

JOY THOMAS

The cover features a central illustration. A white crown sits atop a white, winding path that descends from the left. The background is a textured, greyish landscape with a large, bright sun or moon in the upper left. In the lower right, a dark cross is visible. The title 'PROGRESSIVE SALVATION' is overlaid on the sun and path.

# PROGRESSIVE SALVATION

MOVING  
THROUGH  
THE DIFFERENT  
STAGES OF  
GROWTH  
TO MATURITY

# PROGRESSIVE SALVATION



**PROGRESSIVE SALVATION**

JOYTHOMAS

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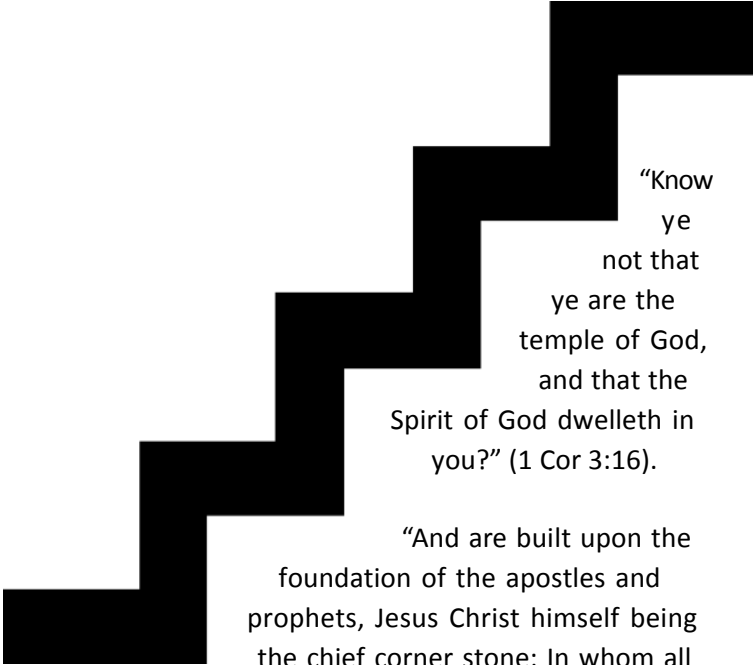
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“Know  
ye  
not that  
ye are the  
temple of God,  
and that the  
Spirit of God dwelleth in  
you?” (1 Cor 3:16).

“And are built upon the  
foundation of the apostles and  
prophets, Jesus Christ himself being  
the chief corner stone; In whom all  
the building fitly framed together  
groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye  
also are builded together for an habitation of God  
through the Spirit.” (Eph 2:20-22).

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual  
house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual  
sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”  
(1 Pet 2:5).

**T**HE calling of every individual, born of God, is to be a  
temple of God. The apostle Paul, writing to the  
Corinthians, says, “...*know ye not that your body is  
the temple of the Holy Ghost ...*” (1 Cor 6:19). Thus, every child  
of God, having been born again and having entered into the

kingdom of God, is called to be an habitation of the Living God. Furthermore, the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is called the House of God or the Holy Temple of God. Therefore, the calling, both individually and corporately, is to be an habitation of God for the building up of His temple. The temple of God is built with Jesus Christ as the very foundation, Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

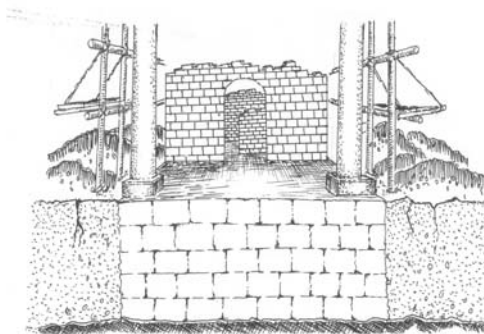
As you well know a strong foundation is the most important feature of any building or structure. The larger the building, the greater its dimensions, proportions and magnitude, the deeper and stronger must the foundation be laid. No building can withstand the test of time, weather, climate and usage without a sound and proper foundation. The strength of a building greatly depends on the strength of what has gone into its foundations. Similarly, when the individual lives of God's people are spiritually strong the temple of God will also be strong. When the individual's life is built on a strong foundation, the corporate expression will also be strong. Much of the weakness and failure in the church at large in these days can be ascribed to the presence of shallow and weak foundations of its members. It is, therefore, essential to lay a deep and proper foundation in your life at the very beginning of your spiritual life. Great care needs to be exercised to make sure that God's house is built upon strong, appropriate foundations. **The higher the building, the deeper must the foundations go.** Likewise, in order to come into the fullness of the divine structure and the ultimate purposes of God, we must give ourselves to the building and the laying of strong foundations, individually and corporately.

## AND THE RAINS FELL

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

(Matt 7:24-27).

Lord Jesus  
C h r i s t  
e m p h a z e s  
t h e n e c e s s i t y  
o f a t r u e  
f o u n d a t i o n  
i n t h e p a r a b l e  
o f t h e t w o  
b u i l d e r s .



There were two builders who set out to build their houses. One of them *“DIGGER DEEP and laid the foundation on a rock”* (Luke 6:48), while the other *“WITHOUT A FOUNDATION, built an house upon the earth”* (Luke 6:49). The Lord called one a wise builder and the other a foolish builder! The difference between what these men did lies in the manner of their *“hearing the sayings*

*of mine*” that is, in their hearing of the Word of God. The wise man “*heard and obeyed*” but the foolish man “*heard*” but refused to obey! The spiritual life of a believer will depend largely upon their response to God’s voice. The greater the willingness to take heed to God’s counsels, the stronger will be the foundation.

In any building or structure, the foundations are hidden deep beneath the earth. One rarely gets to see a building’s foundation! However, what we see and appreciate often enough is the outward edifice of the building. Taking this analogy to the Christian life in present times, we see many Christians who look imposing and magnificent outwardly. There is a lot of talk in the church of ‘bigness’, of large numbers, and of activities of huge proportions. They believe that having a mighty and marvelous God, their churches and their projects must also be big. They make tall claims of revivals, of healings, of baptisms, and of growth. But the spiritual condition is pathetic and paltry in comparison to their outward manifestations. They reflect a shallow Christianity covered up by much that is false, earthly and spurious. One cannot evaluate a building by looking at its appearance. What matters is whether the foundation is sound and whether the building can be used for many years despite bad weather and climatic conditions. Will it be able to withstand earthquakes, cyclones and flood waters? Or will it fall and be damaged by the slightest onslaught of adversity. As a builder what will you choose to do – to lay deep and solid foundations so that a tall structure could be built or would you rather focus on an impressive structure and pay little attention to the foundation?

The churches today consist of both types of builders. Some are wise, but some are foolish; and they both coexist, sometimes in the same church! Both of them are seen in the worship service, they are present in all church activities; and they sit side by side to sing, shout and praise the Lord. Their houses look alike outwardly. Too often, it's the foolish man's house that attracts more praise and admiration! Most people are easily fooled by outward appearances, by the external and by the temporal. But the Word of God says, "*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew*". The Scripture does not say "if the rains descended" but rather "*And the rain descended*". It is a matter of 'And' and not 'if'. It's just a matter of time. The rains and the floods and the winds are sure to come and expose the foundation. They will lay the foundations bare! Many do not lay a strong foundation and it is exposed when trials and peculiar circumstances come into their lives. Then they are offended and they are unhappy with God.

In their zeal to get going the unwise builders had overlooked the need to lay a deep and true foundation in their lives. All they were concerned with was the immediate need for some kind of structure that would look good to others.

Dear ones, the rains will reveal the nature and quality of the foundations you have laid in your life. It's high time you saw what kind of foundations you have! Now is the time to take stock of the foundations on which your spiritual life is to be built. It would be foolish to spend your whole life building a structure, in all earnestness, only to see it being washed



away when the storm comes! Many desire a very high spiritual life but they have a very weak and poor foundation. **Their desire for a deeper life in Christ does not match with their foundations because it is not deep and strong.** Spiritual growth demands the provision of strong, solid, stable foundations. You cannot hope to progress spiritually with weak and insecure foundations, however hard you try.

The writer of Hebrews, detailing on the foundational teaching and truths on repentance, baptisms etc. says, *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation...And this will we do, if God permit”* (Heb 6:1, 3). For a believer to leave the foundations and move on to the ‘superstructure’ requires God’s acquiescence! God has to give His permission so that we can move beyond the foundations. He is the One who ‘authorizes’ or sanctions’ any development of your life!

Do you think God would consent to your growth, if your foundations are not deep and strong ? Do you imagine God will wink at your ignorance and gladly let you into the secrets and depths of His purposes and plans? God will always maintain a perfect standard. He will gladly wait for you to slowly pick up the details of His eternal truths, but He will not sidestep the need for a strong foundation.

Saints you need to know that moving on to perfection or completion cannot be done in our will alone. No. The Lord is the one who will permit those who have a proper foundation. Some time people of God are in a mood to grow in the Lord and yet after a few days everything dies down and they have

no desire for the higher things. They lack a sure foundation to hold the super structure which is also Christ! Saints of God, this is a searching thought – *“this will we do if God permits”*.

It’s not surprising that very few of God’s people, a minuscule really, have progressed to any appreciable spiritual stature. There is still an awesome gap between what we are and what we ought to be concerning the life of Christ. It is no wonder that the vast majority of God’s people are still spiritually weak, frail, and feeble. This is so mainly because God’s people have not taken care to prepare their lives and seek God’s grace and enablement to move beyond the fundamental principles and tenets of Christianity.

“When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3 NIV).

“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.” (Prov 22:28).

These two verses warn us that we cannot move away from the true foundations which are laid by the early Apostles. There can be no compromise or short cuts in the area of foundations. We are living in times of hurry and haste when people look for quick results. This can endanger the building that God wants to build.

The building of one’s spiritual foundations is not a matter of a choice or option; it is an inescapable necessity. It’s His will; it’s His command. The foundation is but the beginning; we all need to progress on towards the raising up of a structure

on that foundation. We have to carefully build upon the foundation in a way that justifies the foundation for this salvation is progressive.

## **OUR SALVATION IS PROGRESSIVE**

A builder does not spend all his time, energy and resources building a good foundation. **A foundation is only the commencement of the builder's plans to build a structure upon it.** It speaks of the builder's intention to build a structure upon it. **Nor does a builder lay the foundation again and again.** A wise builder first prepares a good foundation and then gets busy erecting a super structure upon it. **The foundation is not the end; it is the beginning of that which is to follow after.** Nonetheless, the foundation is essential and not optional.

The Bible (Heb 6:1-3) speaks of laying a fivefold foundation:

- § Repentance and faith towards God.
- § The Doctrine of Baptisms.
- § The Laying on of Hands.
- § The Resurrection from the Dead.
- § Eternal Judgments.

In repentance, we encounter the Lord Jesus as our

Saviour; in baptism we encounter him as our Baptizer; in laying on of hands, we know Him as the Healer & the giver of gifts; in receiving the truth of the resurrection from the dead we know the Lord as the soon and coming King, for it is in His coming again that we will be resurrected; and in Judgments we know the Lord as the True and only Judge of our lives.

These foundational principles form various layers that have to be built as one layer upon another. Together they constitute the most fundamental truths. **Too often we find that the highest level that many believers come to or attain in their spiritual walk is nothing more than these basic foundations!** In other words they have never gone on to the super structure or the real building!

Many believers are content to know the Lord Jesus merely as their ‘Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, King and Judge.’ They acknowledge, proclaim and even teach the things they know of Him. But rarely do they realize that what they know of Christ is nothing is more than these basic echelons. He saves, He baptizes, He heals, and He is the Lord of Lords, yet He is more than whatever they have experienced. The Corinthian believers had experienced all these things, yet the apostle Paul said that were carnal, that were babes in Christ, and they were feeding on milk and were unable to digest solid meat! The reality was that they had not advanced the most essential foundations!

This salvation can never be limited to our initial experience of Christ. It is a progressive salvation which means there is much more each of us has to experience. Every stage

and phase of spiritual growth is essential; no single step, phase or stage is sufficient by itself. However, there can be no advancement to another phase unless the former steps or spiritual levels are consolidated, strong and deep. The foundations must be laid deep within so that they are not affected by crisis situations in our lives.

### **PROGRESSIVE SALVATION AS SEEN FROM THE LIFE OF ISRAEL**

It is enlightening to see God's plan for the Children of Israel. He delivered them from Egypt, from slavery and bondage, led them through the Red sea, brought them to Mount Sinai, where He gave them the Law and the Tabernacle and showed them the might power of His presence. Then God further led them through the wilderness to the River Jordan and then on to the promised land of Cannan. The Lord's intention for the Israelite, individually and as a nation, was for them all to enter into the land of Cannan. **The goal was not just to come out of Egypt, but to come into Cannan! The purpose of their deliverance was to bring them into the Promised Land.** Every believer needs to fully apprehend this 'picture' of salvation. No one should be satisfied with going half way. To settle down, having attained some part of our full salvation experience, is to forfeit and lose the whole purpose of the initial salvation or deliverance. The Lord says in Deuteronomy *"And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers"* (Det 6:23) That was what

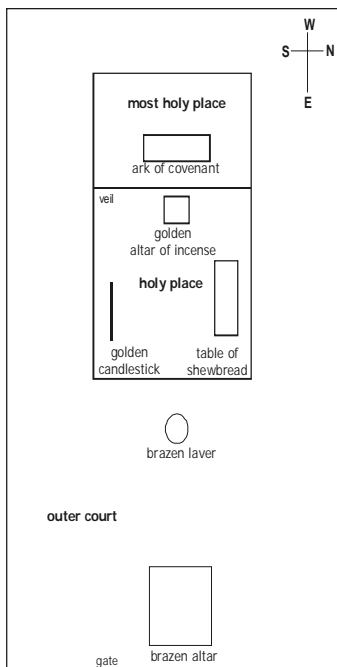
salvation was unto Israel of old. They were saved from Egypt unto a great salvation. That is why Paul warned the Corinthian believers with the example of Israelites in First Corinthians chapter 10. He also warned the Hebrew believers saying *“How shall we escape [appropriate retribution] if we neglect {and} refuse to pay attention to such a great salvation [as is now offered to us, letting it drift past us forever]? For it was declared at first by the Lord [Himself], and it was confirmed to us {and} proved to be real {and} genuine by those who personally heard [Him speak].”* (Hebrews 2:3 Amplified).

Every child of God who has been born again is called to move through different stages of progression till they come into full maturity. There is no stopping place; there is no partial salvation; there is no halfway stop. Each of us has to press on to full maturity. It would be a foolish builder who will stop at some intermediate stage and say, “I am born again and that’s sufficient for me” or “I am born again and even baptized in water and that’s enough for me” or “Now that I am born again, baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit, all I need to do is to await His coming!”. **No one can pitch their tent anywhere on the way according to their whims and fancies and await His coming!** We have to move on; we have to press on beyond the foundational stages and come to the place of maturity in Christ.

So God’s intention is a progressive salvation. However Israel rebelled against God and finally that very generation that was called out and brought out did not enter into their

full salvation (the Promised Land). The Lord told them that they shall not enter in – *“Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it”* (Numbers 14:23). As we have just seen Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 3 *“This shall we do if God permit”*. God did not permit Israel of old to enter in! How awesome is this call and salvation!

### PROGRESSIVE SALVATION AS SEEN FROM THE TABERNACLE



Tabernacle performed a particularly special role in revealing God’s principle of salvation. One must understand that the principles of salvation have never changed. God’s plan of salvation was established at the foundation of the world and its principles were embedded in the provision of the tabernacle of Moses. Through the tabernacle, God demonstrated in “shadow” how He would extend His mercy to mankind. The Bible reiterates that the Gospel was preached to the Israelites through the tabernacle, *“For*

*unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them*" (Heb 4:2). Through the tabernacle, its priesthood, rituals, offerings and furniture, God showed all mankind that the "substance and reality" of things would follow in the fullness of time.

The diagram shows the main areas of the Tabernacle. The first furniture we see in the Outer Court is the Brazen Altar. That is the only place where the blood is shed. The brazen altar corresponds to the cross of Calvary. Therefore, it signifies the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross and the blood He shed for all mankind. **Each item of furniture in the tabernacle symbolized and represented a ministry of Christ and also our experience of Christ.** The brazen altar, therefore, further signified our experience of repentance and our salvation in Christ Jesus. The next furniture was the Brazen Laver which represents water baptism.

Now we come to the realm of the Holy Place which is covered. The Candlestick with its branches which provided light in the Holy Place represents the Holy Spirit and baptism in the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to understand His Word. Rom 8:9 says, *"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* The candlestick was to burn continuously before the Lord. Its fuel was pure oil. The Table of Shewbread in the Holy Place had twelve loaves of bread called shewbread, which typified Christ as the Bread of life. The table also signifies the fellowship of believers. The Altar of Incense means prayer, intercession and worship.

Finally, we come to the Most Holy Place. The Ark and the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place represents the glory, power



and presence of God. God spoke from between the two cherubim on the mercy seat. **This is the realm of the fullness unto which the Lord is calling every born again believer!**

There are many spiritual principles that can be learnt from the material, method of construction, journeys of the tabernacle and so on. However we will restrict our meditation to this aspect of progressive salvation as pictured in the Tabernacle of Moses. We see the design and pattern of our salvation in this Tabernacle.

## **CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURE**

It is necessary for our spiritual eyes to be enlightened to see that Christ Himself is our foundation and superstructure. He is the pattern, the order, the form. It is all a Person, who is the sum of all that the Father has purposed. It is unfortunate that everything is reduced to mere teachings and doctrines today.

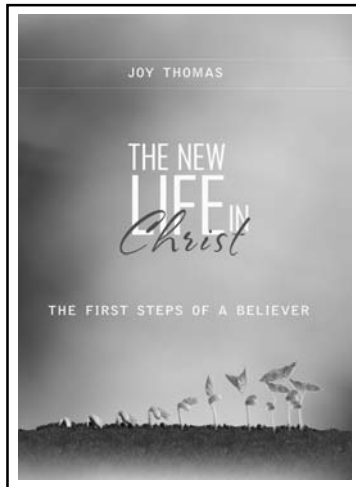
The apostle Paul makes it very clear in his letter to the Corinthians. “ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire;

and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor 3:10-15)

The apostle Paul makes it amply clear that this foundation is Christ Himself. He says no other foundation can any man lay. There is no salvation in any other and there is no other name given under heaven given unto men where by they may be saved. This foundation is a man. Every believer has to see Christ as their foundation. A true revelation of Christ is in reality the foundation in the life of every believer. So it is necessary to see Christ in every principle in the word of God. Paul cautioned the Corinthian believers that they cannot place anything they want on this foundation which is Christ. Anything that is other than Christ will be rejected and shall not be allowed by the Father on the foundation of His Son. It will be declared as hay, stubble and wood however good and nice it may look in the eyes of men. It may be well received, approved and even esteemed among men. Yet, it will go in smoke and shall not be reckoned by the Lord. Dear saints, therefore, keep your heart open and may the Lord open your eyes to behold the Foundation and the Super-Structure which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

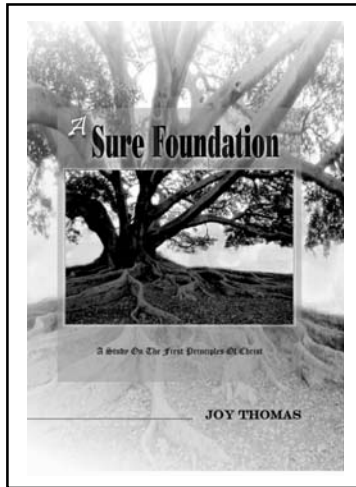


**BOOKS THAT CAN BE READ  
AS SUPPLEMENTS TO THIS BOOKLET**



**NEW LIFE IN CHRIST**

*With new birth, you have only made a beginning in your life on the Christian pathway. That means you have to receive much more from God. There are great adventures ahead! God wants to make you like his pattern Son the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to use you to bring other people to the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, **"I AM COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND ... HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY"** John 10:10. Jesus wants you to co-operate with Him in leading you into this abundant life, this overcomers' life. You have just entered through the gate of 'Salvation'. Do not be content with that. Go on and be what God wants you to be !*



**A SURE FOUNDATION**  
**(Teachings on the first principles of life)**

*There is so much confusion and compromise that has set in. In many cases, the foundations that have been laid are so weak because the traditions of men have utterly destroyed and damaged them. In some cases, those ancient foundational landmarks have been marred and changed due to the choice and likings of man. The burden of this book is not to criticize others, but to show God's people their true spiritual plight and condition so that they may turn and return to the Lord of their lives.*