

Cry of the Wolf

Jesus warns, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Mt 7:15). But how do you discern who is a false teacher? Jesus subsequently explains, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” He explicitly identifies this leaven as “the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Mt 16:6-12), that is, their doctrine. In other words, **you discern false teachers by their false teaching.**

The Bible describes such teachers as “savage wolves” (Acts 20:29). Paul says that such teachers “distort the gospel of Christ” and are to be considered

Look at my sheep skin as proof that I am saved!



accursed (Gal 1:7-9). They are “false brethren” (Gal 2:4). Those who trust this gospel are false believers. The Bible declares that our justification (salvation from hell) must be by “faith apart from works” (Rom 3:28). By adding works as an essential requirement to escape hell, false teachers teach a poisoned gospel that leads to hell. They offer a counterfeit gospel that is worse than counterfeit money. It is a medicine laced with strychnine.



Although they may pay lip service to justification by faith alone, in reality false teachers really believe that good works of some type are required to enter heaven. This theology is known as **Lordship Salvation (LS)**. It teaches that **faith plus** other requirements are essential to enter heaven. This is in contrast to **Free Grace (FG)** theology which teaches that we are saved by **faith alone** in Christ alone.

What these false teachers teach shows what they believe, and what they believe determines whether or not they are saved. According to the Bible, you are saved by what you believe, not by what you do. But LS advocates want to point to their good works as necessary proof of their salvation, and in doing so they make their performance an essential requirement for going to heaven. The following check boxes (☐) refer to common requirements in LS for going to heaven. Some in LS will not require all of these items. But the requirement of any one of these items is the mark of a wolf.

1. Lordship

Although the Bible teaches that it is enough to believe in the Lord Jesus for eternal life (Acts 16:31), LS teaches that you must also:

- ❑ Make Jesus Lord of your life (Mt 7:21-23)
- ❑ Commit yourself to Jesus (Jn 2:23-25)
- ❑ Give your heart and life to Jesus (Rom 6:16)¹
- ❑ Live for Jesus (Rom 6:2; 8:13; Heb 10:38)
- ❑ Surrender all to Jesus (Mt 5:29-30; 18:8-9)

2. Repent

Although the Gospel of John was written to tell us how to have eternal life (Jn 20:31) and refuses to even mention the word repentance, LS teaches that repentance is necessary to escape hell: turn or burn. Going to heaven becomes conditioned on what you stop doing and start doing—your performance.

- ❑ Turn from sins of commission (Lk 13:3-5)²
- ❑ Turn from sins of omission (Jam 4:17).

3. Baptism

Refusal to be baptized is sin. Since you must turn from your sins to be saved according to LS, you must be baptized. Likewise, since submission to the Lordship of Christ requires baptism (Mt 28:19), you must be baptized to be saved.

- ❑ Water Baptism (Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38)

4. Confess Christ

Water baptism is one way to confess your faith in Christ. It and verbal public confession are essential to your salvation in LS.³ Granted, such public confession may cost you your life in some countries. But you have to be willing to pay this price. But if eternal life is free, why do you have to pay a price? Are you buying it?

- ❑ Confess Christ initially (Rom 10:9-10)
- ❑ Confess Christ continuously (Mt 10:32-33)

5. Confess Sins

From the above category, we see that LS front-loads and backloads the gospel with requirements that you must meet at the beginning of your conversion experience and subsequent requirements that you must meet in an on-going level of performance afterwards.

- ❑ You must confess your sins (1Jn 1:9)
- ❑ You must turn from your sins (Heb 10:26-27)⁴
- ❑ You must turn from sex sins (1Cor 6:9-10)⁵
- ❑ You must not commit suicide (1Cor 3:16-17)

6. Forgive Sins

Not only must you confess and turn from your sins to really be forgiven of your sins in LS, you must:

- ❑ Forgive others (Mt 18:31-35)⁶

7. Love Others and One Another

Forgiving others is part of loving others. According to LS, you must even love your enemies, if you want to have any real hope of heaven. You must also love the saved to be saved. And since love without works is not really love, your love must express itself in good works, especially in doing good to others—no good works, no heaven.

- ❑ Love Enemies (Mt 5:44-45)
- ❑ Love Believers (Mt 5:22; 1Cor 13:3)⁷
- ❑ Do good to others (Mt 5:20)⁸

8. Love Jesus

Naturally, LS will insist that you must love Jesus to be saved. Jesus said that if you really love Him, then you will obey Him. Consequently, if you do not obey Him, then you do not really love Him. And if you do not lovingly obey Him, then you are not really saved.

- ❑ Love Jesus (1Cor 16:22)⁹
- ❑ Lovingly obey Jesus (Jn 14:21-23)

9. Abide in Christ

Abiding in Christ goes hand-in-hand with loving Christ. Likewise, the way to abide in Christ is to abide in His word, which includes keeping His word. This is done by taking up your cross and following Jesus in daily discipleship. In LS your salvation from hell is ultimately dependent upon your daily performance. Christ's cross will not save you if you do not take up your cross **daily**. Thus, we must do the things expected of us as disciples. In fact, LS is also known as Discipleship Salvation.

- ❑ Abide in Christ (Jn 15:4-6; 1Jn 2:24,28)
- ❑ Abide in Christ's word (Jn 8:30-32)¹⁰
- ❑ Follow Jesus **daily** (Lk 9:23-26)¹¹
- ❑ Go to church (Heb 10:25-27)
- ❑ Tithe to God and give to others (Mt 19:16-21)¹²
- ❑ Keep His commandments (1Jn 2:3-4)¹³

10. Persevere

To *abide* means to *remain*; thus, in LS you must remain in the faith, that is, persevere in faith and faithfulness to reach heaven. Thus, you must meet the following requirements.

- ❑ Don't commit apostasy (2Tim 4:10; 1Jn 2:19)
- ❑ Don't fall away (Gal 5:4)¹⁴
- ❑ Don't give up the faith (Acts 14:22)¹⁵
- ❑ Endure (Mk 13:13; Lk 9:62)¹⁶
- ❑ Hold fast (Lk 8:15; 1Cor 15:2; Heb 3:6,14)
- ❑ Overcome (Rev 2:10-11; 3:3-5; 21:7-8)
- ❑ Finish the race (1Cor 9:23-27)¹⁷

11. Live Right

A favorite LS proof text is found in 2Cor 5:17, where Paul says that we are new creatures. LS assumes that if you are a new creature, then you will live like it. Thus, if you do not live like it, then you are not new creatures and will go to hell. Ultimately, **the way you live in LS determines whether or not you were saved, are saved, and will be saved from hell.**

- ❑ Live a like new creature (2Cor 5:17)
- ❑ Walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:18-26)
- ❑ Sow to the Spirit (Gal 6:7-8)

12. Good Fruit

According to LS, a new creature lives like a new creature, and a good tree bears good fruits. **If you do not bear good fruits (works/performance), you will burn in hell.** If you are really saved, then you will produce good works. Good works are required to really be saved. You are not saved by works, but you have to have good works to be saved. You are saved by a faith that works. Although you are initially saved by faith alone, faith and works in the end save you. **You cannot be saved from hell without good works.** Final salvation is conditioned on faith and works.

- ❑ Bear good fruit (Mt 7:16-20)¹⁸
- ❑ Produce good works (Jam 2:14-26)¹⁹

Dominos

Although these requirements stand or fall together, most in LS will only require some of these requirements. But their theology falls like a stack of dominos if you take away any one component. For example, consider the LS argument that you must demonstrate love for God to enter heaven:



1. Those who do not **obey** God do not **love** God (Jn 14:15).
2. Those who do not **love** God do not **know** God (1Jn 4:8).
- *Those who do not **obey** God do not **know** God (1Jn 2:4).
3. Those who do not **know** God do not have **life** (Jn 17:3).
- *Those who do not **obey** God do not have **eternal life**.

The LS gospel requires on-going active obedience to God as proof that you love God and as proof that you have eternal life. **Without this proof, you will go**

to hell. Thus, they base your possession of eternal life on your keeping the law of love (Rom 13:8,10; Gal 5:4; Jam 2:4). According to Jesus, the whole OT law is fulfilled by loving God and others (Mt 22:37-40). In LS your salvation is dependent upon your keeping this law. You must keep the commandments to love in order to reach heaven (cp. 1Jn 5:2-3).

To further demonstrate that these requirements stand or fall together, consider that if you do not have to obey God, then you do not have to love God to have eternal life. Conversely, if you have to obey God, then you have to be baptized, go to church, tithe, and help others. All of this is required in LS to have what the Bible calls a free gift (Rom 6:23)! The LS conclusion is false because it is built on a false premise. But if you take away any part of its premise or the conclusions based on that premise, then you destroy the entire LS argument, and it collapses like a house of cards.



Many in LS will say, *If Christ is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all.* This is understandable since **all** their arguments are interconnected, and their whole argument unravels if you pull out any one of the LS requirements. For example, if you pull out the requirement of baptism, then you would conclude that since you do not have to be baptized, you do not have to obey God. But if you do not have to obey God, then you do not have to love God. For this reason, those in FG conclude instead that we are saved from hell on the basis of God's love for us, rather than on the basis of our love for Him (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8).

Strings Attached

Another popular statement in LS is the absurd notion that *heaven is free but costs you everything* (Lk 14:28). LS attaches strings to the biblical offer of eternal life so that it is no longer a free gift. But according to the Bible, **if you will not receive it as a free gift, then you cannot have it at all.** Thus, LS takes away the prospect of your receiving the free gift of eternal life. You cannot really receive it as a free gift with no strings attached according to LS.

Subtle Poisoning

Very few in LS are so blatant as to outright deny that salvation is by faith alone or by grace apart from works. Most are far more effective in disguising their doctrine. They add works through the front door or the back door. Most will not add all these works, just

some of these works. But biblically we are justified by faith apart from **any** works, not by faith apart from just some works or apart from a lot of works.

When asked if one is saved by faith alone, those in LS will affirm that this is true. But when asked if works are required, they will in some way affirm this is true also of at least some works. **Ask them if good works are important and why. Ask them how they would explain the passages listed on this pamphlet in support of LS.** Their answer will attempt to link good works to your assurance of entering heaven—frequently by redefining the good works or by making the good works part of the gift. In either case, they make human performance part of the requirement to escape hell.

Do not be deceived by those in LS who do not add works at the frontend. Many of them will by-pass the front door and try to enter through the back door. And if they cannot bring in all their baggage through the back door, then they will bring in as much as they can. But it does not matter whether they poison the gospel with arsenic or strychnine or both, it is still deadly. Although logical consistency would require that they check off all the above items, many will check off only their favorite ones. But beware, some wolves are better at concealing themselves than others. **The addition of any work (performance) as an essential requirement for salvation from hell nullifies the freeness of the gospel.**

FG Gospel

It is beyond the scope of this brief pamphlet to respond to LS arguments and distortions of the scripture. Suffice it to say that there are FG interpretations available that do not add works (human performance) as an essential theological requirement to enter heaven. Further, many of the passages used by LS are not dealing with soteriology (salvation from hell) but mishology (rewards in heaven). Thus, a study of the doctrine of rewards is very important. Heaven itself is a gift, not a reward in FG theology.

Primary FG Passages

①Salvation from hell is **not by works**: Jn 6:28-29; Rom 3:20-4:6 (esp. 3:28; 4:5); 9:32; 11:6; Gal 2:16-3:11; Eph 2:8-9; 2Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5 (cp. Ps 14:1,3; 53:1,3; 143:2; Eccl 7:20; Is 53:6; 64:6; Rom 3:10,23; Jam 2:10). ②It is **by grace**: Lk 7:41,42; Rom 3:24; 4:16; 5:2; 15-17; 11:5-6; 2Cor 8:9; Gal 1:6,15; 2:21; 5:4; Eph 1:6-7; 2:4-9; 2Tim 1:9; Tit 3:7; 1Pet 1:13. ③It is **by faith**: Mt 9:2,22; Mk 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Lk

5:20; 7:48-50; 8:12,48; 17:19; 18:42; Jn 1:7,12; 3:15-18,36; 4:39-42; 5:24,45-47; 6:29,35,40,47; 7:31,38-39; 8:24,30; 9:35-38; 10:24-26; 11:15,25-26,42; 12:11,36,46; 13:19; 14:1; 16:7-9; 17:20-21; 19:35; 20:29-31; Acts 3:16; 4:4,32; 8:12-13,37; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17,21; 13:12,39; 14:1,23,27; 15:7-9; 16:31; 17:4(KJ),11-12; 18:8,27; 19:4; 20:21; 21:25; 26:18; Rom 1:16-17; 3:21-4:16,23-24; 5:1-2; 9:30-33; 10:4-11; 11:20,32 (KJ); 15:13; 1Cor 1:21; 2Cor 4:4; Gal 2:16-3:11,14,21-26; 5:5; Eph 1:13,19; 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; 3:9; 1Thess 1:7; 2:10; 4:14; 2Thess 1:10; 2Tim 1:12; 3:15; Heb 6:1; 11:6-7,31; Jam 2:23; 1Pet 1:21; 2:6-7; 1Jn 5:1,4-5,10-13; Jude 1:5. Also see Gen 15:6 (cf. Rom 4:1-25 & Gal 3:6-14); Hab 2:4 (cf. Rom 1:17). ④It is a **free gift**: Jn 4:10; Rom 3:24; 5:15-17; 6:23; Eph 1:6; 2:8; Rev 21:6; 22:17 (cf. Is 55:1).

Further Information

The *Grace Evangelical Society* (GES) has up-to-date FG newsletters, journals, tapes, CD's, and books. The newsletters are free, and all the material is geared to be readily comprehensible for the layperson.

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Additional LS passages

¹ Prov 23:26.

² Mt 3:7-8; Lk 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:13,18-23; 11:21; 19:18-19; 20:21; 26:18-20; 2Cor 7:10; 2Pet 3:9; Rev 2:5.

³ Jn 12:42-43; 2Tim 2:12; Rev 12:11.

⁴ 1Jn 2:29; 3:6-10.

⁵ 1Cor 6:9-10; Eph 5:3-6; 1Thess 4:7-8.

⁶ Mt 6:14-15; Jam 2:13

⁷ 1Jn 2:9-11; 3:10,14-15; 4:7-20.

⁸ Mt 13:38-43,47-50; 24:44-51; 25:31-46; Lk 12:43-48; Rom 2:6-10; Gal 6:7-9; 1Tim 6:18-19; 3Jn 1:11.

⁹ Lk 10:25-28; 2Thess 2:10; Jam 4:4; 1Jn 2:15; Jude 21; Rev 2:4-5.

¹⁰ 1Jn 2:24; 2Jn 1:9.

¹¹ Mt 19:21; Lk 14:26-27; Jn 10:27-28.

¹² Mt 6:24; 25:23-30; Lk 14:33; 19:22-26.

¹³ Mt 28:19-20; 1Jn 5:2-3.

¹⁴ Lk 8:13; Gal 5:4; Heb 3:12-14; 6:4-6; 10:23,29,35-39; 12:25; 2Pet 2:18-22.

¹⁵ Gal 1:6-9; Col 1:21-23; 1Tim 1:19; 2:15; 4:1,16; 5:8; 6:10,21; 2Tim 2:18.

¹⁶ Mt 10:22; 24:13; Rom 11:22; 2Thess 1:4-5; 2Tim 2:12.

¹⁷ Phil 3:8-14; 1Tim 6:12; 2Tim 4:7-8.

¹⁸ Mt 3:8-10; 7:16-20; Lk 8:14; 13:6-9.

¹⁹ Lk 13:24; Phil 2:12; Heb 6:9; 2Pet 3:14; 1Jn 3:17-18; Rev 2:5; 3:15-16; 19:7-8.