

Text: John 2

### Review of Major Points from John 1

1. Jesus Christ is God. Both the Old and New Testaments identify Him as such, and He Himself claimed Divinity, taking for Himself the Divine Name I AM. (John 1:1-3, John 8:54-59, Isaiah 9:6)
2. The Bible teaches that there is only One God, but also teaches that God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son or Word, and the Holy Spirit all are God. While this is to a large extent beyond our understanding, theologians have explained this as best they can in the doctrine of the Trinity, which can be succinctly explained by the following three statements:
  - a. There is one Being/Essence/Substance that is God.
  - b. God eternally exists in three Divine Persons/Subsistences.
  - c. These three Persons/Subsistences are coequal and coeternal.(Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Genesis 1:26-27, Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 3:16-17)
3. Jesus Christ made Himself subject to God's Law, and fulfilled its requirements perfectly. As a perfect, unblemished Sacrifice, He gave Himself up to be tortured, crucified, and killed, and thereby paid the full penalty for the sins of everyone that would believe in Him. Because of His propitiation, or appeasement or satisfaction, God views the penalty for the sins of those that believe in Christ to be completely paid, and because Christ rose again from the dead, those that believe in Him also have the promise of a future resurrection, and eternal life in an idyllic Paradise. Those that do not repent of sin and believe in Christ can only look forward to eternal punishment, not merely because they rejected Christ but because their sins remain unpaid for, and a just and holy God demands that sin be punished. (Matthew 5:17-18, John 14:6, Revelation 20:1-15, Romans 1:18-32, Isaiah 53:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 10:9-10)
4. When God saves a person, it is because of His mercy, His grace. In our own selves none of us even has the desire to embrace Christ—we like our sin and want to remain in it. When God draws a person to Himself it is powerful, just as when Jesus called the disciples and, later, the Apostle Paul, and permanent—once a person is truly saved he can never be lost again. Christians are to proclaim the Message of salvation through Jesus Christ to everyone. (1 Corinthians 2:14, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 6:37, John 6:44, Acts 9:20, Mark 16:14-16)

### Section 1

*On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.*  
(John 2:1-12)

**What is marriage?** According to Noah Webster (1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*), marriage is "The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children." Why did Christ honor this wedding with His presence? In part, His purpose was simple—He was invited, and was probably a Friend of the bride and/or groom. His presence also demonstrated that marriage is indeed an estate that was ordained by God, and is honorable in His sight. God's institution of marriage is recorded in Genesis 2.

**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**  
(Genesis 2:24)

Now, the term "one flesh" means what it sounds like—don't overly spiritualize this. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6 clarify that this term is referring, at least in part, to the sexual union between husband and wife.

**Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual**

**immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**  
**(1 Corinthians 6:15-20)**

Why is all sexual activity outside of the marriage of one man and one woman sinful? Because God created sex, and ordained marriage as the only lawful condition in which such a relationship can take place. Nowadays we sometimes encounter people that will argue that one type of extramarital sexual relationship or another is “ok” because it isn’t specifically named as a sin in the Bible. Even if that is true, though, the generic term “sexual immorality” (in the New Testament this is the Greek *porneia*) refers to all sexual relationships outside of marriage.

**Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."  
**(Matthew 19:1-12)****

In this passage, Jesus emphasizes that divorce breaks God’s ordained institution of marriage and is unlawful unless the other partner has already broken that relationship through sexual immorality of some kind. In response to this hard teaching, the disciples stated that perhaps not marrying would be better than being so tightly bound to one’s spouse for life. Jesus confirms that some people have what is sometimes called the “gift of celibacy,” and are able to remain unmarried and wholly devoted to God’s service. He is careful to state, however, that only certain people have this gift. Those with sexual desire are to marry to provide a lawful forum for the expression of that desire. Remember, God demands holiness not only in action and word, but also in thought. The person that truly has the gift of celibacy is free even from immoral thoughts, which are, in God’s sight, just as sinful as immoral actions.

**"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**  
**(Matthew 5:27-28)**

How does God regard alcohol? The Bible does not demand complete and total abstention from alcohol. In fact, during a day and time in which the water was often not entirely safe for drinking the antiseptic properties of alcohol made the regular use of wine both desirable and necessary.

**(No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)**  
**(1 Timothy 5:23)**

However, the Bible is equally plain that drinking to excess is sinful, so much so that drunkenness is an indication that one is not truly a Christian, and destined for Hell rather than Heaven.

**Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.**  
**(Proverbs 20:1)**

**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**  
**(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)**

Is anyone here Catholic, or does anyone here know how Roman Catholics view Mary? There are varieties in how certain Catholics view Mary, though all venerate her to one degree or another, some even going so far as declaring her a co-mediator or co-redeemer with Christ. Notice, however, in this passage that Jesus more or less “puts Mary in her place,” calling her “woman” in a not disrespectful but also not venerable way. She does not argue with Him, but assumes her subservient place—as a human being that, while honored by God with having given birth to Christ, remained a sinner just as needful of salvation through Him as we are—and entrusts the servants to His command, and the fulfillment—or not fulfillment—of her request to His wisdom and discretion. In short,

Christ alone is God Incarnate in human flesh, our Mediator, and our Redeemer. Mary does not stand alongside, above, or anywhere near Him in any kind of similar role.

**For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.  
(1 Timothy 2:5-6)**

## Section 2

*The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."  
(John 2:13-17)*

What was the Passover, and why did Jesus go? The Passover was the yearly celebration and remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. All Jews were commanded to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate this festival, and since part of Christ's mission was to fulfill the Law completely, He faithfully observed this commandment.

**"Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there. You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction--for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste--that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, but at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work on it.  
(Deuteronomy 16:1-8)**

**"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.  
(Matthew 5:17)**

When Jesus saw the outer court of the Temple being taken up with commerce, he drove those conducting business out of the Temple. The disciples later recognized this as a fulfillment of Psalm 69:9.

**For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.  
(Psalm 69:9)**

Why was Jesus so offended by this? This was one of at least two occasions on which Jesus drove these men out of the Temple. His words during the second recorded occasion give us a partial clue:

**And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."  
(Mark 11:17)**

**A house of prayer for all the nations.** While the Jews were God's Chosen People, people of other nationalities were able to, in effect, become Jews through certain observances. These individuals were called proselytes. Now, in the temple, there was the Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place at the center, where only the High Priest could go and him only once yearly, then there were various outer areas, some where only the priests could go, then only Jewish men, then only Jewish women, and the outer court was called the Court of the Gentiles, which was the only place where non-Jews were allowed to worship in the Temple. Well, this place was entirely taken up with commerce, therefore denying God-fearing Gentiles a place to worship.

Furthermore, Jesus was offended by the nature of the commerce taking place here. Now, for worshipers to take money to Jerusalem to buy animals for sacrifice rather than to bring animals with them for long distances was not unheard of—God specifically allowed people to do this for their regular tithes, so there is no reason to think that this was not allowable for the Passover, as well.

**"You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. And if the way is too long for you, so**

**that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire--oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.**

**(Deuteronomy 14:22-26)**

However, it has been often suggested that the men conducting business here, besides locating themselves in an area that should not be used for commerce, were conducting dishonest business. For example, they would tell one man that his goat was blemished and therefore unsuitable, but offer to sell him a suitable goat in exchange for his goat plus a sum of money. Then, they would turn around and sell that (now "amazingly" unblemished) goat to the next man in exchange for his "blemished" goat plus some money. This cheating was very much the same sin as using "false weights and measures," which God abhors.

**"You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small. A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the LORD your God.**

**(Deuteronomy 25:13-16)**

Likewise, it has been suggested that the moneychangers also were engaged in dishonest business, charging interest and other dishonest fees during the money exchange. God also abhors such practices, making not only these men's practice, but also much of our own suspect.

**"You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest.**

**(Deuteronomy 23:19)**

**Whoever multiplies his wealth by interest and profit gathers it for him who is generous to the poor.**

**(Proverbs 28:8)**

Finally, how was Jesus, practically unarmed except for a flimsy, hastily assembled weapon able to drive all of these hardened businessmen out of the Temple without being attacked Himself? This can only be explained as a display of miraculous power. Remember, too, that all miracles done by Christ or by His followers through the power of the Holy Spirit have one purpose: to prove the truth of the message preached as coming from God. Jesus' power to drive out these men, as well as his turning the water to wine in the previous verses, was a confirmation of His Divine Nature and authority.

**If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."**

**(John 10:37-38)**

Jesus' escaping unharmed from this event was much like another recorded in His hometown, in which the people wanted to kill Him for alleged blasphemy, yet He exited unharmed through the crowd.

**And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away.**

**(Luke 4:16-30)**

What does all of this demonstrate about Jesus' crucifixion? Jesus' power to defy any attackers at will further emphasizes that, when He finally surrendered Himself to be tortured and crucified, He did so entirely voluntarily, out of love for His People. He could have left at any time.

**So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."  
(John 19:10-11)**

### Section 3

*So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.  
(John 2:18-22)*

Jesus here predicted that He would die and rise again on the third day. Was this also predicted in the Old Testament? Consider Isaiah 53, which we also read last week, and which predicts that Jesus would die for the sins of His People. After discussing Jesus' death, Isaiah tells us how God will **prolong His days** and **divide Him a portion with the many**. The Old Testament very much told us that Christ would die for our sins and rise again.

**Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.  
(Isaiah 53:1-12)**

Why did Christ die, and why is it important that He rose again? Christ died, satisfying God's just wrath for the sins of everyone that believes. Sin must be punished if God is to remain holy and just. That punishment was either borne by Christ for us, or will be suffered by us for all eternity. Christ's resurrection demonstrates that He will indeed be able to make good on His promise to grant resurrection and eternal life to everyone that believes on Him.

**but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
(Romans 5:8)**

**Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the**

**Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

**(1 Corinthians 15:1-26)**

#### Section 4

*Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*

*(John 2:23-25)*

Christ was, at this point, beginning to be thronged with people. Why did He not trust them? First of all "belief" can be and often is fickle. Even Satan and his demons have a kind of "belief" in God and Christ, yet they will spend eternity in Hell.

**You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder!**

**(James 2:19)**

Christ knew, for one thing, that people in their natural state do not accept Godly, spiritual things, and once their worldly appetites are no longer satisfied through religious observance they move on. By some standards, Jesus Christ was a failure as a minister, because once His ministry was established the crowds following Him became progressively smaller as the "harder" truths of God's Word were proclaimed to them. Even the disciples themselves fled in terror when He was arrested.

**The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**

**(1 Corinthians 2:14)**

**But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.**

**(John 6:61-66)**

**And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." And they all left him and fled.**

**(Mark 14:43-50)**

Jesus knew that whenever the Gospel was preached the hearers could be divided into four groups. One of the groups of people rejected Christ immediately, and one was truly saved. Two of the groups, however, gave an appearance of saving faith for a time, but later fell away.

**And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."**

**(Luke 8:4-18)**

Taking this parable as a very loose statistical analysis, what proportion of professing Christians will turn out to be false believers?  
Two thirds. Three of the four groups of people described here made a profession of faith in Christ, but two of those three fell away. While it would be irresponsible to say with authority based on this passage that precisely two-thirds of professing Christians are false converts, it may not be irresponsible to suggest that a majority of professing believers are, indeed, false. This is a frightening truth, one that exhorts us to follow the admonition of 2 Corinthians 13:5:

**Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!**  
**(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

How do we test ourselves? First of all, do you truly love God with all of your being, and your neighbor as yourself?

**"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."**  
**(Matthew 22:36-40)**

How do we know that we love God? It's not just a feeling—actions are involved. Do we keep His commandments? Do we love His People, the Church?

**Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.**  
**(1 John 5:1-3)**

Does the "fruit" of our lives exhibit **the works of the flesh** or **the fruit of the Spirit**?

**Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**  
**(Galatians 5:19-23)**

Furthermore, we can't just look to a past "spiritual" event, or how we behaved at one time, or anything like that as evidence of real saving faith. The Bible says that saving faith only exists in those that persist in faith.

**But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**  
**(Matthew 24:13)**

So, are you saying that a person that is really saved never sins, or that sin means you're not saved? Not necessarily, while a truly saved person will not sin regularly and repeatedly as a pattern of life, all Christians still struggle with sin. Even Christians must confess sin and be forgiven on a regular basis—the "we" in the following verse refers to believers in particular, not people in general.

**This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**  
**(1 John 1:5-10)**

What do I do if I am not saved? Cast yourself on Christ's mercy, turn away from your sin and embrace Him as Savior, Lord, and Master. He will save all that truly call upon Him in repentance and faith.

**because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.**  
**(Romans 10:9-10)**