

CHAPTER 10

Gates, Wolves, & Mere Men

Conduct is everything in law enforcement. It's unlawful conduct which injures people and property. Compliance with the rule of law is directly related to conduct. That's why there are no "thought police." During the debate over the crime of illegal immigration, there was an unfounded suggestion that Phoenix Police Officers would engage in racial profiling and biased policing. There was clearly an insinuation police officers who wanted to partner with federal law enforcement personnel in addressing the crime of illegal immigration were tainted with racism; and this without any history of civil rights violations anywhere in the State of Arizona.

A probing question asked by critics of Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (*SB1070*) in an attempt to link the statute to racism was; "What's an illegal alien look like?" The idea was immigration enforcement efforts, due to our southern Arizona border with Mexico, would unfairly focus on the Hispanic community. To counter this false belief, the answer to the question was another question; "What's a person look like with two rocks of crack cocaine in their pocket?" You can't tell by looking. You can only tell by observing conduct which generates suspicion. The point of the second question was to demonstrate crime is based upon conduct *not* skin color or culture. Just like I needed conduct along with reasonable suspicion to get into someone's pocket, so officers needed conduct and reasonable suspicion to get into someone's immigration status.

From the Scripture we've been exposed to up to this point, determining who's a criminal and determining who's a Christian have nothing in common. The determination method of criminals and Christians is far beyond apples and oranges – it's at the level of night and day. You see, crimes are tied to conduct (*Paul would call them works*) while justification is based on Christ. Actions are a crucial component in the sanctification process but fruit and works have nothing to do with being born-again (*justification salvation*). Or do they? Here's what some godly men are saying about justification, assurance, and how crucial works are to obtain eternal life.

- "Woven throughout the New Testament is the insistence that a **transformed life** (*emphasis mine*) is evidence of and necessary for salvation."¹
- "True saving faith is a repentant faith in Jesus Christ, and that produces **good works** (*emphasis mine*). If that's not there, it doesn't matter what you say."²
- "Saving faith is no simple thing. It has many dimensions. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ' is a massive command. It contains a **hundred other things** (*emphasis mine*)."³

There is no doubt in my mind a goal that godly men like these hope to see in the church is mature, obedient believers with a deep, abiding fellowship with their Creator and a positive impact on their world. But the ends don't justify the means. To employ a theology which relies upon works, fruit, and changed lives for assurance and justification falls short of the simple biblical standard. To employ a theology which doesn't allow for failure falls short of clear examples in the biblical text. Statements like these create more problems than they solve – one of them being doubt. How does fostering doubt in the life of a Christian make him or her a more useful and dynamic spiritual multiplier? What wisdom is there in looking to someone or something other than Christ for assurance? If I'm looking beyond Christ for assurance, the implication is Christ is insufficient in providing eternal life. Watch the honest questions which flow from the belief that works, conduct, commitment, or a changed life are crucial to justification and assurance.

¹ Schreiner, Thomas R. / Caneday, Ardel B. *The Race Set Before Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), pgs. 283,284 (Thomas R. Schreiner & Ardel B. Caneday, 2001)

² MacArthur, John. *Hard to Believe* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), pgs. 104

³ Piper, John. *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1986), pg. 65

1. Define a transformed life?
2. I used to watch on-line pornography five times a week. I've cut back to one time a week. Is that a transformed life?
3. Who has to see this transformation in my life?
4. What time frame is required to transform a life?
5. If my life is transformed, but I revert back in forty years, did I really have a transformed life to begin with?
6. What is repentant faith?
7. What good works need to be produced?
8. How many good works need to be produced?
9. Who do these good works need to benefit?
10. Besides belief in Christ, what else is needed for my soul to reach heaven?
11. Why is faith alone in Christ alone for eternal life insufficient to secure my eternal destiny?
12. Where did Christ get it wrong?
13. What was Paul thinking?
14. If saving faith requires a hundred other things, could you tell me what number 67 is?
15. What's number 53?
16. What's number 33 – that's my lucky number?
17. What other works do our Catholic, Muslim, and Mormon friends rely upon we might be missing?
18. What is it about child-like faith that is difficult?
19. How does grace fit in with good works, a transformed life, and a hundred other things?

The phrase “the thin blue line” communicates a minority position when it comes to the small amount of people willing to risk their lives to protect others. I'm confident the grace-based teaching presented in this book is perceived by some in the evangelical community as a minority position – a “thin grace line.” As a result, harsh criticism from godly men is sometimes launched against those who maintain eternal life is free and eternal security is real. The following statement from a popular Christian teacher is telling about the schism in the church regarding the free gift and eternal security. J.I. Packer stated:

“The pastoral effect of this teaching [*grace theology*] can only be to produce what the Puritans called ‘Gospel hypocrites’—persons who have been told that they are Christians, eternally secure, because they believe that Christ died for them, when their **hearts are unchanged** (*emphasis mine*) and they have **no personal commitment** (*emphasis mine*) to Christ at all. I know this, for I was just such a Gospel hypocrite for two years before God mercifully made me aware of my **unconverted state** (*emphasis mine*). If I seem harsh in my critique of [Dr. Zane] Hodges' [*grace-based theology advocate*] redefinition of faith as barren intellectual formalism, you must remember that once I almost lost my soul through assuming what Hodges teaches, and a burned child always thereafter dreads the fire.”⁴

Let me try my best to translate this comment. “Imagine the gall! Hodges thinks a person is a Christian simply because they exercised faith in Christ. How dare him! Let's be clear. Without our commitment, Christ's sacrifice and God's grace are ineffective. Without *our* involvement, *our* work, and *our* effort, justification just won't happen. It obviously takes more than child-like faith in Christ for eternal life to secure one's eternal destiny.”

An expectation is a requirement on the back end. An expectation goes like this: “Here, it's free. You can have it. *But* I'd better see [*insert – “changed heart, personal commitment, transformed life, good works, a hundred other things, denial of self, taking up cross, following Christ.”*]” If this is free, I'd hate to see costly. “But” is a small word and a huge “negator.” God bless our Catholic friends. At least they're upfront and honest in their theology about the works required to secure one's eternal destiny. There's little room for doubt what the Muslim is required to do to enter paradise. The Mormon makes mandatory conduct clear as to what it takes to become

⁴ Packer J.I. *Tabletalk*, (P.O. Box 547500, Orlando FL 32746, Ligonier Ministries, Inc.), May, 1991. (Packer, *Tabletalk*, 1991)

a god and/or a spirit wife. It appears the up-front requirements of obedience, fruitful discipleship, and a visibly changed life are moved and shuffled to the back of the justification equation as expectations in the misguided rhetoric of some Christian teachers in the evangelical church. Changing the location of a work doesn't change what it is. Scripture remains clear and compelling. Truth has a tendency to be consistent and pristine. The Bible teaches fruit and works have nothing to do with providing eternal life, either up front or on the back end; either as a requirement or an expectation. Thus they have nothing to do with eternal security. Jesus seemed to verify this in Matthew 7:13-23.

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount (SOTM), Christ instructed His disciples about gates, false prophets, and wolves. Reading the SOTM is like pouring over a lifestyle blueprint – a strategic plan on how believers can be eternally significant in God's Kingdom program. Acknowledging and appreciating an ancient Eastern Jewish culture as well as discerning literal meanings behind figurative expressions are critical components in understanding what Christ taught these Christian men. Context frees us from agendas. I've learned this the hard way through the revision of this chapter in this second addition.

There are no less than fifty (50) commands in Matthew chapter five through seven in Christ's SOTM teaching. Jesus' instruction was clearly presented to His disciples (*Mt. 5:1-2*) with others listening in (*Mt. 7:28*). Except for Judas (*Jn. 6:70-71, 13:2, 11, 27, 17:12*), the remaining eleven (11) disciples (*Mt. 28:16*) were born again, "completely clean" (*Jn. 13:10*), justified, adopted with guaranteed entry into the Kingdom and the Lord's presence. As believers, the disciples were His target audience. It's important to remember that good works and/or obedience to commands don't justify and have no part of a biblically based evangelistic message. The only requirement for a spiritually dead person to freely obtain an eternally right relationship with the Creator (*Jn. 17:3*) is to exercise faith alone in Christ alone for eternal life. Compliance with directives has nothing to do with one's presence in the Kingdom. Obedience, though, is critical for a Christian's spiritual impact on eternity. In the passage in Matthew 7 we can find Christ giving commands and caution to His Christian disciples. The passage reads as follows:

Enter through the **narrow** gate; for the gate is **wide** and the way is **broad** that leads to **destruction**, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is **small** and the way is **narrow** that leads to **life**, and there are few who find it. **Beware of the false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous **wolves**. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know **them** by their **fruits**. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will** of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never **knew** you; **depart** from Me, you who practice **lawlessness**.' (*Mt. 7:13-23*)

Christ begins this section with the first of two commands – "**Enter** through the narrow gate..." How, *not* if, a Christian enters the Kingdom is the issue. All believers will enter. Some Christians will enter with honor through the "**small**" gate and "**narrow**" path. Small and narrow figuratively imply restricted, tight, difficult, hard, with distress, trouble, and mistreatment (*Ex. 3:9, 23:9, Dt. 23:16, Psm. 18:6, 120:1, Isa 49:20, Jer. 30:20 LXX – Septuagint - Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scripture*). Choosing to follow Christ's blueprint can have an uncomfortable cost. In contrast, many Christians will enter the Kingdom with dishonor through the wide gate and the broad way. "**Wide**" and "**broad**" figuratively communicate enticing, attractive, and comfortable (*Gen 34:10, 21, Psm. 31:8, Isa 30:23 LXX – Septuagint*). When we say, "The opportunities in the market are

‘wide open’”, we’re expressing attractive, easy and conducive options. Jesus is commanding His disciples to pursue “life” (*greatness* – Mt. 5:19-20, 18:1-4,9, 19:16-17, 21, 23-24, 27-30) reward, and honor in their Christian walk. To live according to the narrow way found in the SOTM (“*he who does the will of God*”) is to avoid the wide gate leading to dishonor and “**destruction**” (*waste* – Mt. 26:8). It would be contextually inappropriate and misleading to utilize John’s evangelistic use of “way” and “life” (Jn. 14:6) with Mathew’s use in his written product to Jewish believers

Following this command to these born-again disciples, Christ offers a second – “**Beware** of the false prophets...” These Jewish Christian disciples were told to watch out for “pseudo-prophets” (*Greek - “pseudoprophetes”*). False prophets, like some Hebrew priests, were spiritual leaders who lacked veracity and provided untrue or misleading information to the nation of Israel through the sinfully deceptive misuse of their authority (*Dt. 18:22, Jer. 6:13, 23:16-17, 25-32, 26:1-19, 27:9-10, 28:1-29:8, Zech. 13:1-4 LXX – Septuagint*). These prophets and priests were indeed Israelite prophets and priests, but ones that engaged in disobedience, lies, deceit, and presumption. They could lead the Jewish nation astray. The Greek term “false prophet” was used by Christ to describe those spiritual leaders who would mislead the nation of Israel in end times (*Mt. 24:11, 24*). The reality of them being spiritual influencers (*prophets*) is not questioned. Peter also uses the same term “false prophets” – he equated them as Christian “false teachers” in the Church.

But **false prophets** also arose among the people, just as there will also be **false teachers** among **you** [*believers in the context*], who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying **the Master who bought them** [*believers in the context – 1 Pt. 1:18-19, 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, Rev. 5:9*] bringing swift destruction [*“ruin”*] upon themselves. And many [*believers in the context*] will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned. (*2 Pt. 2:1-2*)

False prophets and false teachers are not “fake believers.” They’re real actual members of the body of Christ who lack biblical accuracy not eternal life. The issue with a false prophet in the SOTM is an issue of purity, reliability, and truthfulness, not their eternal destiny. This statement by Christ ought not to be used to determine if a person has eternal life based upon their obedience (*fruit*). Christ tells us “You will know **them** by their fruits.” The “them” in the context hasn’t changed; it’s still the false prophets. Israel was able to identify a false Hebrew prophet by their words (*Deut. 13:1-5*). A similar standard was provided to the disciples. The fruit of a Christian false prophet or a misdirected teacher is *not* their conduct (*they act just like sheep*) but their teaching. If their instruction is contrary to Christ’s principles (*Mt. 7:24-27*) in the SOTM, it’s bad fruit. Christ touched upon this concept again in Matthew.

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, **speak** what is good? For the **mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart**. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless **word** that people **speak**, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your **words** you will be justified, and by your **words** you will be condemned. (*Mt. 12:33-37*)

The damage caused by born-again persons who engage in unbiblical teaching (*false prophets*) appears to prompt Jesus to figuratively describe them as “wolves...thorn bushes...thistles.” All three symbolic expressions describe things which cause damage. “Ouch, that hurts!” In the Hebrew culture of Jesus (*the teacher*), Matthew (*the writer*) and the disciples (*the students*), wolves (*Mt. 10:16*) were equated with a shrewd, aggressive, vicious creature – not spiritual death (*Gen. 49:27, Ezek. 22:27, Hab. 1:8 LXX – Septuagint, Acts 20:29-31*). A wolf need not be tied to separation from God no more than a serpent defaults to evil (*Gen. 3:1 LXX – Septuagint, Mt. 7:10, 10:16*) or a lion implies wickedness. Jesus is the Lion of Judah (*Rev. 5:5*) while Satan prowls around like

a roaring lion (*1 Pt. 5:8*) – both Jesus and Satan, like lions, are dangerous and can bite. In contrast and in context, sheep were animals presented in Matthew figuratively portraying gentleness, vulnerability, and value (*Mt. 9:36, 10:6, 16, 12:11-12, 18:12, 26:31*). A believer can be vicious and lack veracity. A believer can also be gentle and biblically sound. It's their choice. False prophets/teachers may appear harmless in their demeanor and be trusted in their position of authority, but they can do great damage with their doctrine.

Christ's handful of disciples were given extraordinary supernatural abilities for a specific mission for a specific moment in time (*Mt. 10:1-8*). It wasn't the norm. It's sadly interesting to see these false prophets relied upon these same unique and dynamic ministry tools available to the twelve few disciples instead of the simple and powerful biblical SOTM principles offered to countless faithful believers (*Mt. 7:24*). These Christian wolves were banking on flashy over functional, style over substance. They didn't forfeit their eternal relationship or demonstrate a lack of eternal life but instead they failed in their attempt to obtain eternal significance. These "wolves" (*false prophets*) were confident their prophecy, exorcisms, and miracles (*sounds like fantastic ministry conduct one would engage in at church*) would guarantee honor in the Kingdom. They don't. Honor in the Kingdom is found in the application of the Sermon on the Mount. In addition to protecting other Christians, it seems the disciples received a cautionary reminder that they too could find themselves on the broad way, engage in lawlessness and experience the consequences. Since false prophets disobey Jesus ("*lawlessness*") by ignoring the narrow way, they will discover sobering outcomes:

- Being useless to a dying world (*figuratively expressed as "cut down and thrown into the fire"*)
- Forfeiting greatness and honor upon their entrance into the Kingdom ("*will not enter [into greatness in] the Kingdom of heaven [through the narrow gate]*") (*Mt. 5:19-20, 7:13, 18:1-4*)
- Experiencing a rebuke ("*depart from Me*") due to lost intimacy ("*I never knew you*") with Yahweh (*Ex. 2:25 LXX – Septuagint*)

"Fruit inspection" which focuses on behavior is not encouraged by or patterned after the biblical text. This passage in the SOTM is frequently used out of context to link a person's relationship with God to their conduct. That dog won't hunt. It's the criminal dimension of life that is linked to conduct – let's call them works. The born-again (*spiritual*) dimension of life is based upon faith.

We now move from wolves to mere men. Paul shares with us there were Christians who acted just like unbelievers, in fact worse. Paul tells us there were believers in the Corinthian church whose conduct would embarrass a pagan. Their sexual relationship with their father's wife was in violation of even civil law provisions of the day. Paul writes to rebellious disobedient believers in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3:

And I, **brethren**, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are **you [brethren] not walking like mere men?** (*1 Cor. 3:1-3*)

Paul seemed aware a Christian's (*brethren*) conduct is not a reliable (*and certainly not the sole*) indicator of whether the person has eternal life. There are believers who act like "mere men." He continues in 1 Corinthians 5:1:

It is actually reported that there is **immorality among you** [*believers in the context*] and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. (*1 Cor. 5:1*)

Once again we see a Christian's ("*you*") practice is not guaranteed to line up with their position in Christ. Paul reiterates the certainty of position (*justification*) and the option of practice (*sanctification*). He says in Eph. 2:10,

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we **should** walk in them. (*Eph. 2:10*)

It doesn't say "will" but "should." The mood of the Greek verb in this passage is subjunctive. The context and the grammatical use of the term "walk" doesn't seem to move the mood beyond probability to certainty. Thus, maybe we will walk in His good works for us, maybe we won't. God has good works lined up for those who obtained eternal life by grace through faith in Christ. It's our choice to walk in them or not. If we don't, our relationship (*justification*) with God will still be secure, but our fellowship (*sanctification*) with Him will be impaired. Prior to Paul's writings, James referred to this as "dead" (*useless*) faith (*Jms. 2:17,20,26*).

In the end, Paul relied upon his apostolic authority to deal with and discipline the immoral Christian in the aforementioned specific passage. He writes in 1 Corinthians 5:5:

I have decided to deliver **such a one** [*believer in the context*] to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that **his spirit may be saved** in the day of the Lord Jesus. (*1 Cor. 5:5*)

There is no reason to equate the destruction (*Rom. 9:22, 1 Cor. 11:30, 1 Ths. 5:2,3, Heb. 12:5-13, 1 Jn. 5:16*) of one's flesh as the lake of fire (*Rev. 20:15*) but only as an aspect of God's discipline. This passage deals with the destruction "of his flesh" not the eternal destiny of the spiritual dimension of his life. The context tells us the ultimate condition of this believer's spirit – "saved."

In my brief twenty-five-year moment in time on the Phoenix Police Department, I've seen more Christian law enforcement personnel chewed up and spit out by the harsh police environment than I've seen grow spiritually. One peer, prior to becoming a police officer, was a youth pastor at a church. He was married, fresh, and excited about combining his faith with his job. As his time wore on as an officer, his usefulness to the Master eroded. He left his wife, began to abuse alcohol, started living with another woman, and communicated in a foul-mouthed manner which would embarrass a sailor. In other words, here was a believer who looked (*engaged in conduct*) just like the "brethren" in Corinth. My police peer was a Christian who was walking like "a mere man" – an unbeliever. I've seen pastors fail also: cheating on their wives, cheating on their wives again, abusing drugs, knowingly using Scripture out of context, and stealing money from petty cash boxes after removing the hinges of the door the cash box was locked behind. I know homosexual Christians who are battling immune deficiency issues, believers who are in prison for statutory murder (*Christ raised the bar and defined murder as unjustified anger – Mt. 5:21,22*), born-again men who struggle with pornography, believers who are addicted to illegal narcotic drugs, and Christians who are doing time for federal theft convictions. I'm not condoning or minimizing the conduct. But the biblical fact is Christ paid for each and every one of these sins. The conduct of these Christians had absolutely nothing to do with their justification. Yet, to deny failure in the Christian life exists is to deny reality. Paul failed (*Rom. 7:7-24*). Peter failed (*Jn. 18:25-27*). I fail too (*1 Jn. 1:10*).

Perhaps conduct is better tied to discipleship (*sanctification*) rather than justification and eternal security. John documented an important statement from Christ;

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly **disciples** of Mine.' (*Jn. 8:31*)

There seems to be a distinction between belief and abiding (*obey*). Becoming a Christian involves faith. Becoming a disciple involves faithfulness. Jesus repeated this idea by saying,

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit (*obeying*), and so prove to be My **disciples**. (*Jn. 15:8*)

Even after the great struggles in the Corinthian church (*immorality, favoritism, misuse of the Lord's Supper, abuse of the gift of tongues, suing one another in court, insensitivity, favoritism*), Paul never questioned their eternal destiny or relationship with God. Between his two letters to Corinth, he refers to them as “brethren” 32 times, “saints” 5 times, and twice considered them “temples” of the Lord (*1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19*). In police work we call these clues. Their positional justification didn't seem to be an issue. But their practical conduct was. Paul admonished the Corinthians they needed to be concerned about their obedience and choices. They needed to address their practice because of their position. That's what was frustrating to Paul – their position in and life from Christ deserved (*not required*) obedient practice. They had been “bought with a price (*1 Cor. 6:20*).” Frequently, “whistle-blowers” are attacked. This is what happened to Paul. With great irony and sarcasm he defended his own conduct and motives from Corinthian accusations. Paul pointed out their disobedience and disingenuous intentions by saying:

Test yourselves to see if you are **in the faith**; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you **fail the test**? (*2 Cor. 13:5*)

Some in the church were “seeking proof” and challenging Paul's apostolic authority (*2 Cor. 13:3*). Did Christ really work in and through him? Paul's response: Don't throw stones in glass houses. “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” Paul had used the phrase “in the faith” in the past. It was connected with obedience and orthodoxy (*correct thinking*) – “...stand firm **in the faith**...” (*1 Cor. 16:13*) and “...reprove them severely that they may be “sound **in the faith**...” (*Titus 1:13*). He finishes 2 Corinthians 13:5 with what appears to be a shot of scorn that's dripping with sarcasm – “You, yes you, have got all the answers. You've got it all together. No problems in your church. Christ is clearly working in you. Who am I? I'm just an apostle. I'm the one who's short. I'm the problem. Unless I'm right and you're wrong and you aren't living up to Christ's standards of obedience - unless indeed you fail the test.” The concept of “failing the test” is the Greek term “adokimos.” It can mean “depraved” (*Rom. 1:28*). It can also mean “disqualified” (*1 Cor. 9:27*). Paul used the term in this manner concerning himself. As a believer who was eternally secure, he was concerned he might be “disqualified” and forfeit an eternal reward. And at the end of this letter to the Corinthians he used it three times in a row in 2 Corinthians 13:5,6,7. Within this passage, it's defined as “unapproved” in verse seven. There's no indication in this context that it pertains to anything more than disobedience. With apostolic authority, Paul was clear, “If I come again, I will not spare anyone (*2 Cor. 13:2*).” It seems the issue was the faithlessness of these disobedient Corinthian Christians.

The context in all of the discussed passages involving Christ and Paul, as well as the disciples and the Corinthians, doesn't seem to be justification but an admonition to sanctification. Their historical words are to obedience: invitations to greatness, honor, and reward. Why would the words of Jesus to His “born-again” disciples direct these men to be “born-again” by obeying His Sermon on the Mount commands? Why would Paul refer to the Corinthians as “brethren” and then tell them to make sure they are “brethren?” Jesus and Paul were consistent and smart. They understood it's not what we do for our Creator that determines our eternal destiny, it's what the Creator has done for us. What we as believers do impact our eternal significance not our eternal security. Don't look to conduct or good works for assurance, look to Christ. He's the sole source of eternal life.