

Hooks in the Tackle Box — My Journey from Lordship Salvation to Free Grace

By Bob Nyberg

“Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” –2 Cor. 2:11

Satan is a master fisherman. He has two main goals: keep the lost... lost, and keep the saved... defeated, discouraged, and confused. For each, he keeps a box full of shiny lures. Some are easy to spot. Others are subtle, carefully crafted for the believer who already loves the Lord.

When I first came to Christ, I was full of joy and eager to grow. The first church I stepped into was a Pentecostal congregation that taught you could lose your salvation. Something about that didn't sit right with me. Shortly after, I found a booklet tucked under my windshield wiper. At first it sounded good — until the end, where it claimed baptism was required for salvation. Again, something didn't add up. I hadn't been baptized yet, but I knew Christ had already saved me. Those hooks didn't catch me.

But Satan had another lure in his tackle box — Lordship Salvation. And this time, I bit.

When I entered the training of Ethnos360 in Baker, Oregon, in 1981, I was firmly in the Lordship Salvation camp. My pastor even warned me that the mission had some strange teaching about how people get saved. One year later, I moved on to the language and linguistic training in Camdenton, Missouri, still convinced that Lordship Salvation was correct. That was my world, and I saw no reason to question it.

Then along came two men God used to shake my thinking — Lance Latham and Larry Johnson. They challenged my assumptions about the gospel. During my first year in Camdenton, my understanding began to shift on two major issues: how to interpret God's Word and what a person must do to be saved.

Ironically, my journey out of Lordship Salvation came through studying dispensationalism — a subject I had once dismissed. Someone challenged me to read *There Really Is a Difference* by Renald Showers. That led me to *Dispensationalism Today* by Charles Ryrie. Somewhere in the middle of those two books, the lights came on. Suddenly the Scriptures fit together. The blinders came off. And I saw clearly that Lordship Salvation simply did not align with God's Word.

For nearly ten years, I had wallowed in what John Bunyan might call “the slough of despond.” My assurance was shaky. My joy was clouded by constant self-examination. My focus had shifted from Christ's finished work to my own performance — and it was exhausting. But God is faithful. He led me to discover the freeing truth of grace: that salvation is God's gift, received through simple faith in Jesus Christ alone — apart from works, before, during, or after.

Satan still casts his lures. Some are flashy. Others are quiet and respectable-looking. But every one of them aims to pull our eyes off Jesus.

The enemy's tackle box is still full. Test every teaching against the Word. Keep your eyes on Christ's finished work. The hook can't catch you if you refuse the bait.