

## L. S. Chafer Summarizes Eternal Life; When Ignored the Gospel Is Fuzzy or Flawed; Paul Asserts Himself to Be the Worst Sinner, 1 Tim 1:15

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology: Doctrinal Summarization*. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:142:

ETERNAL LIFE. A sharp distinction must be made between human existence which by its nature continues forever and the gift of God which is eternal life. In the last analysis, humanity is not wholly conformed to time. Every human being will be living on forever, even after it has been decreed that time shall be no more. Thus humanity intrudes into eternity and must, in the end, conform to the eternal mode of existence. Each human being has a beginning. In this he is unlike God. Each human being, however, has no end of his existence. In this respect he is to some extent like God. That human beings have no end is a solemn thought; but on those who receive God's gift of eternal life the very life of God is bestowed. That life is a partaking of the divine nature. It is no less than "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Thus by regeneration all who believe become possessors of that which in God is itself eternal.

- 39) Failure to grasp the fact that faith in Christ provides eternal life is to misunderstand the reason why one should believe in Christ and the false and fuzzy gospels that come from this oversight are legion.
- 40) Paul understood the power of the Gospel to not only save sinners but that this deliverance from the lake of fire necessitated the imputation of eternal life. He expresses these concepts in:

**1 Timothy 1:15 -** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1. Paul presents himself as the ultimate example of grace and begins his testimony by citing portions of a hymn that was popular at the time. The name of the hymn is "Πιστὸς ὁ Λόγος": "Faithful is the Word." It is used by Paul on five occasions in his pastoral epistles: 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, and 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8.
2. In each of these references some aspect of faithfulness to the Word of God is emphasized. He then continues by emphasizing the doctrinal accuracy of the line quoted. In this verse he asserts that it deserves full acceptance.
3. The word "deserving" is ἄξιος, *axios*, and means, "to be worthy." This is followed by the phrase, πᾶς ἀποδοξή, *pas apodoxē*: "unqualified acceptance."
4. A principle regarding hymns sung in church is taught here: the lyric should be beyond biblical reproach and its theme and content should communicate pure doctrine. Here then is how Paul approaches the first line of the hymn in our context:

**1 Timothy 1:15a -** "Faithful is the Word," and worthy of unqualified acceptance:

5. Next comes the conjunction that introduces the first line: **ὅτι, *hoti***: "that." What follows indicates what is worthy of unqualified acceptance on the part of all who are saved:

Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The verb is the culminative aorist active indicative of:

**ἔρχομαι, *erchomai***: with the preposition *eis* it means "to come into," and implies motion from point *A* into Point *B*. Christ Jesus came out from heaven into the devil's world with a purpose.

aorist: Culminative: signifies effort or process denoting the attainment of the end of such effort or process. Thus Christ Jesus came into the devil's world by means of the Virgin Birth and entered the *kosmos* in what we refer to as the First Advent.

active: Christ produced the action.

indicative: Unqualified statement of historical fact.

6. The purpose of the Lord's entry into the devil's world is indicated by the culminative aorist active infinitive of the verb:

**σώζω, sōzō** - "to save" Saved from what and by what process?

7. The definition of *sōzō* answers these questions and amplifies the principle that the result of salvation is deliverance from the lake of fire through the imputation of eternal life. We consult:

**Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich. 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 798:**

**σώζω.** 1. To preserve or rescue. **a.** to save from death. **b.** to bring to safety. **d.** to keep, to preserve. 2. to save or preserve from eternal death, judgment, and from all that might lead to such death, e.g., sin. To endow with everlasting life. Passing over into a state of salvation and a higher life. **a.** active voice to save someone or something: Christ, 1 Timothy 1:15.

aorist: Culminative: signifies effort or process denoting the attainment of the end of such effort or process: the finished work of Christ on the cross.

active: Christ produces the action on the cross, its culmination occurring with His statement in John 19:30, "It is finished!"

infinitive: Intended result: it was the Lord's intent to make it possible for sinners to be saved. His sacrifice was also for the purpose of granting eternal life to those who would believe.

8. Those for whom Christ performed this completed sacrifice are identified by the direct object of *sōzō*, the accusative masculine plural of:

**ἁμαρτωλός, hamartōlos** - The sinful ones, i.e., the entire human race.

9. The human race is in the impossible position of being born into this world—the *kosmos*—separated from God, spiritually dead, and in the hostile environment of the devil's world.

10. Trapped in enemy territory we are powerless to escape through our own efforts and abilities. No good deeds to help others who are also hopelessly incarcerated in the same prison will contribute anything to either's escape. No capitulation to the allurements of Lucifer's global domain will provide any lasting comfort once physical death overtakes us. We are resigned to the conclusion that we stand condemned in our sins for which there is no human recourse available to make reconciliation. Thus we all find ourselves in a hopeless situation, helpless to do anything about it.

11. This very circumstance is where the Shulammitte finds herself in Song of Solomon 4. Solomon represents the devil's world to which he has so disgracefully submitted. His wealth and possessions would make Croesus \krē' sus\ blush and in his sexual lust he uses blessing God permits him to enjoy to lure defenseless women into his harem.

12. The Shulammite finds herself helpless before the god of her world, the king of Israel. Solomon has great power, influence, and authority which he can use to control her. She is helpless to escape from his palace, his mighty men, or his staff of emissaries. She can only find deliverance from someone who can rescue her from the environment in which she is entrapped.
13. The hero, the deliverer, the one who rescues, and thus the one who saves her is the one whom her soul loves. Her Shepherd is in essence outside the immediate authority of Solomon and his forces. He will become the one qualified to *exerchomai*: to come and rescue her.