



***SOLUTION TO SIN
PART THREE
BIBLICAL REALITY***

Having addressed the major misconceptions of the payment and forgiveness of sin (*Solution to Sin, Part 1*), which are the product of different theological perspectives (*Solution to Sin, Part 2*), this article by means of a timeline brings clarity to the cause, the impact, and the outcome of sin in the lives of both Christians and non-Christians.

With a fresh perspective and understanding with respect of sin, we can turn our attention to a timeline in which we consider the biblical reality of the *Solution to Sin* (see chart #1). Notice the chart flows from the problem with sin and moves across to address sin's solution. The chart's legends, with color-coding at the bottom provide information and category distinctions relative to data displayed on the chart.

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**Chart #1
Overview of
Solution to Sin**

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Chart #1
Overview of
Solution to Sin

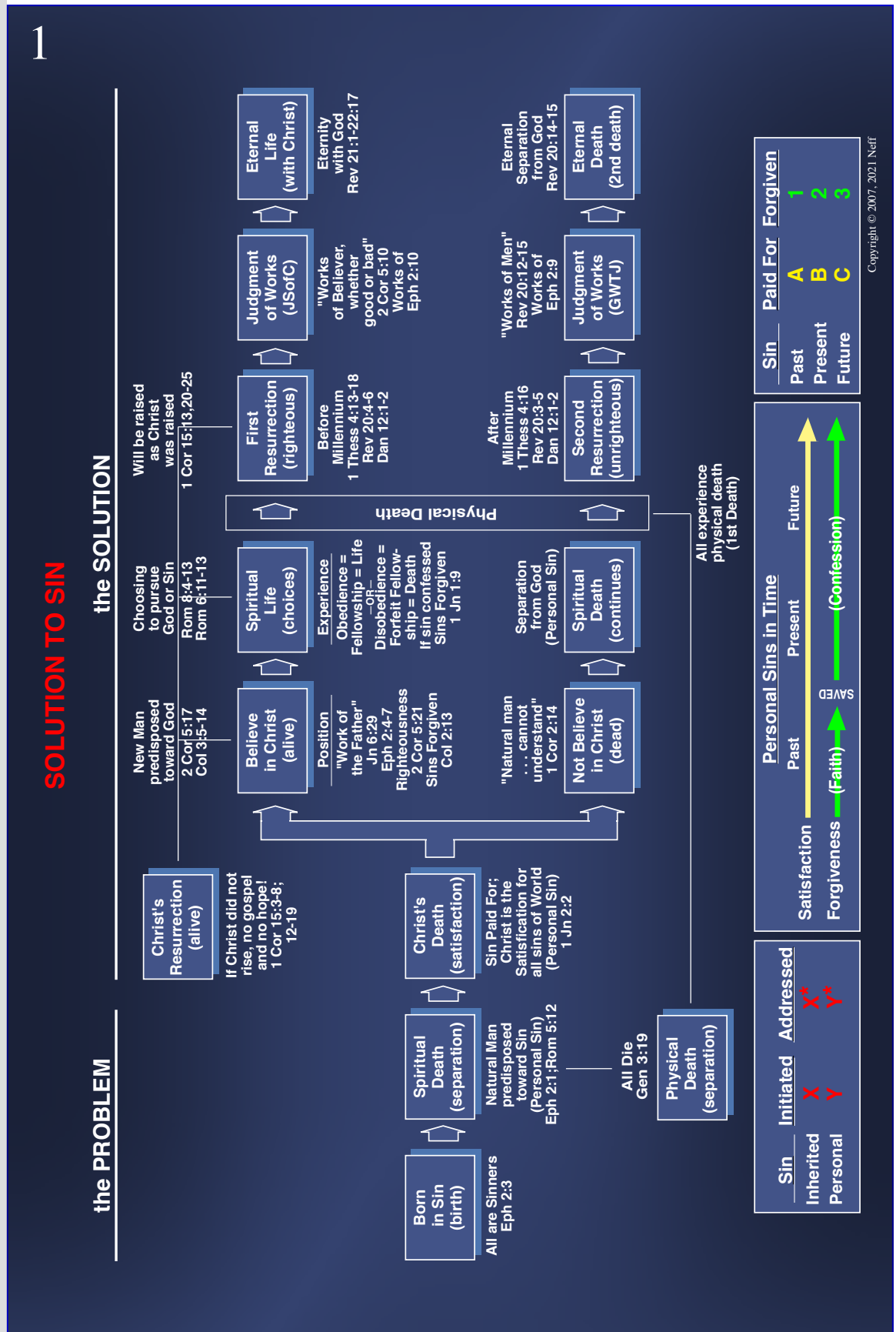


Chart #2 The Problem of Sin

Beginning with “the Problem,” each one of us inherited a propensity to sin from our ancestors at birth (see Chart #2). We all were born in sin [indicated by **red X**]. Paul wrote, “Among them (non-Christians) we (Christians) too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Eph 2:3). Unfortunately, it is usually assumed that the term *nature* in the clause “we... were by nature children of wrath” refers to a “sin nature,” which accounts for and causes the person’s sinful behavior.¹ As a result, the typical translation, “we...were by nature children of wrath,” springs from interpreting “nature” as “a natural quality, so that when ‘left to ourselves,’ we are destined to suffer wrath, the consequence of sin.”² This particular interpretation would justify a “sin nature” or “old nature” idea, meaning that unbelievers deserve God’s wrath since their “sin nature” causes them to sin.³

On the other hand, the preferred view is to understand “nature” in the sense of origin or descent, with the clause translated, “We were, because of our ancestors, children of wrath.”⁴ “It is the natural endowment or condition inherited from our ancestors, particularly from Adam (Rom 5:12-21), that brings wrath.”⁵ Consequently, “the unregenerate are...destined to God’s wrath.”⁶ The author prefers the preferred view. Consequently, the notion of a “sin nature” is not supported in Scripture. That does not mean that Christians do not possess a propensity or an inclination to sin. In fact, the believer’s sinful flesh, his propensity to sin, continues to influence his behavior.

As a result of our physical birth, we all experience “spiritual death” [indicated by **red Y**]. Death means separation with spiritual death referring to a spiritual separation from God. It is our spiritual state or condition. In our unregenerate state we “were dead in [our] transgressions and sins” (Eph 2:1, e.g., Col 2:13). Harold Hoehner explains that “transgressions” and “sins”—

connote more than an inadvertent mistake for they express a conscious and willful action against God’s holiness and righteousness and thus a failure to live as one should. Human beings are responsible for these acts of treachery against God.⁷

Spiritual death is a universal experience as a consequence of sin. Consider Romans 5:12: “Therefore just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death entered through sin, and so death came to all men because all have sinned.”⁸ Explaining Zane Hodges wrote,

Death became a universal experience precisely *because all human beings have sinned*...It is enough to know that what Adam and Eve did in the garden has produced descendants who, *without exception*, have committed sin.⁹

Predisposed toward sin, the unregenerate man’s natural tendency, whether Jew or Gentile, is to utterly disregard God (e.g., Rom 1:18-3:20). Being spiritually dead, the non-believer is enslaved to sin (e.g., Rom 6:6, 17) and a proper response to God is impossible due to his hostility toward God (e.g., Eph 2:1). Spiritually separated from God with a mind that is darkened toward God (e.g., Rom 1:18, 21, 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:3), the non-believer’s behavior is solely influenced by his sinful flesh, meaning his inclination to sin. Nevertheless, the non-believer can choose to do “good,” but not with behavior that is pleasing to God (e.g., Rom 8:8).¹⁰

Not only do we experience “spiritual death” but we will also experience “physical death,” resulting from God’s judgment for Adam’s sin in the garden (Gen 2:16-17; see bottom of chart). “For you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19; e.g., Rom 5:12-14).¹¹ Since all have sinned, all mankind will die. This is God’s promise that we will experience a separation of the outward body from our inner man at the end of physical life (see article *Outward Man and Inner Man Distinctions*).

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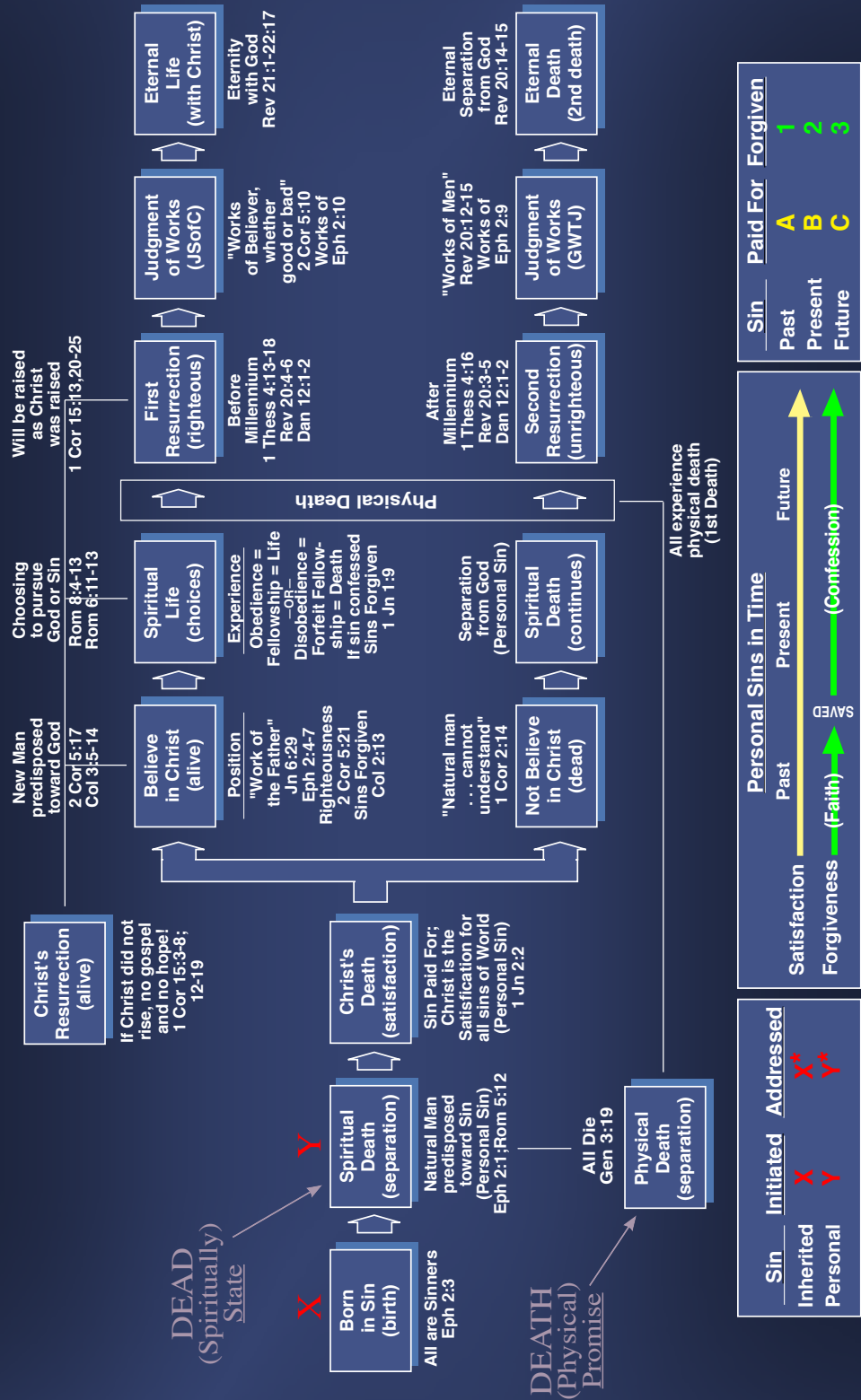
Chart #2
The Problem
of Sin

2

SOLUTION TO SIN

the SOLUTION

the PROBLEM



**Chart #3
The Work
of Christ**

So, what is the solution to our sin problem (see chart #3)? Being separated from God and without hope, God out of love acted on our behalf [indicated by **red X***] and “gave His only Son” to die on the cross in our place (John 3:16). Christ’s died for the sins of everyone in the world: “He Himself is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins...*the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2). All the sins (past, present, and future) were paid for in Christ’s sacrificial death and the Father’s justice was satisfied for the sin of the whole world [indicated by **yellow A, B, C**].

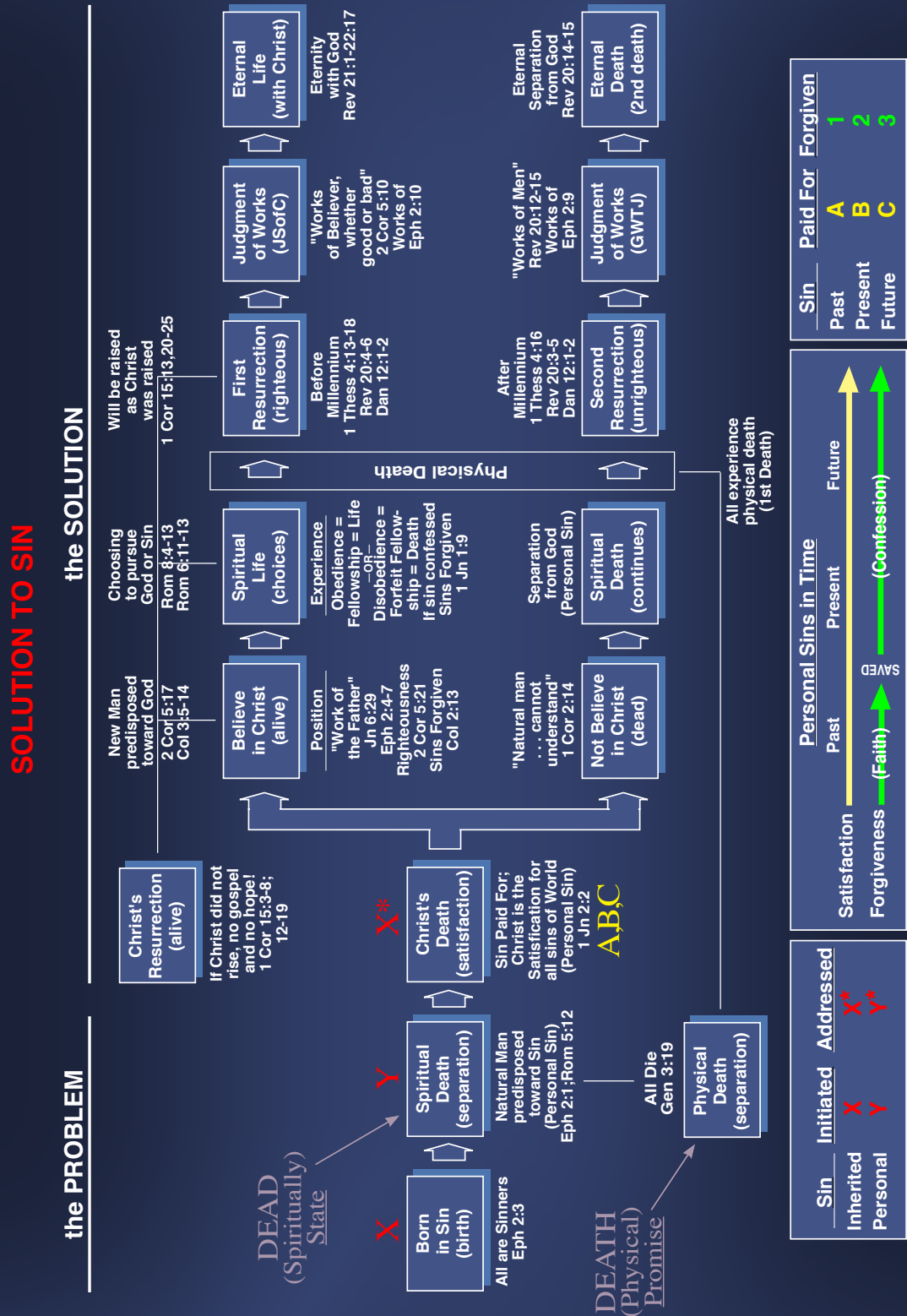
Through *Christ’s death*, the judicial requirement for sin that separated mankind from God was paid for completely. Through *Christ’s resurrection* (see top of chart), mankind can now *potentially* experience spiritual life with Christ. Christ is alive and that is good news (1 Cor 15:3-8; 12-19). Mankind now has hope because Christ lives and therefore we may live—spiritually and abundantly. God has made “the way” through Christ who said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). We not only can experience spiritual life but also life lived in abundance. Jesus taught, “I came so that [you can] have life, and have *it* abundantly” (John 10:10b). If this is all true, what keeps us from experiencing these things?

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**Chart #3
The Work
of Christ**

3



**Chart #4
Possessing
Eternal Life**

Remember that to experience the gift of spiritual life (see chart #4) a person must trust in Christ for eternal life [indicated by **red Y*1**]. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that *everyone who believes* in Him will not perish, but *have eternal life*” (John 3:16, italics added). Faith (noun) or belief (verb) is “simply trust”—a realization that something is true. In this case, faith is a persuasion in or reliance on Christ for eternal life. But notice a person’s new life in Christ is a gift of God. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the *gift of God*” (Eph 2:8, italics added). Being spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3), God had to act to change our circumstances, making those who believe in Christ spiritually alive (Eph 2:4-7). This is the promise Christ spoke about in John 5:24: “The one who...believes Him who sent Me...has passed out of death (spiritual) into life (spiritual).”

Based on the work of God, each believer possesses the righteous of God (2 Cor 5:21). The believer’s new position in Christ provides a solution to sin. Sins (past, present, and future) have been paid for by Christ’s death and God’s justice is been legally satisfied (1 John 2:2). Nevertheless when a relationship with God is established at conversion, God also acts in forgiving the new believer’s prior sins committed as a non-believer [indicated by **green 1**]. Paul explains, “When [we] were dead in [our] wrongdoings (sins)...He made [us] alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings (sins)” (Col 2:13; e.g., Eph 2:5).¹²

As noted on the bottom portion of the chart, the natural man remains alienated from God. Being separated from God and thus enslaved to sin, the non-believer remains spiritually dead. In that state, he cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God (e.g., 1 Cor 2:14) and cannot please God (e.g., Rom 8:8).

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**Chart #5
Experiencing
Abundant Life**

Previously enslaved to sin (e.g., Rom 6:6, 17) and “presenting the members of his body as instruments of unrighteousness” (v 13), the new believer can now choose to “make available the members of his body as instruments of righteousness” (v 13; see chart #5). Being no longer under the domination of sin, Paul wrote, “Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to Christ Jesus” (v 11). Nevertheless, still having a propensity to sin, the Christian can now choose either to “walk in relation to [sinful] flesh or in relation to the Spirit” (Rom 8:4). The former choice results in a “living death” and hostility between the believer and God. On the other hand, the latter choice produces “abundant living” [indicated by **red Y*2**] and fellowship with Christ (vv 2, 6, 13; see article *Critical Concept #1—Insight to Romans 8:1-14*).

While God’s justice was satisfied on the cross, sin alienates the rebellious believer from God. Confession of sin is the only antidote to the experience of spiritual deadness, a loss of fellowship. To confess is to agree with God’s assessment of one’s actions and it repairs the hostility caused by the believer’s sin, restoring fellowship with Christ. Since sin is forgiven by God when confessed [indicated by **green 2, 3**], “forgiveness removes the *estrangement between God and man*.”¹³

For non-believer on the bottom portion of the chart, separation from God and spiritual death will continue to be their experience.

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Chart #5
Experiencing
Abundant Life

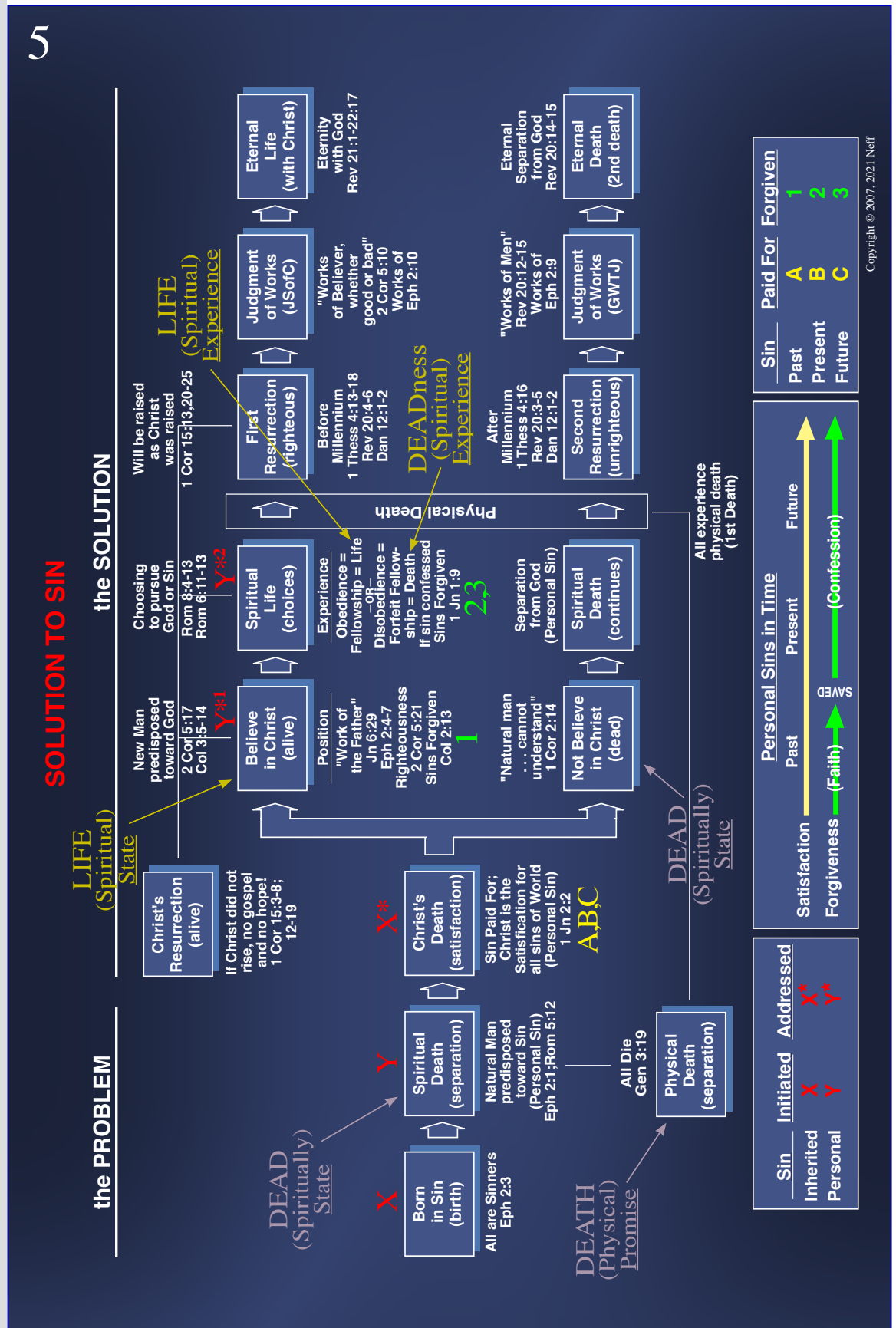


Chart #6
Experiencing
Resurrection

All mankind will experience physical death since all have sinned.¹⁴ In turn, all will be made alive (see chart #6): “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22). Each will be raised as Christ was raised (v 13). The resurrection of the dead, however, takes place at two different times, referring to two different groups of people.

The first resurrection occurs prior to the thousand-year, Millennial reign of Christ that follows His return (Rev 20:4-5). This is the resurrection of the righteous, those who are believers who will participate in Christ’s reign on the earth (v 6; 1 Thess 4:16; Dan 12:1-2).¹⁵

The second resurrection will take place when the thousand years are completed. This is the resurrection of the non-believers (Rev 20:4; 1 Thess 4:16; Dan 12:1-2).¹⁶

Continue to Chart #6 on Next Page

**Chart #7
Experiencing
Unending Life**

At the Judgment Seat of Christ (see chart #7), Christians will be judged according to their works, “whether good or bad” (Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10).¹⁷ These are not works to prove that salvation has been earned (Eph. 2:9) since eternal life is the result of faith in Christ alone (v 8). Rather, these are the “good works” of Ephesians 2:10, that result from walking in fellowship with Christ. Through good works believers are storing up “treasures in heaven” (Matt 6:20), looking forward to hearing Christ say, “Well done” (Luke 19:17).

Believers will go into eternity, being in the very presence of the Lord because their names are in the book of life (Rev 20:15). Spiritual life will be unending. Nevertheless, believers’ involvement in Christ’s Millennial reign and then in the newly established new earth at the end of time will be determined according to the evaluation of their good works at the Judgment Seat.

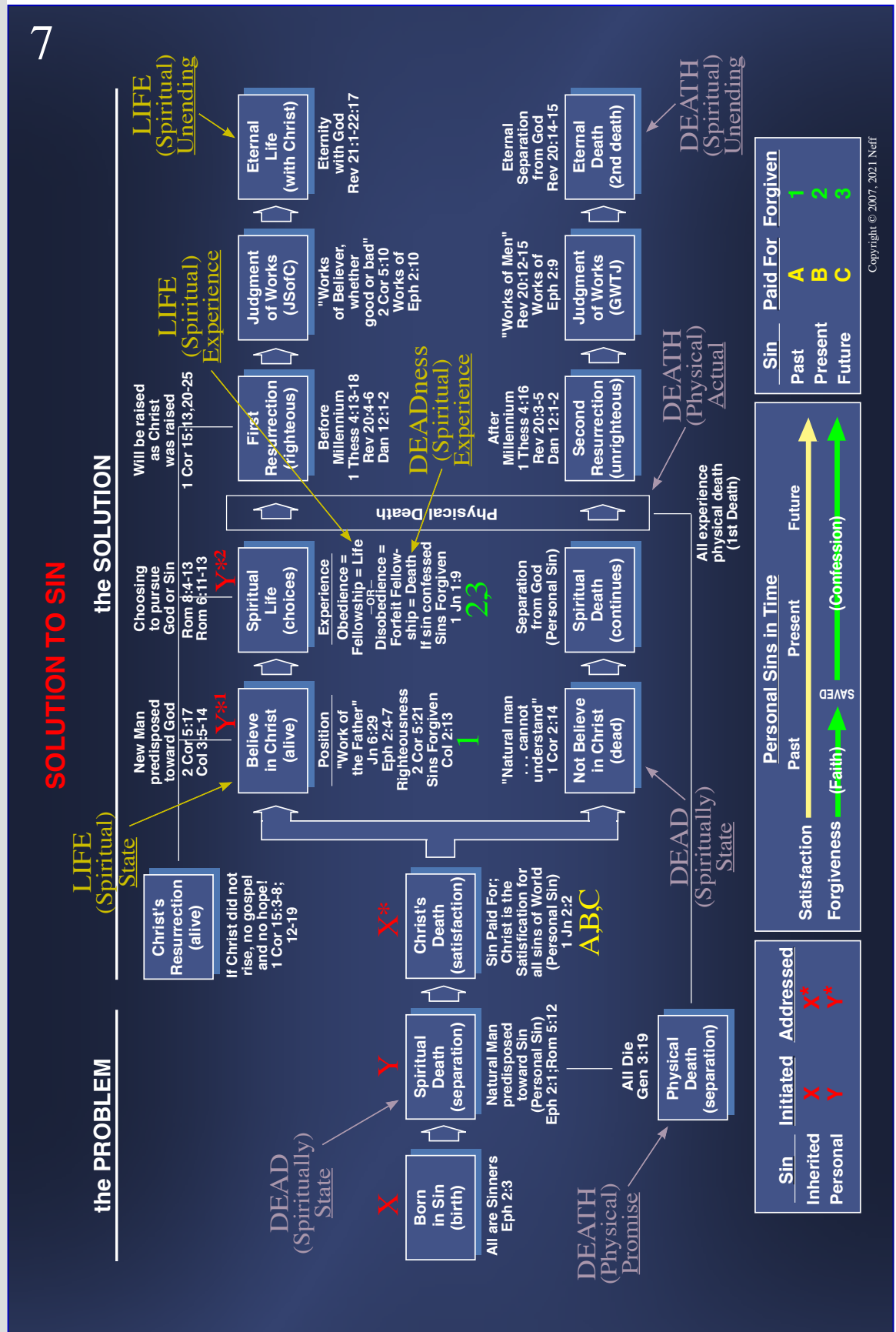
Non-believers (see bottom of chart) will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment when the books are opened. They will be “judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Rev 20:12-15).¹⁸ Remember, sin will not be the issue at this final judgment.¹⁹ All sins have been paid for and God is judicially satisfied through the death of His Son. Unbelievers will be shown that nothing they did gained any merit before God. No one can earn his way to heaven (Eph 2:9). Regardless of how good their works may have been, their names will not be found in the book of life. Consequently, they are destined to eternal separation from God (Rev 20:15). The only way to heaven is God’s life-gift, which is solely through simple faith in Jesus Christ.²⁰

As a result of their names not being found in the “book of life,” non-believers will experience the “second death” (Rev 20:14). Every person experiences the “first death,” being a physical death. The second death, an unending separation from God, is experienced by those not found in the book of life and they will be “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14-15).

Continue to Chart #7 on Next Page

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Chart #7
Experiencing
Unending Life



Conclusion

God desires all to come into a relationship with Him and experience fellowship with Him. In order to this process to become a reality since we are all sinful people, God has provided the solution to man's sin problem in two ways. *First*, He sent His Son to die on the cross removing the sin barrier between God and man. He is judicially satisfied. As a result, sinful men can have a relationship with God through faith in Christ and begin to experience fellowship with God since past sins are forgiven. *Second*, as believers come aware of sin in their daily Christian walk, confessing those sins (agreeing with God's assessment of our action) allows fellowship to continue unhindered since God forgives those sins.

Notice the information on these charts make it clear that there are two paths leading to a person's final destiny. How individuals respond to the provisions of God—providing a Savior, removing the sin barrier, and forgiving confessed sins—leads either to unending life with God or to unending death, meaning separation from God.



Endnotes

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 322-23. Hoehner segments the use of the term *nature* (*phusis*) into three senses. "First, it can denote origin, source, or descent, as lineal descent. Second, it can have the idea of the natural condition, state, or quality, like the natural lay of the land or the nature of the existence of the gods. Third, it can refer to the created world or nature."
2. *Ibid.*, 323.
3. Ken Neff, *Escape* (Jacksonville Beach, FL: LeaderQuest, 2018), 269, 272-73. Only two texts are the basis for understanding "natures" in the Christian life. While the term *nature* is used fourteen times in the New Testament, Ephesians 2:3 is the only verse that provides a foundation for an alleged *sin nature*, while 2 Peter 1:4 is the only verse that gives support for an alleged *new nature*. It is important to perceive the intended meaning of the term in each context. From Ephesians 2:3 a "sin nature" cannot be supported, but non-believer and believer alike obviously possess a capacity to sin. Additionally, 2 Peter 1:4 does not provide support for a "new nature," yet the truest self, the inner man of the Christian, cannot sin.
4. Hoehner, 323.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 324.
7. *Ibid.*, 308. Addressing the two adjectives "transgressions" and "sins," Hoehner indicates these dative forms could express cause ("because of") or instrument ("by") or sphere ("in"). "Sphere leaves it vague enough to capture these ideas." As such, "Sin is the cause of the spiritual death of people and they remain in that condition until God acts."
8. Zane C. Hodges, *Romans* (Corinth, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2013), 146. Translation is Romans 5:12 is by Hodges.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Giving a million dollars to charity by a non-believer or for the wrong motive by a Christian illustrates that a "good" thing is not displeasing to God, even though helpful to others.
11. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 95, 103. Waltke associates "to dust you will return" to physical death as God's judgment on Adam and thus mankind (95). He explains, "sin is transgressing divine boundaries, which results in alienation, deteriorating ecology, and physical death" (103).

While many turn to the use of “death” in Romans 5 to support mankind’s “physical death” as a result of Adam’s sin, the context seemingly indicates “spiritual death.”

Douglas J. Moo, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 320.
Moo takes the middle road when he writes,

But what does Paul mean by death here? He may refer to physical death only since “death” in v. 14 seems to have this meaning. But the passage goes on to contrast death with eternal life (v. 21)...Paul may refer here to “spiritual” death: the estrangement from God that is a result of sin and that, if not healed through Christ, will lead to “eternal” death...Here, then...Paul may simply have in mind this death in both its physical and spiritual aspects.

12. While many use Colossians 2:13 to teach that God forgives all sin (past, present, and future) at salvation, that is a theological rather than a contextual conclusion.
13. Zane C. Hodges, *Harmony With God* (Dallas, TX: Redencion Viva, 2001), 73, italics his.
14. Those who are alive when Christ returns are the only exceptions.
15. The First Resurrection prior to the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth includes:
 - 1—Church—1 Thess. 4:16
 - 2—Tribulation Believers—Rev 20:4-5
 - 3—O.T. Believers—Dan 12:1-2

In addition, the righteous who are alive “will be caught up” and will be with Christ (1 Thess 4:17).
16. The Second Resurrection following the Millennial reign of Christ includes:
 - 1—O.T. Non-Believers—1 Thess. 4:16
 - 2—N.T. Non-Believers—Rev 20:5
 - 3—Tribulation Non-Believers—Dan 12:1-2
17. The Judgments of Believers includes:
 - 1—Church—prior to Mill.—2 Cor 5:10
 - 2—O.T. Believers—assume prior to Mill.—No Text
18. The Judgments of Non-Believers includes:
 - 1—Dead Non-Believers—after Mill.—Rev 20:11-15
 - 2—Living (Gentile) Non-Believers—prior to Mill.—Matt. 25:31-46; Joel 3:2
 - 3—Living (Jews) Non-Believers—prior to Mill.—Matt. 25:14-29; Ez 20:37-40
19. 1Hodges, *Harmony With God*, 69.
20. *Ibid.*, 72.