

## THE DEBATE

Here it is Saturday and the debate is over. The debate team have all left and either gone home or to the Philippines to preach and teach. It was a very long week with long nights. Many were there each and every night of the debate and I'm sure that you are very tired. The question is whether those of us who attended have learned anything from the experience? I have to admit that I learned some things I didn't know before the debate. Here are some of the things I have learned:

1) I learned that the group of Baptist, who were represented in the debate, believes that a "child of God" can lose their reward but not their salvation. Now I have to admit I had never heard that before. Dwight called me Wednesday morning and asked if I had heard what Mr. Brandenburg had said the night before and I told him that I had. He had never heard it before either. So I asked Larry and Ron and they told me that this was the common response of the Baptist to the idea that a person could lose their salvation. For those of you who might not have been there during the debate Mr. Brandenburg said "You can lose your reward but not your salvation." This was said many times during the debate. The only conclusion you can draw from what Mr. Brandenburg said is that he and those who follow him believe that there are different levels of rewards in heaven. The term "reward" appears 36 times in the KJV of the Bible and 25 times in the NASU. The differences in the rewards that are talked of in the scripture are the positive or negative, the good and the bad. No other differences are stated in scripture, to quote Mr. Brandenburg "no, not one." In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." NASU Matthew 5:12. Jesus is telling those who are insulted and persecuted for his sake we will be rewarded. All those who are so insulted and persecuted will receive the same reward not different ones. The writer of the Hebrew letter says "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a **great reward**. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. NASU Hebrews 10:35-38. Note the singular nature of the reward that is offered to those who "do not throw away your confidence." Those who do not throw away their confidence receive the same reward not different ones. While we are here let us look at what this set of verses has to say concerning the "once saved always saved" doctrine. First this is talking of saved people – "MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;" The righteous belonging to God that lives by faith must be saved cannot be an unsaved person. Now look "IF HE SHRINKS BACK" – who is the HE in our verse if he is not the "RIGHTEOUS ONE" who belongs to God. So where is the saved individual shrinking back to? The only place for a child of God to shrink back to is the world. Then we are told "MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM." The same person (God) who possessed the righteous one above is the One who will have no pleasure in him if he shrinks back. This is clearly an individual who has fallen out of pleasure with God and can no longer be saved.

2) The next thing I learned from the debate is, if a verse doesn't agree with what your doctrine says just redefine it. Point in question is found in Galatians 5:1-4, Walk by the Spirit It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. NASU The ones that Paul is writing to in these verses are those who have been set free by Christ, (thus they are saved) and they were told to "keep standing firm." Why would you warn anyone who to "stand firm" if they could not quit standing firm. In verse 4 in the NASU we have "You have been severed from Christ." Now you simply cannot be severed from something that you have never been attached to. No wonder Larry's opponent didn't like the NASU. Paul goes on to say "You have fallen from grace" There can be no misunderstanding that the ones falling from grace are those who had been set free by Christ. Because someone says they are not saved people doesn't make that true. We need to search the scriptures and prove the things men say. If some says that they are unsaved and the scriptures clearly indicate they are who are you going to believe.

3) One more thing that I learned was that "if" doesn't mean "if" it means "since." Now in the NASU the word "if" appears 632 times. Not being a Greek scholar I have to look these things up in a lexicon and figure them out. Strong's Concordance list two different words which are translated "if" in the New Testament, they are *ei* and *ean*. The simple fact is that though these words can mean something other than "if" not once are they translated "since" nor is "since" listed as one of the meanings of either word. It comes down to the fact that "if" means "if." John writes and says, 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. NASU1 John 1:7. Notice that it says "if we walk in the light", wouldn't that mean it is possible to not walk in the light? And if we don't walk in the light wouldn't that mean the blood of Jesus would not cleanse us from our sins. How can we know for certain that John is talking about saved people here? He uses the personal pronoun "we" which would include him and he says "if we walk in the light" not "since we walk in the light" To be cleansed from all future sins we must walk in the light and Jesus Himself is in the light

When anyone stands in front of you, changes words just to prove his doctrine and wants you to follow him on his say do what the Bereans did "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." Acts 17:11 NASU. "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;" 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASU.