being unsaved.

The key question that must be answered is this. What does the expression, "I know Him" mean? If a person "does not know Him" then does this mean that the person is unsaved or does this mean that the person is not enjoying fellowship?

The New Testament teaching makes it very clear that **KNOWING GOD** is equivalent to having eternal life (see John 17:3) and **not knowing God** is another way of saying that the person is unsaved (see 1 Thess. 4:5 and 2 Thess. 1:8). Hodges and Dillow teach that "knowing God" in John 17:3 means something very different from "knowing God" in 1 John 2:3-4.

The position of Hodges and Dillow is that a person can persist in deliberate, willful disobedience to God’s commands, and yet this person can be saved. "I’m saved, but I refuse to do what my Saviour tells me to do!" We certainly would agree with Hodges and Dillow that true believers can struggle with times of disobedience. Which one of us could say that we have never disobeyed our Saviour? The apostles themselves had their times of rebellion against the revealed will of God. Certainly Peter was not being obedient when He denied his Lord three time. And yet if you were to look at the lives of the apostles as a whole, you would have to conclude that their lives were characterized by obedience, not disobedience. That is why Jesus, who knew all of their faults and failures, said of them, "They have kept Thy Word" (John 17:6). If you took a snapshot (still picture) of Peter denying the Lord, you would conclude that he was a disobedient believer. If you took a video of Peter’s entire saved live, you would conclude that he was an obedient believer. He knew God and obeyed Him!



## 15. Loving the Brethren

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:14-15).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This saved person loves his brothers and sisters in Christ thus demonstrating that he has fellowship with God.	This fleshly believer hates the brethren, has not passed from death to life, abides in death, is a murderer, and does not have eternal life abiding in him, and yet in spite of all this, he is saved!

### Observations:

Hodges and Dillow strongly deny that loving the brethren is a mark of a true believer. They insist that love for the brethren is evidence that a person has fellowship with God, not that he is saved.

The expression "passed from death unto life" is carefully defined in John 5:24— "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." It is obvious that the person who has passed from death unto life is saved and has eternal life. The person who has not passed from death unto life is unsaved and condemned and does not have eternal life. John teaches that the person who does not love his brother has not passed from death unto life. He "abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). Indeed, he does not have eternal life abiding in Him (1 John 3:15). How could he say it any clearer?

Hodges and Dillow admit that John 5:24 refers to salvation. However they say that even though "passed from death unto life" refers to salvation in John 5:24, it does not mean this in 1 John 3:14 (see *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 896). They are forced to say that it means something different because otherwise it would not fit into their theological system.

In the context, Cain is given as an example of a person who did not love his brother (1 John 3:12). Cain "was of that wicked one" (1 John 3:12), that is, he was unsaved. Cain was not a carnal believer, he was an unregenerate, wicked, unbeliever.

In 1 John 3:10 we learn that the person who does not love his brother is manifesting that he is a child of the devil (unsaved).

In 1 John 2:9,11 we learn that the person hating his brother is "in darkness." This is not true of the saved person: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess. 5:5).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8). This verse teaches that the person that

## ***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

"loveth not" is unsaved. Hodges and Dillow disagree. According to Hodges, this person is born of God but he does not know God (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 898)! He believes that this verse is describing a saved person who does not love the brethren and who does not know God!

Is it correct to describe those who are truly saved (even carnal saved people) as those who know not God and who are in darkness and who are abiding in the state of death and who are murderers and who do not have eternal life abiding in them? Is this an accurate description of those whom God has saved and called out of darkness into His marvelous light?

The theology of Hodges/Dillow insists that a saved person can live just like the unregenerate and persist in such a life style. This life-style includes hatred for God's children. "I'm saved but I detest Christians. I hate being with them. I hate what they love and I love what they hate." Perish the thought!

### **16. Can A Saved Person Have A Dead Faith?**

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14,17,26).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This believer is fruitful unto every good work. His faith is not a dead faith. His faith is accompanied by good works. It is a living faith.	This is the person who believes in Christ but good works do not follow his justification. The result is that his faith shrivels up and dies. This spiritual impoverishment is considered "death." There is no connection between justification and sanctification at all. Though this person's faith is "dead," he is nevertheless a saved person.

#### **Observations:**

The true connection between saving faith and good works is found in the following chart:

# The Relationship Between Good Works and Salvation

<b>Salvation is NOT BY WORKS</b> (Eph. 2:8-9)	<b>Salvation is UNTO GOOD WORKS</b> (Eph. 2:10)
Good works are <b>not</b> the MEANS of salvation (Titus 3:5).	Good works are the RESULT of salvation (Titus 3:8).
Good works are <b>not</b> the CAUSE of salvation.	Good works are the CONSEQUENCE of salvation.
Good works are not what a person must do to be saved. <i>“But to him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”</i> (Rom. 4:5).	Good works are what a saved person does. <i>“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works”</i> (Titus 3:8).
The unsaved person performs good works to try to obtain God’s favor.	The saved person performs good works because he has obtained God’s favor (Titus 2:11-14).
Believers do <b>not</b> work in order to be saved.	Believers work because they are saved!
<b>FLESHLY WORKS:</b> that which an unsaved person tries to produce in order to be saved.	<b>FAITH WORKS:</b> that which God produces in the saved person (Heb. 13:21).
<b>FLESHLY WORKS</b> cannot please God (Rom. 8:8).	<b>FAITH WORKS</b> are pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6).
The unsaved boaster: “Look what I have done!” (see Matt. 23:5—“to be seen of men”).	The saved person: “Thank you Lord for what You are doing in me” (Phil. 2:13).
The works of an unsaved person are grounds for boasting. <i>“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory [boast]; but not before God”</i> (Rom. 4:2).	The works of a saved person bring praise to God. <i>“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God”</i> (Phil. 1:11).
<b>DEAD WORKS</b> (Heb. 6:1; 9:14; Eph. 5:11) Working apart from God’s LIFE.	<b>FRUITFUL WORKS</b> (Col. 1:10) Works which flow out of a right relationship to the living God.
The unsaved person <b>boasts in SELF</b> (“I”) (Luke 18:11-12).	The saved person <b>boasts in GOD</b> (1 Cor. 1:29-31).
A person cannot WORK FOR his salvation (Rom. 4:5).	A saved person can WORK OUT the salvation that he has (Phil. 2:12).
<b>EMPTY:</b> “Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling.”	<b>FULL:</b> <i>“that ye may abound to every good work”</i> (2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Cor. 15:58)
Faith alone saves (Rom. 3:28).	The faith that saves is not alone (James 2:22).

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

The error Paul corrected in Rom. 3-4: SALVATION IS BY WORKS. This is the error of <b>legalism</b> .	The error James corrected in James 2: Works are <b>unnecessary</b> after we are saved. This is the error of <b>antinomianism</b> .
You can't be saved with works (Rom. 3:28; 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:9).	You can't show that you are saved without works (James 2:18).
How can I be saved? ONLY BY FAITH (Eph. 2:8; Gal. 2:16)	How can I show that I am saved? ONLY BY WORKS (James 2:14-26).
<b>Faith without works</b> is essential for salvation (Gal. 2:16).	<b>Faith without works</b> is detrimental and evidences death (James 2:26).
Faith is the ROOT (Gal. 5:6).	LOVE (expressed by good works) is the FRUIT (Gal. 5: 6, 22; Heb. 10:24).
Faith is unseen (even as a root).	Works are visible (Matt. 5:16).
Good works REJECTED (Matt. 7:22-23).	Good works REMEMBERED (Heb. 6:10).
The works of an unsaved person will be an issue at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).	The works of a saved person will be an issue at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15).
God's message for the unsaved: <i>"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).</i>	God's message to the saved: <i>"[God's grace] teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world...a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11, 12,14).</i>
Impossible requirements for the unsaved: <b>"Run, John, run," the law commands but gives me neither feet nor hands...</b>	Supernatural enabling for the saved: <b>...far grander news the Gospel brings, It bids me fly and gives me wings!</b> — attributed to John Bunyan
<b>I do not work my soul to save— That my Lord hath done...</b>	<b>...But I would work like any slave For love of God's dear Son!</b>
<b>LORDSHIP SALVATION ERROR:</b> Adding requirements to saving faith. To be saved you must submit, obey, surrender to Christ's Lordship, fulfill the conditions of discipleship, etc.	<b>GRACE EVANGELICAL SOCIETY ERROR:</b> Insisting that a true believer can be barren and devoid of good works even to the point of abandoning the faith and totally rejecting the gospel, even denying Jesus Christ.

For a fuller discussion of James 2 and what it teaches about good works, see our paper, *Justification by Faith and Justification by Works*, 25 cents.

In studying James 2, it is important to note that the emphasis is on a **profession of faith**. "Though a man **say he hath faith**" (v.14). There is a big difference between saying that you have faith and actually possessing faith. And if we are going to prove that we have faith, works must be shown: "I will show thee my faith by my works" (v.18). If a person cannot show any works, then it is reasonable to question whether he really has faith.

## 17. Can A Saved Person Deny Christ?

“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32-33).

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us: If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:12-13).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer confesses Christ before men. He does not deny His Lord. His Lord will not deny him. He will reign with Christ.	This unfaithful believer denies Christ. He publicly disowns Christ. Christ will someday deny him, but this unfaithful one will still be saved. He let go of Christ but Christ will not let go of him! However, because of his failure to persevere, he will not reign with Christ for a thousand years.

### Observations:

Peter denied his Lord three times. The sin was very serious but it was temporary. About 53 days later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly confessed Christ before thousands. As his life is viewed as a whole, Peter was a disciple who confessed Christ. His denial was an aberration.

Thomas Cranmer was the moving force of the Protestant Reformation in the mid 16th century in England. In 1555 he was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. As pressures mounted Cranmer weakened and he even signed a statement in which he denied Protestantism. Just before he was to be put to death by Queen Mary (“bloody Mary”) he renounced his denial, and once more and in the strongest terms declared his Protestant faith. In dramatic fashion he showed how he felt about his denial of the principles of the Reformation. The hand which had signed the denial he held in the flames until it was burned to a crisp. Then the flames scorched his body, and he died the death of a martyr. He had a lapse of faith, but not an ultimate denial of the faith. His denial, though serious, was only temporary. Cranmer, in the final evaluation, would not be considered one who denied his Lord.

Matthew 10:32-33 describes a person who denies Christ. This is the person who says, “I don’t know Him! He is not my Saviour! I do not belong to Him.” He denies any kind of saving relationship with Christ. The person who confesses Christ gladly declares the opposite: “I know Him as my personal Saviour and Lord. I am His and He is mine!”

If a person confesses Christ, then Christ will confess Him before the Father (Matt. 10:32) and before the angels (Luke 12:8). That is, Christ will say: “I know Him! He is Mine! That person belongs to Me!” But the one who

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

denies Christ will be denied by Him before the heavenly audience. The Lord Jesus will utter these tragic words: “I do not know Him. He does not belong to Me.” Compare Matthew 7:23. The one who publicly disowns Christ will be publicly disowned by Him.

Contrary to the teaching of Hodges and Dillow, the person who denies the Saviour is UNSAVED: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth (confesses) the Son hath the Father also” (1 John 2:22-23). Even the most carnal believer will not persistently deny Christ and deny having any saving relationship to Him.

In 1 John 4:2-3 we learn that the person who DENIES CHRIST is not saved: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that **confesseth not** [the person who does not confess is the person who DENIES] that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh **is not of God**: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4:2-3).

Those who deny Christ are those who are ashamed of Him: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). Hodges teaches that this is speaking of true believers who are ashamed of Christ (*Grace In Eclipse*, p. 58). The Bible, however, clearly teaches that the true believer is not ashamed of Christ (Rom. 10:11 and compare 1:16).

The teaching of Hodges and Dillow insists that a regenerate person can deny Christ, deny the faith, deny the gospel, deny Christianity, deny any saving relationship to Christ, and yet still be saved. The Bible does not teach this.

### **Who Will Reign With Christ?**

“**If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him**” (2 Tim. 2:12a). Hodges/Dillow/Wilkin teach that there is a whole class of believers who are saved but because of their unfaithfulness they will not reign with Christ. They teach that only the persevering, suffering saints will reign with Christ. Only those who are “partakers” (“servant/kings”) will rule with Christ for a thousand years. Only the “joint-heirs” will reign with Him (Rom. 8:17). All other believers will be lesser citizens of the kingdom and will be in some sense on the outside, in outer darkness, etc. They teach that the non-overcoming believers will lose out on the privilege of reigning with Christ (Rev. 2:26-27).

It is interesting to scan the pages of the book of Revelation to see what it teaches about believers ruling with Christ and to see if this privilege is limited to some elite group of saved persons. “**Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen**” (Rev. 1:5-6). This passage teaches that all blood-washed believers have been made kings and priests unto God. And as kings, we must rule. Also, as the church of God we are the bride of Christ, and shall not the queen rule with the King?

“**And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth**” (Rev. 5:9-10). Notice the added information supplied by this passage. These blood-bought kings and priests had been redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation. As kings they must rule, and we are here told the location of their reign: “We shall reign **on the earth**.” Nothing is said about a special class of blood-bought

believers. These statements apply to all.

**“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years”** (Rev. 20:6). We have already seen that all blood-washed, blood-bought believers are made kings and priests unto God. Here we are told that they will all reign with Christ a thousand years (this will also include the tribulation saints according to Rev. 20:4). All who are part of the first resurrection (“the resurrection of life”—John 5:29) will share in this reign. It is interesting that Joseph Dillow, in his textbook on who shall someday reign with Christ (*The Reign of the Servant Kings*) says nothing about any of these passages in Revelation (1:5-6; 5:9-10; 20:4-6), apparently because they contradict his theory. Hodges teaches that Revelation 20:6 does not refer to all believers, but only to those faithful believers who are the HEIRS of the kingdom (*Grace In Eclipse*, p. 75). This is another example of forcing the text to fit one’s theological view.

It is interesting that Paul taught that all saints, including the Corinthian believers (who had serious problems with carnality), would someday "judge the world" and "judge angels" (1 Cor. 6:2-3). It is inconceivable that this could be done apart from reigning with Christ, the One who is the final and ultimate judge of all men and all angels. "Judging" the world and angels in 1 Corinthians 6 refers, indeed, to "governing," "ruling," or "reigning over," as in Matt. 19:28 (judging the twelve tribes of Israel) and Rev. 20:4a (judgment was given to those seated on the thrones). This is just one more indication that all saints will rule with Christ, not just some special class of "overcomers."

### 18. Will only some believers be presented holy and unblameable?

“In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard” (Col. 1:22-23).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This is the believer who continues in the faith and because of this he will be presented holy and unblameable and unreprouvable. He earns this spotless presentation because he persevered in the faith.	This carnal believer does not persevere and does not continue in the faith. He is saved, but because of his unfaithfulness he will not be presented holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

#### Observations:

Because of God's so-great salvation which is totally by grace, Colossians 1:22-23 describes something that will be true of every blood-bought believer. It is the same truth that is set forth in Ephesians 5:27— "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Certainly we do not want to envision half of the church presented faultless and the other half being presented full of faults and blemishes! No, the entire body and bride of Christ will be

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

presented faultless. The most carnal believer who has ever lived will be presented spotless and unblameable before God: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Hodges and Dillow divide Christ's beloved body and bride in troubling ways.

Why then does Colossians 1:23 say "IF ye continue in the faith..."? A true believer does not continue in the faith in order to be saved. A true believer continues in the faith because he is saved. Continuance in the faith is not a requirement for salvation but it is the evidence of salvation. Christ prays for those who are saved (as He did for Peter) that their faith will not fail. Hodges and Dillow teach that a true believer may abandon the faith, stop believing, deny Christ, reject the gospel, teach against Christianity and yet still be saved. Their system of theology seeks to make room for unbelieving apostates. Yet the Scriptures teach that if a person does not hold fast to the truth of the gospel, he is not saved: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, IF ye keep in memory [hold fast] what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

### 19. Can A Saved Person Be Characterized as An Evil Doer?

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but **he that doeth evil hath not seen God**" (3 John 11).

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and **they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation**" (John 5:29).

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil**, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. 2:6-10).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer does good and performs good works and perseveres in the faith unto the end.	This unfaithful believer's life is not characterized by doing good. He does evil persistently and consistently, and yet he is still saved.

#### Observations:

In the 3 John 11 passage Hodges, true to his theology, believes that Diotrephes was a saved man. "John was not questioning Diotrephes' salvation" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary, NT*, p. 914). Hodges insists that a true believer may do evil and may be described as one who "hath not seen God" (p. 914).

In 3 John 11 John is teaching that those who do good are OF GOD. The implication is that those who do evil are NOT OF GOD. Hodges, in 3 John 11 and 1 John 3:10, teaches that it is possible for a SAVED person to be described as one who is "NOT OF GOD." According to Hodges, the expression "he is not of God" does not mean the person is unsaved but merely that "a person so described does not find the source of his actions in God"



## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

(*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 895 and see Dillow, p.173). But how is this expression used in 1 John and in the Gospel of John? Consider the following:

**1 John 3:8**—the unsaved person is OF THE DEVIL.

**1 John 3:9**—the saved person is BORN OF GOD.

**1 John 3:10**—a contrast between the unsaved children OF THE DEVIL and the saved CHILDREN OF GOD.

**1 John 3:12**—unsaved Cain was OF THE EVIL ONE.

**1 John 4:2**—the person who confesses Christ is OF GOD.

**1 John 4:4**—the saved person is OF GOD.

**1 John 4:5**—the unsaved are OF THE WORLD.

**1 John 4:6**—a contrast between the saved who are OF GOD and the unsaved who are NOT OF GOD.

**1 John 4:7**—the saved are BORN OF GOD.

**1 John 5:1**—the saved are BORN OF GOD.

**1 John 5:4**—the saved are BORN OF GOD.

**1 John 5:18**—the saved are BORN OF GOD.

**John 1:13**—the saved person is BORN OF GOD.

**John 8:44**—the unsaved are OF THE DEVIL.

**John 8:47**—a contrast between the saved who are OF GOD and the unsaved who are NOT OF GOD.

In light of the above usage, we may safely conclude that the expression "OF GOD" means that a person has been born of God, is a child of God, belongs to God and to the true family of God and is therefore a saved person. The expression "NOT OF GOD" means that the person has never been born of God, is not a child of God, does not belong to God and does not belong to the true family of God. This person is unsaved and is of the devil (1 John 3:10). Therefore Hodges is incorrect to teach that the expression "NOT OF GOD" may be a description of a saved person.

Hodges' teaching that a saved person may be characterized as an evil doer is refuted by John 5:29 which clearly teaches that those who do evil will participate in the resurrection of damnation (the second resurrection which is exclusively for the unsaved). This verse mentions only two groups of people: 1) those who do good and who have life; 2) those who do evil and who are damned. Hodges and Dillow require a third group of those who do evil and are saved, but this verse does not mention such.

Of interest is Faust's interpretation of John 5:29. In harmony with his idea that unfaithful Christians will be severely punished, he teaches that the "resurrection of damnation" will include unfaithful Christians! [*The Rod*, p. 195]. Hodges and Dillow would strongly reject such teaching and yet in some ways Faust is more consistent than they are. If, as Hodges and Dillow teach, unfaithful Christians can be described as "those who do evil" (3 John 11) then why don't they qualify for the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29)?

## 20. Can A True Believer Continue in Sin and Persist in Sin?

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:9-10).

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This righteous saved person has a new nature that never sins. Moreover this saved person consistently walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.	This unrighteous saved person continues in sin and persists in wickedness. This carnal believer does not practice righteousness. He is born of God and has a new nature but he consistently walks in the flesh. He will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ.

**Observations:**

There are three factors which prevent a true believer from continuing in sin, and they all begin with the letter “C.”

(1) **CONFESSION**—The sinning believer need not continue in a state of sin because he may CONFESS his sins (1 John 1:9) and God is faithful and just to forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

(2) **CONVICTION**—Spirit wrought conviction ought to lead to humble confession. If it does not, the conviction continues. The Holy Spirit makes His grieved presence felt (Eph. 4:30). The true believer can never be comfortable in his sin, even as righteous Lot’s soul was vexed in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8). We can thank God that He makes us miserable when we are not right with Him. When we are disobedient we are unsettled, unpeaceful, unhappy. Thank God it is so!

(3) **CHASTENING**—If the sinning believer does not respond in the right way to God’s conviction in the heart, then the Father will chasten His child whom He loves (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Maximum chastisement can even result in the physical death of the believer (1 Cor. 11:30). As a good human father will not permit his child to continue doing wrong, so the Heavenly Father will not permit His child to continue in wickedness.

[Hodges teaches that it’s possible for true Christians to be "bastards" (Heb. 12:8-KJV) or illegitimate sons, and even though they are saved, they will not be chastened of the Father and they will lose their inheritance! See Hodges discussion of Hebrews 12:8 in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.]

**A Key Question:**

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” (Rom. 6:1)

**Paul’s answer:**

“God forbid (Perish the thought!). How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2)

**Hodges/Dillow answer:**

The believer should not continue in sin but many believers do. Many persist in sin and practice unrighteousness (even persisting in the sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). They will be saved but they

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

will not inherit the kingdom. **Questions:** Why are not these believers convicted? Where is the Father's chastening hand? Where is the heavenly restraint?

R. Gene Reynolds in his helpful book *Assurance—You Can Know You're A Christian* said the following on page 73:

A person who is living sinfully, who *knows* he is living sinfully, who *enjoys* living in such a manner, who intends to *continue* that sinful way of living—that person does not have the Holy Spirit living within him. The very fact that he is 'comfortable' about his sin is proof of the Spirit's absence. His spiritual vital sign registers "no life."

Hodges teaches that righteous living proves that a person is saved but that unrighteous living does not prove that a person is lost (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 893). He says, "the converse does not follow" (p. 893). In other words, Hodges teaches that a person can give evidence that he is saved but he cannot give evidence that he is lost! His righteous living points to LIFE but his unrighteous living does not point to DEATH! He can have assurance of salvation but not assurance of damnation!

### 21. Those Who "Have Part in the First Resurrection" Is This An Exclusive Group of Saved People?

"Blessed and holy is he that hath **part** [portion] in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer has part in the first resurrection and will inherit the kingdom and reign with Christ. This is the believer who attains unto the resurrection of the dead.	This barren believer will not have part or inheritance in the first resurrection and will not reign with Christ. This carnal believer will not attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

#### Observations:

Hodges says that Revelation 20:6 does not refer to all believers, but only to those faithful believers who are the HEIRS of the kingdom (*Grace In Eclipse*, p. 75).

Dillow teaches that Philippians 3:11 refers to a special class of saved people involved in the first resurrection. Those who attain unto the resurrection are those who will inherit the kingdom: "[Paul] hopes to earn a place among that special class of resurrected saints who have been faithful to their Master to the final hour and will hear Him say, 'Well done!'" (*Reign of the Servant Kings*, pages 559-561).

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

The teaching of Hodges and Dillow resembles the teaching which has come out of the erroneous *OVERCOMER* movement, which is dominated by “partial,” or “split” rapturists. The Overcomer movement allows for a partial rapture, whereas Dillow and Hodges allow for a partial or split resurrection.

**Note:** It's of interest that Dillow's book, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*, was published by Schoettle Publishing Company, the same company that publishes the books of key men who held to the partial rapture theory: Robert Govett, G. H. Lang, D.M.Panton, G.H.Pember, etc. It is also the same company that has published J.D.Faust's book, *The Rod--Will God Spare It?* which teaches that the majority of saved people will be hurt of the second death and suffer torment in the fires of Hades for a thousand years. All of these authors share the common belief that not all saved people will inherit the kingdom of God.

The idea of a **split resurrection for believers** is reinforced by the teaching of Bob Wilkin, founder and director of the Grace Evangelical Society.

Wilkin's shocking comments regarding Daniel 12:2 are found in the newsletter of GES entitled *GRACE IN FOCUS* (March/April 2004), pages 2,4. In this article he says that the phrase "some to shame and everlasting contempt" does not refer to the unregenerate (unsaved) but it refers to OT BELIEVERS: "Some believers will experience shame when resurrected." He likens this to the shame mentioned in 1 John 2:28 (which certainly is not everlasting shame). Wilkin writes: "Now admittedly Daniel does speak of 'everlasting contempt' which is literally 'everlasting abhorrence.' But this is parallel to shame. It simply means that forever this person will live with the consequences of their (sic) unwise life."

Leon Wood, in his commentary on Daniel under Daniel 12:1, says this:

The word for "shame" means literally "reproaches," and the word for "contempt", from the root, dara, "to repel from oneself," means "something abhorrent." "Everlasting" is best taken as modifying both. Reference, clearly, is to the eternal state of the wicked in unending punishment.

Brown, Driver and Briggs define the phrase as "everlasting abhorrence" (p. 201). The only other place in the Old Testament that this term "abhorrence" is found is Isaiah 66:24 where it is clearly a reference to the punishment of the wicked, "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched and they shall be an **abhorring** unto all flesh."

How Wilkin can describe true believers as those who will be shamed and abhorred forever is incomprehensible. I am reminded of the many errors of J.D.Faust (author of *THE ROD--WILL GOD SPARE IT?*) who takes numerous passages that pertain to the everlasting punishment of the wicked and wrongly applies them to believers.

## 22. Children of God and Children of the Devil

“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” (1 John 3:10).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This believer by his righteous living and love for his brethren clearly manifests that he is a child of God. Righteous living proves that a person is saved.	This saved person does not practice righteousness and does not love his brother. He lives like those who are children of the devil but this does not prove that he is lost.

**Observations:**

See the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 895, for Hodges’ interesting comments concerning 1 John 3:10. According to Hodges, righteous living proves that a person is saved but wicked living does not prove that a person is lost. Apparently a person can gain assurance if he is living righteously, but if he is living wickedly he need not worry too much. Hodges teaches that saved persons can live just as wickedly as unsaved persons. Dillow says this: "When a Christian is ‘of the devil,’ John means that, when he commits even one sinful act, in the doing of that act, the source of it was Satan" (p.172).

But John is not speaking of one sinful act or a single occurrence of unrighteousness. He speaking of a person who does not practice righteousness. His life is characterized by practicing unrighteousness. He does not love his brother. He is likened to Cain, who was "of that wicked one" (v.12). Because he hates his brother he is likened to a murderer (v.15), "and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (v.15). It is hard to imagine what stronger words could have been used to describe an unsaved person!

### 23. The False Teacher of 2 John 9

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer holds to the true doctrine of Christ. He is not a false teacher. He honors the Lord by the way he lives and by what he teaches.	This wicked person is a false teacher who teaches false things about the Person of Christ. He “hath not God” but he is still saved.

**Observations:**

Hodges, true to his system, understands the first part of verse 9 as a reference to a saved person (*Bible*

***The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society***

*Knowledge Commentary*, p. 908). He sees this as a doctrinal deviation but **not** loss of salvation. The normal and natural way of understanding of the phrase “hath not God” is to understand that the person was not saved. However, Hodges does not understand it this way.

Dillow teaches that the unregenerate state of false teachers is proven by their doctrine (p. 384). If this is true, then why is the false teacher of 2 John 9 considered regenerate?

**24. Saved But Not Led**

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer is led by the Spirit of God. He is a son of God indeed!	This unfaithful believer is not led by the Spirit. He is a son of God but he is not a son of God indeed.

**Observations:**

See Dillow’s discussion of the two sons on page 368 and following. Again we see the constant attempt by Dillow and Hodges to divide all saved people into two distinct classes. Romans 8:14 says nothing about being “a son indeed.” It simply says that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” It’s unthinkable that Christ, the good Shepherd, should not lead His sheep! All of His sheep are LED. And all that are LED are His sheep, His sons. “All the way My Saviour leads me!” Compare John 10:27.

**25. “Salvation Ready To Be Revealed”**

***(But Only For The Spiritual Few!)***

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5)

<b>The Teaching of Joseph Dillow</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer will be kept unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time, which refers to the glorious reign of the “partakers” in the coming kingdom.	This unfaithful believer will not be kept unto the salvation ready to be revealed at the last time. He will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ. He will experience weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness.

Observations:

See Dillow's explanation of 1 Peter 1:3-5 on pages 86 and 497. Dillow says, "The salvation to be revealed in the last time is not deliverance from hell. Rather, it is the glorious reign of the metochoi (partakers) in the coming kingdom. Those Christians who persevere in faith keep themselves for this great privilege" (p. 497). Notice how Dillow distorts and twists what the text really says.

<b>What 1 Peter 1:3-5 says</b>	<b>What Dillow says</b>
They are kept by the power of God	Dillow says that they "keep themselves"!
Peter says that these born again ones have a living expectancy which involves an eternal inheritance and it is theirs only because of "His abundant mercy" (verses 3-4).	Dillow says that a certain group of elite believers <b>earn</b> this inheritance by persevering in the faith.
Peter speaks of those things that are true of every born again believer (verses 3-5).	Dillow, without any indication from the text, distinguishes a special group of faithful believers who will gain this special inheritance. Other born again believers will be excluded from this inheritance and will not reign with Christ.

In 1 Peter 1:3-5, Peter is speaking of things that are true of every saved person, not just the spiritual elite. Verse 3 clearly refers to all who have been born again, not to some special class of saved people. God's keeping power extends to every saved person, even to carnal believers. The Great Shepherd keeps all of His sheep (1 Pet. 2:25), not just a special group of sheep.

1 Peter 1:5 is a very important text, when understood correctly. It helps us to understand how God keeps His children. It says that we are constantly (present tense) being kept (guarded) by the power of God through faith. It teaches that God keeps us; we do not keep ourselves. How does God keep us? Hodges and Dillow teach that all believers are kept eternally secure whether they believe or not. Peter says that we are kept by the power of God "through faith" (not "apart from faith"). God in His faithfulness not only keeps us, but He keeps us faithful! As He did with Peter, Christ intercedes for His believers that their faith will not fail (compare Luke 22:32).

## 26. Regenerate Bastards?

"But if ye be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Hebrews 12:8).

*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

<b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges</b>	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This faithful believer is a partaker of God's chastisement (discipline). These heirs are being prepared by this educational process for millennial reward.	These are Christians who have been disloyal to the faith (apostates) and have lost their inheritance. These illegitimate children are true Christians but they will not partake of God's discipline. Instead they will receive severe judgment.

It is shocking indeed to see what Hodges does with the Hebrews 12 passage which teaches that God chastises every legitimate son of His and that if you are without chastisement, then you are bastards and not sons (Heb. 12:7-8).

Zane Hodges, writing in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 810, says this: "In speaking of those who are not disciplined and are thus illegitimate children, he was probably thinking of Christians whose disloyalty to the faith resulted in their loss of inheritance (i.e. reward) which is acquired by the many sons and daughters. (In the Roman world, an 'illegitimate child' had no inheritance rights.) What such Christians undergo, the author had shown, is severe judgment. On the other hand, believers who undergo God's 'discipline' are being prepared by this educational process for millennial reward."

There are at least several serious problems with this view:

1. This view teaches that there is a group of saved people who are not God's sons. How can a truly regenerate person not be one of God's sons (see Galatians 3:26-4:7 and Romans 8:14-17)?
2. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19; etc.). How can Hodges teach that there are some sons, some saints that are not chastened by God? This passage in Hebrews 12 clearly teaches that God chastises every true son of His. Those who are not chastised are none of His! But Hodges teaches that those who are not disciplined are CHRISTIANS who have been disloyal to the faith.
3. If there were indeed a group of saved people who were living wicked lives, would not they need God's chastening even more than those walking on God's path? Why would God refuse to chasten those who need it the most? If an earthly Father would be quick to correct a wayward son, would not the heavenly Father do so? If we being evil would do these things how much more our heavenly Father!

For these and other reasons, I totally reject Hodges' suggestion that the term illegitimate ("bastards"--KJV) is an appropriate term to describe saved people who are truly regenerate. When the writer of Hebrews used the term "bastards" (illegitimate children) he was referring to those who are not part of the true family of God, that is, those who are unsaved. God only disciplines His own, but He disciplines **ALL OF HIS OWN**.



## 27. Assurance of Salvation and Continuance in the Faith

Hodges and Dillow teach that you undermine a person's assurance of salvation if you tell him that continuance in the faith is an evidence of genuine salvation. Their argument goes something like this: "Since you do not know if you will continue in the faith until the end of your life, then you can never have assurance of salvation. Since there is always the possibility that you will depart from the faith, you can never know for sure that you are saved."

For a detailed discussion of Hodges and Dillow and their teaching on assurance see our paper, *Hodges, Dillow, Wilkin (GES), and Faust---Their Teaching on Assurance of Salvation*.

An illustration of security is given to us in Acts 27. In this case the issue is not eternal security but the security and safety of Paul and the others who were with him in the ship in the midst of a terrible storm. Notice that God's sure promise is given in a twofold way:

1. **NONE WILL BE LOST:** "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be **no loss** of any man's life among you, but of the ship" (Acts 27:22).

This reminds us of God's promise to the believer that none shall be lost: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me **I should lose nothing**, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39).

2. **ALL WILL BE SAVED:** "Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee **all** them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:24).

This reminds us of God's promise to the believer that all will be saved: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that **every one** which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).

In spite of God's promise to these crewmen, Paul told them something very amazing. He gave them a very strong warning that if they do not remain in the ship they would perish: "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, **Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved**" (Acts 27:31). This warning was necessary because in verse 30 we see that the crewmen were about to abandon ship and if they had done this the results would have been disastrous. These men responded in the right way to Paul's warning. They all remained in the ship and they were all saved: "And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, **that they escaped all safe to land**" (Acts 27:44).

Every true believer is on the "ship of faith." He is safe and secure on this ship and God promises him a safe journey even through dangerous waters. And yet, often believers are given strong warnings to "stay in the ship" (that is, to continue in the faith and not to abandon the faith). Some of these warnings and exhortations are as follows:

ACTS 14:22— "continue in the faith" (compare Col. 1:23)

ACTS 13:43— "continue in the grace of God"

Compare also Hebrews 3:6,12,14; 1 Cor. 15:2— "HOLD FAST!"

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Hodges and Dillow strongly object to telling a person that if he does not continue in the faith then he cannot be saved. They say that this undermines assurance of salvation. Their teaching is that a person is saved whether he continues in the faith or not. He can abandon the faith and still be saved.

Going back to the illustration found in Acts 27: Hodges and Dillow would apparently object to Paul's warning that if the crewmen did not stay in the ship they could not be saved. They might say, "But did not God promise that they would be saved? Would not they be saved whether they stayed in the ship or not?" No, had they abandoned ship their lives would have been lost. God used Paul's warning as a means of keeping these crewmen safe, just as God uses the very strong warnings in the New Testament as a means of keeping His true believers safe and on the ship of faith.

To say that God keeps believers safe even if they abandon the faith is contrary to 1 Peter 1:5— "Who are kept by the power of God THROUGH FAITH unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." How does God keep us? God keeps us THROUGH FAITH, not apart from faith. Christ intercedes for His own that their faith will not fail (Luke 22:32). Hodges and Dillow teach that the true believer can have eternal security apart from faith!

It may seem contradictory that God can promise us eternal safety and yet at the same time issue strong warnings that if we abandon the faith we are not safe! But keep in mind that God uses these warnings as a means of keeping us on the ship of faith. The teaching of Hodges and Dillow is that the believer can abandon ship and fall overboard and still be safe.

### 28. Did Paul Always Assume His Readers Were Saved?

On page 95 of *The Gospel Under Siege*, Hodges implies that Paul was not concerned about the eternal destiny of his readers because he knew they were all saved. He makes this statement: "There is not even a single place in the Pauline letters where he expresses doubt that his audience is composed of true Christians" (p.95).

Hodges in referring to the book of Hebrews said this: "[Nowhere] in his letter did the writer [of Hebrews] betray the slightest suspicion that his audience might contain people who were not real Christians...The widespread view that he was concerned about mere professors of the faith as over against genuine believers is not found in the text" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 787).

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul said this to the Corinthians: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Those who are IN THE FAITH are those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and who are thus INDWELT BY HIM. If Jesus Christ is not in a person, then that person is not saved. Romans 8:9 implies that Paul was aware of the possibility that some of his readers may not have been true Christians. In 1 Corinthians 15:2 Paul stated that some of his readers were not saved **if** they had believed in vain, not holding fast to the truth of the gospel.

It is important to make a clear distinction between mere professors and true possessors. Scofield makes a clear distinction between believers and professors in his booklet, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. Did Paul really believe that everyone in the churches he was writing to was saved? Was he not aware that tares could easily creep in among the wheat?

Suppose that pastors today were to view their audience in the same way that Hodges says Paul viewed his audiences. Should they always assume that their audience is made up of saved people? Does a mere profession indicate a true possession? Should not the people be challenged to show that they are really saved and to give

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

evidence that God has done a work of grace in their hearts? Should they not be diligent to make their calling and election sure? Should we assume that because someone is sitting in the pew that Christ is living in the heart? Should we assume that because someone is in church that this automatically means he is IN CHRIST? Is everyone who merely names the name of Christ a true believer (see 2 Timothy 2:19)?

We are living in a day when vast multitudes of Americans are claiming to be born again. With their lips they say that they have put their faith in Christ, and yet their daily lives are no different from thousands of non-professors all around them. They are rarely, if ever, found at the prayer meeting; they have no family worship; they seldom read the Scriptures; they will not talk with you about the things of God; their walk is thoroughly worldly; yet they are quite sure they are bound for heaven. You ask them how they know they are saved and they will tell you that many years ago they “accepted” Christ and “once saved always saved” is now their comfort. Do we have any warrant from the Scriptures to challenge such a profession? Apparently Hodges and Dillow think we do not.

It is important to understand that the Scriptures do not provide assurance of salvation to all those who merely profess faith in Christ. False profession is a matter of life and death spiritually, and thus the many warnings of the Scriptures must be received with the same readiness as the promises. These warnings must be taken seriously, as lack of assurance in the regenerate is far less critical than false assurance in the unregenerate. A true Christian may have horrible doubts and fears about losing his salvation, but in spite of this, when he dies he is going to be safe in the arms of Jesus. His anguish of soul, though regrettable, is only temporary. This is far less serious than the case of an unsaved person who claims to be a Christian and who is given false assurance that all is well with his soul. This has very grave eternal consequences. It is far better for our teaching and preaching to err on the side of causing believers to examine their profession and to make sure they are saved, than to give even the slightest degree of hope and false assurance to unbelievers.

## 29. Surprises in Heaven?

In an article in the Grace Evangelical Society News (July-August 1994), Zane Hodges insists that King Saul was a saved regenerate man: “One of the best examples of God’s grace in the OT salvation is found in the story of Saul. Saul’s regeneration is recorded in 1 Samuel 10:1-10.” This is consistent with the doctrine espoused by Hodges/Dillow which insists that a saved person can persist in the works of the flesh and be dominated by them throughout his life, as was certainly true with the case of Saul.

They also teach that Simon the sorcerer was a saved man (Acts 8), in spite of Peter’s strong words: “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23). See Dillow, p.327. If these were Peter’s words to a saved man, what would he say to a wicked unbeliever?

Hodges also teaches that wicked, self-centered Diotrephes was a saved man (3 John 9-11). See his commentary on 3 John in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 914. Thus a true believer may do evil and may be described as one who “hath not seen God”! Also to be found among the saints in heaven are Hymenaeus and Philetus (Dillow, p.336) and Demas (Dillow, p.339). The apostates described in 2 Peter 2:20-22 will also be in heaven (Dillow, p.467)!

Hodges seems also to imply that Esau was a saved man (Heb. 12:16-17), and that his life is a warning to

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

true believers lest they forfeit their inheritance (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 807).

Dillow makes the amazing statement that the majority of the Israelites [in the wilderness] were born again (p.213)! “The majority of the exodus generation was regenerate” (Dillow, p. 448). He also believes that all of the sons of Jacob were born again (p.318).

A shocking article was published in *Grace in Focus* (published by G.E.S.) In the Sept/Oct 1007 issue. The lead article was written by Bob Wilkin and entitled, “Are Esau and Cain in Heaven or Hell?” Wilkins argues that these men are probably in heaven, along with King Saul, Simon Magus (Acts 8) and King Agrippa. The conclusion regarding Cain is both puzzling and troubling. In the context of distinguishing between the children of God and the children of the devil (1 John 3:10), John tells us that Cain “was of that wicked one.” If Cain was of the devil, then by what kind of eisegesis do we have him among the redeemed in heaven? Wilkin’s weak argument is as follows: “Surely Adam and Eve, who met with the pre-incarnate Jesus in the garden, would have evangelized both Cain and Abel. If Abel believed, would it not be likely that his brother Cain would as well?” Evangelism is one thing; believing the message of good news is another matter. His argument for Esau being saved is just as weak: “Would not Isaac and Rebecca have evangelized both of their sons? If Jacob believe in the coming Messiah for eternal life, wouldn’t it be likely that his brother, Esau, would have as well?” And on what basis do we include King Agrippa among the redeemed? Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian (Acts 26:27-29). By what reasoning can we make “almost persuaded” to be equivalent to becoming a Christian? And what signs of eternal life are found in the life of murderous King Saul who consistently manifested the works of the flesh? Similar things could be said of Esau. Wilkin’s conclusions are unbiblical, but they are consistent with his antinomian theology.

God only knows the hearts of men, and some of the above examples could be debated by students of God's Word, but these examples illustrate the main thrust of the teaching of Hodges, Dillow, and others, namely that a truly saved person can live a life that is undistinguishable from that of the unregenerate, and he will end up being in the kingdom, though not an heir of it. Because of this doctrine there is a tendency among these teachers to look at certain wicked people in the Scripture and say, "I don't see any reason why this person could not have been a saved person." It matches their template. God's template is as follows: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

## **Were All of the Israelites in the Wilderness Saved? The Misslers say "Yes"!**

One statement the Misslers' book [*The Kingdom, Power, & Glory--The Overcomer's Handbook*, by Chuck and Nancy Missler] was somewhat shocking:

Finally, there were the two million Israelite believers who were supposed to inherit the blessings of the promised land, but they failed to do so because of their disobedience and lack of faith. They were saved (they had put the blood on the doorposts of their homes), but they were unable to receive their inheritance and go into the promised land (a foreshadow of the Millennial Kingdom) because of doubt, disobedience, and unfaithfulness. Only Caleb and Joshua of that generation inherited the land and the blessings from God (p. 60).

To say that the entire congregation of Israel in the wilderness was saved goes against two Biblical principles: 1) The Old Testament teaches consistently that within the congregation of Israel there existed only a small fraction or remnant of people who were faithful to God (Isaiah 1:9; 10:20; Rom. 11:27). Remember, "they are not all Israel, who are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). In other words, not all Israelites are saved Israelites; 2) The Lord Jesus taught that compared to the "many" on the road to destruction, those on the road to life are comparatively only a "few" (Matthew 7:13-14). A general principle in any age is that the saved are greatly outnumbered by the unsaved. There is only one time in the history of the world when every Israelite will be saved, and that will be at the beginning of the millennial kingdom (for the simple reason that the unsaved will not be allowed to enter--Matthew 13:41-43. But even in the kingdom, under ideal conditions, the unsaved will eventually flourish and rebel (Rev. 20:7-9).

Does it really make good Biblical sense to say that these stiffnecked, murmuring, unbelieving Israelites were all saved? And what of Korah and those who rebelled with him, whom the earth swallowed up into Sheol? According to the Misslers they were saved also.

The logic the Misslers are using is faulty. The Israelites were all saved, but in what sense? They were all saved from the destroying angel on the Passover night. This does not mean that they were all saved from eternal judgment. This national deliverance at Passover foreshadowed our spiritual deliverance when we by personal faith apply the blood of Christ. The Misslers reason backwards: All believers who believe on Christ and apply His blood are saved, so it follows that the Israelites who applied the blood at the Passover must have been saved also. This is not true. By using the same logic, one could argue that every Israelite who gazed at the brazen serpent was eternally saved: Every one who believes on Christ lifted up on Calvary's cross is saved (John 3:14-16), so it follows that every Israelite who gazed at the brazen serpent was saved also. But the Bible does not teach this. The Bible teaches that the Israelites who gazed were saved from physical death, and saved from the venom of the snakes. They were not saved from eternal damnation. And yet the brazen serpent incident is a wonderful picture of our eternal, spiritual salvation (John 3:14-16).

Not only that, but would not this same logic indicate that not one of the Jews was spiritually/eternally saved until the Passover??? That is, there were no saved Jews till they applied the blood on their doorposts? And would this also mean that the Jews who were spiritually saved at the Passover, and still alive at the brazen serpent event, were "re-saved" spiritually/eternally [!!] when they looked upon the brazen serpent!!! None of this makes good Biblical sense.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that the two million people in the wilderness were saved and justified. [Note: Joseph Dillow's view is that most of the Israelites in the wilderness were saved and going to heaven but he acknowledges that "some may not have been saved." See *The Reign of the Servant Kings*, p. 58.]

### 30. Security Without Purity?

Consider 2 Timothy 2:19— “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.** And, **Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**” Notice the two parts of this verse: (1) **SECURITY**—The Lord knoweth them that are His. (2) **PURITY**—Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity. Security and purity belong together and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Hodges and Dillow teach that SECURITY can be divorced from PURITY (that you can have SECURITY without PURITY). That is, you can comfortably rest in the assurance that you are HIS and at the same time CONTINUE IN INIQUITY! Those who know they are saved also know that the God who saved them is holy and expects His children to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

### 31. Should Personal Wickedness Hinder One's Assurance of Salvation?

Hodges believes that if good works are a necessary fruit of salvation, then a person can never have assurance of salvation: “A man who must wait for works to verify his faith cannot know until life's end whether or not his faith was real” (*The Gospel Under Siege*, p.79). Hodges is thus saying that the root (saving faith) can be good but the fruit (good works) can be missing.

It is true that a person can KNOW that he is saved based on God's sure Word (1 John 5:9-13). We can KNOW now and it will SHOW now and later! Hodges is saying that a person can **know** but it may or may not **show**. He teaches that a person who persists in wickedness may have full assurance even if there is no evidence of God's great working in his life. The danger in this is that we can wrongly encourage an unsaved person to think that he may be saved based on some supposed profession of faith made in days past, a profession which may not have been a true possession.

Does the Bible ever teach that we can KNOW that we have eternal life based on the great work God is doing in and through us? "**We KNOW that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death**" (1 John 3:14). Faith is the root; love is the fruit (compare Gal. 5:6). "**And hereby we do KNOW that we know Him, if we keep His commandments**" (1 John 2:3). The reality of faith is shown by obedience.

If a person really has God's LIFE, that life will be evidenced. If a tree claims to be an apple tree, we have every right to say, "Prove it! Let me see your apples!" We have every right to be fruit inspectors, but first and foremost, let us inspect our own lives: "Judge **me**, O LORD." "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11).

### 32. Are Good Works the Essential Fruit of Salvation?

In his book, *The Gospel Under Siege*, Hodges . . .

1) Denies the necessity of good works in the life of a true Christian: "Consideration [in this book] will be given to some of the major texts that are thought to teach the necessity, or at least the inevitability, of good

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

works in the life of a true Christian. The inconsistency of this view...must be faced" (p.8);

2) Denies that good works are an essential fruit of salvation: "Can I know that I belong to Christ and belong to Him forever? If good works are really...an essential fruit of salvation, the answer to this question must be: No" (p.9);

3) Says that good works are not a necessary outcome of saving faith: "If works are a necessary outcome of saving faith, the problem is equally great" (p.11; and the argumentation here used makes it clear that Hodges does not believe that works are a necessary outcome of saving faith);

4) Denies that good works are an inevitable outcome of genuine saving faith: "Certain passages in the Pauline letters have been taken to prove that good works are an inevitable outcome of genuine saving faith. As has already been pointed out, this kind of deduction destroys the believer's ground of assurance" (p.79);

5) Says that the Bible does not teach that a true Christian will persevere in good works: "Some believe [wrongly so, according to Hodges] the Bible teaches that a true Christian will persevere in good works" (p.11).

[In a later edition of *The Gospel Under Siege*, I have been told that Hodges has modified some of these statements, thankfully].

### **Clarification:**

In being critical of the position of Hodges, Dillow, Faust, etc. we do not mean to imply that true believers always live lives that are pleasing to God and super-abounding in good works. We recognize that carnality can be a major problem among believers and that regenerate people can and do backslide. Saved people can be in a very sad spiritual state, and this we do not question. They can even walk as unregenerate men (1 Cor. 3:1-4). These important issues are dealt with in detail in the following document: *Saved By Grace Alone (50c)*. We do not hold to the Lordship salvation teaching that good works automatically and unfailingly result from saving faith. There is a delicate Biblical balance on this issue that must be maintained. "The pendulum swings, ridiculous extreme, bypassing the truth which lieth between." The so-called "free grace" position and the Lordship salvation position are two extreme positions. The truth is to be found somewhere in between. This is common in theology. With most areas of doctrine, there are usually extreme and unbalanced views on both sides of the truth.

What we are concerned about is the teaching that a truly saved person can totally abandon the faith, deny Christ, deny the gospel, and even mock the Christian faith, or that a true believer can have a life that is characterized by and dominated by immorality, disobedience, and wickedness.

**IF GOOD WORKS ARE NOT A NECESSARY OUTCOME OF SAVING FAITH, THEN...**

...why did Jesus say, "even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit...a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit...a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things" (Matt. 7:17-18; 12:35)?

...God's work of chastening has failed to bring about the desired result (Heb. 12:10-11).

*Note:* Those who are not God's legitimate children can live any way they please all the way to the grave, but God, in His love, does not allow His children to live any way they please. Just as a human father uses a rod to keep his child from persisting in evil behavior, so the Heavenly Father chastens His children so that they will not persist in sin. [Zane Hodges claims that the "bastards" or illegitimate children mentioned in Hebrews 12:8 are probably regenerate people who do not inherit the kingdom! See the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* under Heb. 12:8.]

...the God who saves is powerless to sanctify [thus, the prayer of Jesus in John 17:17 will not be answered for some believers].

... the indwelling ministry of the grieved Spirit of God in convicting erring saints is ineffective.

...for some believers God's workmanship is never realized and never displayed and thus there are some believers that **never** walk in those works which God has before ordained that they should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

...Jesus' parable of the sower ought to be revised so that it would read as follows: "But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold and some zerofold" (Matt. 13:8). As the parable stands it teaches that all believers are fruitful but not all believers are as fruitful as they should be or could be. Actually, Hodges and Dillow and Wilkin teach that many believers bear ZERO fruit as represented by the stony and thorny soils.

...John the Baptist was being too severe and demanding when he challenged the profession of the Pharisees and Sadducees and when he told them that every tree not bearing good fruit would get the axe and the fire (Matt. 3:7-12).

...John the Apostle must have been mistaken when he wrote, "He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (2 John 11).

...God is not changing all believers into the image of His Son, or if He is changing them, this change is not evident and not seen (2 Cor. 3:18).

...God's grace has failed in its teaching ministry (Titus 2:11-12) and God's purpose of redemption has not been realized (Titus 2:14).

...God's purpose for believers in light of the cross would not be fulfilled (see 1 Pet. 2:24).

...God's holy new nature (Eph. 4:24; 1 John 3:9) is consistently concealed in the lives of those believers who are devoid of good works.



### 33. "This We Believe"

The Independent Fundamental Churches of America (IFCA) published a doctrinal booklet entitled *This We Believe*. On page 30 of this booklet (the Chapter on Eternal Security and Assurance of Salvation) there is a section entitled, "The Marks of a True Believer." It reads as follows:

Not everyone who professes Christ actually possesses Christ. Some people profess Christ but by their works they deny Him (Titus 1:16). Some name the name of Christ but they do not depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). With their lips they say that they know Christ, but they are found to be liars (1 John 2:4).

It is therefore needful for each professing believer to examine himself to see whether or not he has truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly reveals certain marks which should characterize every child of God. Some of these are as follows:

The true believer (1) believes the Word of God (1 John 5:9-12); (2) hungers for the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:2); (3) loves the brethren (1 John 3:14); (4) obeys God's commands (1 John 2:3-5); (5) performs good works (2 John 11; James 2:17-26); (6) does not continue in sin but lives a righteous life (1 John 2:29; 3:6-10; 5:18; 2 Tim. 2:19); etc.

Obviously believers often fail to fully exhibit the above characteristics, and yet if a person truly has life, that life will be manifested (1 John 5:12). Those who consistently live in sin have no right to claim assurance of salvation.

Hodges and Dillow would strongly disagree with the above statement. They would say that some Christians do **consistently** (habitually) live in sin and that these Christians do have a right to claim full assurance of salvation. If a person lives like a child of the devil he still has every right to call himself a child of God, they would say.

In the physical realm it is possible for a person to know that he is alive right now! He has no doubt about it! And yet it is also true that this person will manifest this physical life in various ways. In the physical realm there are definitely "signs of life." We would expect a living person to breath and move and eat and have a pulse, etc. The same is true in the spiritual realm. Every believer has LIFE (1 John 5:11) and this life will be manifested. It is possible for a person to KNOW that he is alive (1 John 5:13). He has no doubt about it! We agree with Hodges and Dillow that this person can fully claim God's salvation promises. And yet, it is also true that in the spiritual realm there are signs of life: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Love for the brethren is a sign of life! If a person never acts and lives like a Christian should, do we not have a right to question whether the person really has life? If a tree never bears apples but only pears, should not we question whether it is an apple tree? In the physical realm, if a person does not move, has no pulse and stinks (John 11:39), do we not have a right to assume that he might be dead? So it is in the spiritual realm. We need to KNOW that we are saved; we need to SHOW that we are saved.

### 34. The Position of the Early Dispensationalists

"And allow me to say that it is a very solemn thing indeed to claim the privileges of grace for that which is contrary to the nature of God. I am not speaking now of the lost one found by grace, to whom God gives a new life fresh from Himself. But the effect of a soul's receiving life in the person of Christ is that there

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

are produced feelings, thoughts, judgments and ways acceptable to God and akin to His nature. If a person is a child of God, he is like his Father; he has a nature suitable to God, a life that dislikes sin and is surely pained by what is iniquitous in others, but more particularly in himself. Many bad men are strong against evil in others; they are weak where it might touch themselves. But a Christian always begins with self-judgment....Repentance is the soul's moral judgment of itself under the eye of God; the soul's acceptance of His judgment of its state before Him, and bowing to it."—William Kelly (Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew)

Holiness, we all agree, is so imperative that without it no one shall see the Lord; and the professing Christian who does not pursue it only deceives himself. It is false and misleading to let people fancy that they may be real saints, yet unholy. 'Every one' that has the grace-given hope resting on Him purifies himself as He is pure; others that have not are self-deceived. Because of iniquities the wrath of God cometh upon the sons of disobedience; but believers are essentially sons of obedience, and His love rests on them. If one sin, it is a grievous inconsistency. But grace does not fail to awaken self-judgment through our blessed Advocate with the Father, and restoration ensures. Those who do the wicked works of the flesh, and abide impenitent and indifferent have no part or lot with Christ, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and in no way share the portion of the saints in light. (William Kelly, *The Prize of our High Calling*).

'Will a believer be saved, no matter into what course of sin he may fall, and die in?' A true believer will, infallibly, be saved; but we consider that salvation includes, not only full deliverance from the future consequences of sin, but from the present power and practice thereof. And, hence, if we find a person living in sin, and yet talking about his assurance of salvation, we look upon him as an antinomian, and not a saved person at all.... The believer may fall, but he will be lifted up; he may be overtaken, but he will be restored; he may wander, but he will be brought back, because Christ is able to save to the uttermost, and not one of His little ones shall perish.... To talk of having the Spirit and yet 'indulge' in evil and unholy thoughts is, in our judgment, the ancient Nicolaitanism (Rev. 2:6,15), or modern antinomianism.... we believe that the man who draws a plea from the freedom, sovereignty, and eternal stability of the grace of God to continue in sin, knows nothing of Christianity at all, has neither part nor lot in the matter, but is in a truly awful and dangerous condition.... The Christian has to struggle with sin; but struggling with it and wallowing in it are two totally different ideas.... We must have life before we can do anything; and we get life, not by 'saying' we have faith, but by really having it; and when we have it, we shall manifest the precious fruits thereof, to the glory of God (C.H.Mackintosh, *The Mackintosh Treasury*, "Final Perseverance—What Is It?" page 644 and following in the one volume edition).

While we are justified in the sight of God by faith alone, a real faith must be evidenced by works.... There must be LIFE-WORKS, or else there is no life.... When people are saved, ought they not to live as such? Ought not the new life to come out in fruits? It must come out if it be in; and if it does not come out, it is not there.... It is very interesting and instructive to compare the teaching of Paul and James—two divinely inspired apostles—on the subject of 'works.' Paul utterly repudiates law-works. James jealously insists upon life-works. If this fact be seized, all difficulty vanishes; and the divine harmony is clearly seen (C.H.Mackintosh, *The Mackintosh Treasury*, "Life-Works," pp. 660-662 in the one volume edition).

These quotes by CHM also reflect the general teaching of Darby, Kelly and the early Plymouth Brethren (the pioneer dispensationalists).

Grace is that which breaks the dominion of sin, sets the soul right to go on with God, and if this be not the result of it, grace has not been learned at all, nor can it be pleaded as availing in behalf of those who, whatever they may profess, show themselves uninfluenced by it" (F.W.Grant, *The Numerical Bible*, Acts to II Corinthians, p. 479).

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Empty profession is of no profit. He who speaks of faith in Christ is responsible to manifest it by his renewed life. In James 2 we are taught that we are justified before men by works, works that are the fruit of a living faith, which is manifest to all...If we believe God we will yield obedience to His Word, and so our faith will be manifested (H.A.IRONSIDE, *The Continual Burnt Offering*, see under December 7).

Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man's sinfulness and guilt, calling on "all men everywhere to repent," results in shallow conversions; and so we have myriads of glib-tongued professors today who give no evidence of regeneration whatever. Prating of salvation by grace, they manifest no grace in their lives. Loudly declaring they are justified by faith alone, they fail to remember that "faith without works is dead"; and that justification by works before men is not to be ignored as though it were in contradiction to justification by faith before God (H.A.IRONSIDE, *Except Ye Repent*, p. 11).

Perhaps someone may ask, "But does it make no difference to God what I am myself? May I live on in my sins and still be saved?" No, assuredly not! But this brings in another line of truth. The moment one believes the gospel, he is born again and receives a new life and nature--a nature that hates sin and loves holiness. If you have come to Jesus and trusted Him, do you not realize the truth of this? Do you not now hate and detest the wicked things that once gave you a certain degree of delight? Do you not find within yourself a new craving for goodness, a longing after holiness, and a thirst for righteousness? All this is the evidence of a new nature. And as you walk with God you will find that daily the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit will give you practical deliverance from the dominion of sin. -H.A.IRONSIDE, *Full Assurance*, p. 32.

...when you are born again, you love to follow Jesus, and if you do not, you are not a Christian. Take that home. Examine your own foundations a bit....It makes a tremendous difference what you do. If you do not behave yourself, it shows that you are not a real Christian. I know that a real Christian may fail, but the difference can be seen in Peter and Judas. Peter failed, and failed terribly, but he was genuine, and one look from Jesus sent him out weeping bitterly; his heart was broken to think that he had so dishonored his Lord. But Judas companied with the Lord almost three-and-a-half years, and was a devil all the time; he was a thief, and was seeking his own interest. He was even made the treasurer of the company, and he held the bag, but we read, "He bare away what was put therein" (John 12:6), as this has been literally translated. At last remorse overtook him, not genuine repentance, and what was the result? He went and hanged himself. He was never a child of God. There is a great difference, you see, between a Christian and a false professor. -H. A. IRONSIDE, *The Eternal Security of the Believer*, p. 18.

God does not want any true believer to lack assurance of eternal safety. Christ said: "I give my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish." But let us insist on that other mark of Christ's sheep: "They follow me." If we are going on in our own way, then what right have we to assurance? Remember the "seal" of the "foundation of God," in 2 Timothy 2:19: "The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (WILLIAM NEWELL, *Revelation*, p. 332)

Salvation and a holy walk are inseparably connected... Where there is true salvation and eternal life, it is proved by a godly walk...But he [the apostle Paul] knew, as every Christian should know, that the grace which had saved him, which taught him to live soberly, righteously and godly, would also keep him and enable him to persevere through all hindrances (ARNO C. GAEBELEIN, *Gaebelein's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 938).

"Doeth" in 1 John 2:29 and 3:7 should be "practiceth." The trend of the life is in view. The new man, God's seed, cannot sin. Therefore, although we still "have...sin" (1:8), the life should be righteousness. If it is not, we must not expect others to believe our profession. This is James's point of view. Neither should we believe the profession of one whose habitual life is unrighteous (C.I. SCOFIELD in his *Correspondence*

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

*Course*, comments under 1 John, p. 928). [James] insists that **only by a godly life can true faith be manifested** [emphasis his]...He [James] tests profession by practice (C.I. SCOFIELD in his *Correspondence Course*, comments under James, p. 896).

**Note:** The teaching of C.I.Scofield is in sharp contrast to the teaching of Hodges/Dillow. This is seen by his chapter on "Believers and Professors" in his booklet *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. Scofield gives many examples of those who are mere professors but not true possessors, that is, those who claim to be saved but who are not truly saved. Most of the examples given by Scofield of mere professors are claimed to be true Christians by Hodges/Dillow. For example: Scofield says Simon was a professor (pretender); Hodges and Dillow teach that he was saved. Scofield says that 1 John 2:19 ("they went out from us") describes pretenders; Hodges says these people were saved. Scofield says the other virgins in Matthew 25:11-12 were pretenders; Hodges and Dillow teach that they were saved. Scofield says the man not having a wedding garment in Matthew 22:11-13 was a pretender (unsaved); Hodges and Dillow teach that he was saved. Scofield says that the man described in James 2:14 (the man claiming to have faith but having no works) was a pretender; Hodges and Dillow say that he was saved. Scofield says that the apostate described in Hebrews 10:38 was a mere professor; Hodges and Dillow teach that he was saved.

Several of these Scriptures [Scriptures which seem to indicate that a person can lose his salvation] bear on the important fact that Christian profession is justified by its fruits. Salvation which is of God will, under normal conditions, prove itself to be such by its own fruits (1 John 3:10; John 8:31; 15:6; 2 Pet. 1:10; James 2:14-26; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Heb. 3:6,14) –(LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER, *Major Bible Themes*, p.188, his chapter on "Security").

Unbelievers are warned that they will not have part in that kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5)" –(J. DWIGHT PENTECOST (*Things To Come*, p. 471). *Note:* Hodges and Dillow insist that these three passages are not referring to unbelievers, but rather to wicked believers who will lose their inheritance in the millennial kingdom and will not reign with Christ, but who will still be saved.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." The promise here mentioned for overcomers is not a message to a special group of Christians distinguished by their spirituality and power in contrast to genuine Christians who lack these qualities; it is rather a general description of that which is normal, to be expected among those who are true followers of the Lord. The Apostle John in his first epistle asks, "Who is he that overcometh the world?" (1 John 5:5). He answers the question, "He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (JOHN F. WALVOORD, *Revelation*, p. 59 under his discussion of Rev. 2:7). In contrast to this statement is the teaching of Hodges/Dillow who say that the overcomers are a special group of believers.

James teaches that "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone"; it is always attended by good works....A man may hear the truth and even say that he believes, but unless the fruits of living faith are evident in his life, he is not saved at all....Now if I say I have faith, but my life does not correspond to that which I profess, can the faith that I say I have save me? The answer is an emphatic "No." For a faith that produces no works cannot save anyone. There is no profit in a man claiming to possess something which he actually does not have....True faith necessarily results in fruit after its kind....The work of faith in a true believer will be indicated and proved by good works (LEHMAN STRAUSS, Dispensational Conference Speaker, *James, Your Brother—Studies in the Epistle of James*, pages 103,104,105,110).

James insists that a living faith will authenticate itself in the production of works. There is no antagonism between faith and works. They are not two totally distinct concepts, but rather two inseparable elements in salvation....James demands that the man who already claims to stand in right relationship with God through faith must by a life of good works demonstrate that he has become a new creature in Christ....In this passage [James 2] James insists that a genuine faith must prove itself by its production of works....A

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

saving faith manifests itself in the production of works....Christian faith must manifest its existence in active obedience to God's Word (D. EDMOND HIEBERT [noted dispensational commentator], *The Epistle of James—Tests of a Living Faith*, see Chapter 5).

Hodges and Dillow maintain that faith and works are totally distinct and separable and that a man of true faith may be devoid of good works.

Actually there is nothing new under the sun. What men such as Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin are promoting is not new doctrine at all. They are merely reviving the old "overcomer" movement, which was led primarily by Robert Govett (1813-1901), and also by David Panton (1870-1955), George Henry Lang (1874-1958), George Pember (1837-1910), Watchman Nee (1903-1972), etc. These men all divide true Christians into two distinct groups and they all teach some form of kingdom exclusion. Some of these men believed in a partial rapture. Hodges, Dillow and Wilkin do not go to the extremes of some of these men (especially when it comes to millennial punishment), but they do share a common theological framework with them.

It's interesting that Schoettle Publishing Company (NC) published Joseph Dillow's book, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*, the very same publisher that has published books by Govett, Lang, Panton, Pember, and more recently even the abominable book by J.D. Faust (*The Rod--Will God Spare It?*) which teaches that multitudes of saved people will taste of the second death and then be tortured in Hades for a thousand years! Dillow avoids the dangerous extremes of Faust, and yet he shares the same basic theological framework of Faust and these other men.

### 35. The Position of Dr. Charles Ryrie With Respect to These Issues

Dr. Charles Ryrie is a well-respected dispensationalist, the author of the excellent book *Dispensationalism Today* which recently has been revised and enlarged and goes under the title of *Dispensationalism*. Dr. Ryrie is quoted on the back cover of Joseph Dillow's book, giving this endorsement: "In this penetrating critique of Westminster Calvinism, Dr. Dillow has given us a comprehensive discussion of eternal security and rewards. By a constant appeal to scripture, the biblical doctrine of eternal security is supported instead of the Reformed doctrine of perseverance. This scholarly and well written book should be read by all pastors and students of the Word who are interested in the doctrines of grace—A TRULY LANDMARK BOOK!"

It was puzzling to this writer why Dr. Ryrie should endorse Dillow's book in light of the fact that Dr. Ryrie's own writings contradict many of the positions held by Dillow (and Hodges). Consider the following examples:

"An overcomer is not someone who has some special power in the Christian life or someone who has learned some secret of victory. John himself defined an overcomer as a believer in Christ (1 John 5:4-5). Thus every Christian is an overcomer" (*Revelation*, pp. 22-23 under the discussion of Rev. 2:7). "To him that overcometh. Not a reference to an especially spiritual group among the believers, but to all true Christians (cf. 1 John 5:5)" (*Ryrie Study Bible*, comment under Rev. 2:7). Hodges and Dillow are at odds with Ryrie, teaching that the "overcomers" are a special class of believers (the victorious believers who persevere in the faith).

"James 2:24 ["Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"] is the reply to the question of James 2:14. Unproductive faith cannot save, because it is not genuine faith. Faith and works

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

are like a two-coupon ticket to heaven. The coupon of works is not good for passage, and the coupon of faith is not valid if detached from works” (*Ryrie Study Bible*, comment under James 2:24). In contrast to this, Hodges and Dillow teach that a person can present to God a coupon of faith detached from works and be admitted to heaven. Ryrie does not hold to the Hodges/ Dillow interpretation of James chapter 2.

“[Acts 8:13] *Simon himself believed also*. Peter’s denunciation in vv. 20-23 indicates that Simon’s faith was not unto salvation (James 2:14-20)” (*Ryrie Study Bible*, comment under Acts 8:13). Ryrie here teaches that Simon was not saved whereas Hodges and Dillow insist that he was. Notice also how Ryrie gives James 2:14-20 as a cross-reference, indicating that Ryrie understands James 2 as depicting a situation where the person is not truly saved, whereas Hodges/Dillow understand James 2 as depicting a saved person who is fruitless and without works.

Ryrie teaches that the false teachers described in 2 Pet. 2:20-22 are unsaved: “These false teachers had apparently made some sort of profession of the truth without possessing the new life of Christ. They then rejected what they professed, becoming slaves of corruption (v.19) and showing their true natural, unchanged condition (v.22)” [see *Ryrie Study Bible*, comment under 2 Pet. 2:20]. Hodges/ Dillow understand these verses to be describing a saved person (see Dillow, *Reign of the Servant Kings*, p. 467).

“Every Christian will bear spiritual fruit. Somewhere, sometime, somehow. Otherwise that person is not a believer. Every born-again individual will be fruitful. Not to be fruitful is to be faithless, without faith, and therefore without salvation....Every Christian will bear fruit; otherwise he or she is not a true believer” (*So Great Salvation*, pages 45-46). Hodges and Dillow would never make such a statement! Hodges teaches that good works are **not** a necessary outcome of saving faith (*The Gospel Under Siege*, see pages 8,9,11,79).

“‘If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.’ [2 Tim. 2:12] Here the contrast is between the endurance necessary in this life and the ultimate glorification which all believers will enjoy (Rom. 8:17)” [*So Great Salvation*, pages 140-141]. Hodges and Dillow teach the opposite. They teach that **NOT ALL** believers will enjoy reigning with Christ, but only the “overcomers” (that is, only those believers who suffer with Christ). Ryrie teaches that all believers will share in this.

“‘If we deny Him, he also will deny us,’ reiterates the Lord’s word in Matthew 10:33. Judas did this” (*So Great Salvation*, p. 141). Ryrie understands this verse as describing the denial of Christ by an unsaved person and uses Judas as an example. Hodges/Dillow understand this verse as describing the denial of Christ by a saved person.

Concerning SIGNS OF LIFE in 1 John: “The subjective ground [of assurance] relates to my experiences. Certain changes do accompany salvation, and when I see some of those changes, then I can be assured that I have received the new life. Some of those changes are keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3); loving other believers (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14); and doing right things (1 John 2:29; 3:9). It goes without saying that I will never keep all His commandments, nor will I love all other believers, nor will I always do right things. But the fact that these experiences have come into my life, whereas they were absent before, gives assurance that the new life is present (2 Cor. 5:17)” [*So Great Salvation*, p. 143]. Hodges and Dillow would strongly object to this statement on assurance. They insist that one’s assurance must rest only upon the promises of God and not upon any subsequent experiences or changes following salvation. They understand these tests in 1 John to be tests of fellowship and not tests of life, but Ryrie disagrees.

**If Ryrie’s views on these things are so contrary to that of Hodges and Dillow, then why did he write such a positive endorsement of Dillow’s book? Has Ryrie changed his views lately or is he merely minimizing the doctrinal differences which he has with Joseph Dillow (and Zane Hodges)?**

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

In seeking to answer these questions fairly, I wrote to Dr. Ryrie and received the following response:

Thank you so much for the materials you recently sent and for your letter concerning my blurb for Dillow's book. I don't think the blurb says I agree with all the positions taken in the book, though it clearly says I do not agree with the Reformed position. I endorsed the book because I do think it deserves a careful reading because of what it does to the Reformed position. Perhaps I should have added something like "although I do not agree with all the conclusions taught in the book."

Years after receiving this response from Dr. Ryrie I learned what really happened. I learned this from two reliable sources, one from a Bible college professor and another from a seminary professor (from two different schools, each man's testimony was given independently of the other--"in the mouth of two witnesses"). Both of these professors had talked to Dr. Ryrie directly about this. I learned from both of these men that Dr. Ryrie never wrote the blurb that is found on the back cover! Apparently what happened was that Dr. Ryrie did a favor for his friend Jody Dillow, and give him permission to write a blurb in his name. So the blurb was written by Dillow himself, putting Ryrie's name to it. Later Ryrie regretted doing this, especially in light of the fact that many men were bewildered (as was I) that Dr. Ryrie could recommend a book containing so many peculiar interpretations many of which are diametrically opposed to what Dr. Ryrie has written and taught. I e-mailed Jody Dillow to ask him if this is what really happened and he never replied to my e-mail.

### 36. Two Distinct Classes of Believers

As we have discussed throughout this paper, Hodges and Dillow place all believers into two distinct classes:

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>
Those who inherit the kingdom	... do not inherit the kingdom
The overcomers	... do not overcome
The partakers	... do not partake
Those who reign with Christ	... do not reign with Christ
The spiritual ones	The carnal ones
Those who suffer with Christ	... do not suffer with Christ
Those who are joint-heirs with Christ	... are not joint-heirs
Those who persevere in the faith	... do not persevere in the faith

This categorizing of believers into two groups raises some interesting questions. How carnal does a saved person need to be in order to be placed in Group 2? Certainly there is some carnality in the life of every believer. How much does a saved person need to suffer in order to qualify for Group 1? How faithful must a saint be in order to inherit the kingdom? There are varying degrees of faithfulness among God's people. At what point does one qualify as a "partaker of Christ"?

Some believers (according to Hodge/Dillow) might be thoroughly carnal and wicked and unfaithful and it would be evident to all that they belong to Group 2. Other believers live for Christ faithfully and consistently from the day they are saved to the day they go home to be with Christ. They obviously belong to Group 1. But what about those inconsistent believers who are in the "grey area" in the middle, sometimes serving the Lord well, at other times walking in the flesh; sometimes walking in the path of obedience, at other times being disobedient. Theoretically it seems that there could be two believers who both have inconsistent walks with

## *The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

Christ. One barely qualifies for Group 1 (he inherits the kingdom by the "skin of his teeth") and the other ends up in Group 2, almost but not quite qualifying for Group 1 (he was not quite faithful enough and did not quite suffer for Christ enough). It seems unfair that the person in Group 2 should be grouped with other believers who lived such wretched and unfaithful lives and suffer serious consequences at the judgment seat, in the kingdom and even beyond. It seems unfair that the person in Group 1 should share such bliss in reigning with Christ when he just barely missed the weeping and gnashing of teeth that his **slightly** more unfaithful brother must experience.

A much better solution is to allow the LORD to take care of all the gradations that exist in Christian character and conduct. This involves the Biblical doctrine of rewards. God will reward each and every believer according to perfect justice and will render to every believer according to his works. Every believer will be dealt with individually and there will be no problem dealing with inconsistent believers and all the gradations and degrees of faithfulness that are involved. The judgment seat of Christ will put everything in order: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:9).

### For Further Study

1. Of historical interest is William Kelly's review of a tract entitled, *The Prize of Our High Calling* by J. Sladen. Kelly's review was reprinted by R.A. Heubner in the Sept/Oct 1995 issue of *Thy Precepts*. Sladen's position of many years ago is remarkably similar to the position of Hodges and Dillow. As one reads Kelly's answer to Sladen, it is almost as if he is responding to Hodges and Dillow. The similarities are striking. If you would like a copy of this paper, contact George Zeller at the Middletown Bible Church.
2. Also of historical interest is the paper by William Hoste (early 1900's) entitled *Who Will Share in the Kingdom?* This also is an answer to the same kind of teaching being promoted by Hodges and Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society. It reminds us that some of the important doctrinal battles which were fought in previous generations are still being fought today. Hoste demonstrates that it is Biblically unthinkable to suggest the possibility that there will be a group of saved saints that will not inherit the kingdom. If you would like a copy of this paper, contact George Zeller at the Middletown Bible Church.
3. *Dispensational Disintegration—The Reign of the Servant Kings*, a critique of Joseph Dillow's book by Miles Stanford. May be obtained through an internet search.
4. "The Overcomer of the Apocalypse," by James E. Rosscup, *Grace Theological Journal* 3.2 (1982) 261-86. An excellent study showing that all true believers are overcomers.
5. *Who Are The Overcomers?* Available from the Middletown Bible Church. 25 cents.
6. *Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth—Is This the Fate of True Believers?* Available from the Middletown Bible Church. 50 cents.
7. *J. D. Faust, The Rod--Will God Spare It? --Will True Believers Be Sent To Hell for a Thousand Years?* Available from the Middletown Bible Church. 50 cents.
8. *Basic Doctrines for New Believers*, 100 pages of doctrinal worksheets for new believers, dealing with many of the issues touched upon in this paper.
9. *Assurance—You Can Know You're A Christian*, by R.Gene Reynolds (a study on assurance of salvation based upon the epistle of 1 John), available from Calvary Baptist Church, 1822 West Tenth St., Dallas, TX 75208-5799.
10. *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* by C.I. Scofield. See especially the chapter on "Believers and Professors."



*The Theology of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society*

11. *The Epistle of James—Tests of a Living Faith* by D. Edmond Hiebert (Moody Press).
12. *The Epistles of John—An Expository Commentary* by D. Edmond Hiebert (Bob Jones University Press).

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