

Healing Hereafter: Quick-read Version

(For briefly examining nearly all the questions and conclusions found in Booklet 5.

Please explore the Full Version of this booklet for a more thorough discussion and extensive biblical and scholarly evidence validating the summaries below.)

Booklet 5: The King of Spring

Chapter 1

Having established what kind of faith God seeks, we then examine how it looks in everyday life. Belief in the gospel is only part of its application in the salvation process. It continues to be utilized by increasingly building an intimate relationship with God, and it culminates in living a life more and more like his.

This makes sense because people who genuinely have faith that God can and will do what he says and that what he says is the best will not stop with merely accepting Jesus as savior; their faith will generate desire to know this God who knows what is best and is able and willing to actuate it. As this best continues to be confirmed to them, their faith will also lead them to emulate God's best more and more. And this intimacy with and admiration of God is precisely what fuels fulfillment of humanity's purpose: eternal community with him in Heaven.

Therefore, God desires the faith that he does, not because he needs an arbitrary prerequisite for salvation, but because it must be present to genuinely take every step of the salvation process and prove that humans truly want their purpose to be fulfilled, that they truly want God's Heaven. We also remind ourselves how essential God's involvement is throughout this process too, from making the solution of Jesus an option, to seeking out those with faith, to teaching them the gospel. But his words in the Bible teach us about him and his ideals to deepen our

relationship with him as well; moreover, upon exercising our faith to believe Jesus' message, his Holy Spirit enters us to prompt and even predetermine godly deeds of emulation. God's salvation is not triggered without the impetus of human faith and is not accomplished without the insistent work of God because that faith is what convinces God to specially predestine people to be saved, guaranteeing that the rest of his involvement—and therefore their inevitable salvation—will occur as well.

Chapter 2

We learn that this lack of saving faith explains why people change their mind about Christianity. If they believe the gospel but not many of God's other words, if they know a lot of information about God but don't desire to know him, or if they do good deeds to earn salvation rather than out of admiration for him, they've tried to enter the salvation process without faith and therefore without God's special predestination or guarantee of salvation via the Holy Spirit. They don't lose their salvation; they simply never had it, but they can if they start at the beginning with faith. This leads us to ask if those who do have genuine saving faith can ever lose their salvation, and a review of several biblical passages detailing God's guarantee does not allow this to be possible. However, we also discover how God's salvation process seldom allows our salvation status to be objectively proven to us during this life either, and we discuss several reasons why it is eternally better for us and for others this way.

Chapter 3

We then focus more on what the good deeds are which our faith and the Holy Spirit work together to accomplish. We find that God does not simply consider them as evidence of a person's salvation and desire for Heaven; he also efficiently uses them to produce glimpses of what Heaven is like for the benefit of everyone

on earth now. The salvation process is not only meant to get a person to Heaven; it's also meant for her to reflect Heaven to others, so that they learn what it truly is like and know how fulfilling choosing it would be for them as well. We distinguish this reflection from the argument that Heaven—or Hell—are actually brought to or are a part of our current existence, and we find that it is biblically and logically unsupportable to diminish the distinct natures of these places by relegating them in any way to earthly experiences. In fact, is it a faith-led desire to reflect God's ideals combined with the acknowledgement of an eternal Hell and Heaven that motivate human evangelism of the gospel. Even though God has made provision for those who have no meaningful access to Jesus' message during physical life, we peruse several reasons why sharing this solution with others is absolutely necessary and how it offers immediate and eternal benefits for everyone involved. But even as we recall the truly staggering amount of good deeds and good news God has used and is using his people to offer the world, we admit and address the very real presence of hypocrisy as well. We can now explain why much (though certainly not all) of it is actually committed by those who are not Christians, but rather those who have attempted to enter the salvation process without saving faith. Since they want to be saved but don't want to believe that all of God's words are the best, they adopt the Christian label but don't exemplify Christ's deeds or words. But regardless of whether the culprit is not yet saved or saved but still not finished becoming like God, we discover why the argument against Christian hypocrites is truthfully a strong argument *for* Christianity, especially by those who use it the most. However, because many have legitimately suffered from such hypocrisy, we search for a more reliable and complete way for God to respond to the evil in our world, whether hypocrisy-related or not.

Chapter 4

Before we biblically and logically explore how God can be good amidst so much suffering, we pause to acknowledge the emotional impact of it first, with the assurance that a healthy mindset goes a long way in achieving a healthy mood. We tackle the hardest part of the problem of suffering first: reminding ourselves that every human experience of evil is derived from our persistent decisions to know what is not God or his ideals. Although specific acts of sin are not necessarily directly related to specific experiences of evil, we all undergo suffering because we all keep telling God every time we sin that we are not satisfied with him and his goodness, preferring instead to pursue the opposite. Even seemingly random, unfair, or large-scale suffering like natural disasters are simply different manifestations of experiencing the evil of injustice. Every sinner asks to know evil, whatever form it might take, by desiring what is not God or good. We review how passionately and repeatedly in the Bible God pleads with us to stop sinning and suffering, and it is clear that he never intended either for us, which is why an answer to the problem of suffering is never complete by simply addressing how God responds to it without addressing who truly initiated it in the first place. However, even though humanity is solely to blame, continues to choose it, and has no right to demand relief from it, God does respond to our suffering in ways that make it quite difficult for us to doubt his goodness—even in the midst of it. First, God is always working to transform the consequences of suffering from burden to benefit, rather than merely removing them and leaving us without the benefit. Besides, we would waste no time in sinning and suffering again, so removing these consequences would accomplish nothing significant anyway. Second, God uses suffering to help us more fully appreciate his blessings that still remain or have been taken for granted. Third, God can provide opportunities for us to much more effectively help others who suffer if we have suffered too. Fourth, suffering may be the only way God can persuade us to abandon choosing a fate that would be far

worse. Finally, once suffering is present, there is some good that can only be accomplished through suffering, like the availability of salvation made possible through Jesus' death. We won't put a rest to suffering, so God makes the best of suffering. But we find that he does even more by becoming a human to voluntarily experience that evil with us, to truly understand and have empathy for our predicament. Then we find that he does even more by offering us an eternity completely free of every experience of evil in Heaven, giving everyone who says they don't want to know evil anymore the opportunity to prove it and enjoy it. We conclude that God is nothing less than very good amidst human suffering. He takes the evil we ask for and deserve and mercifully benefits us through it, empathizes with us in it, and indiscriminately offers eternal escape from it in Heaven.