

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Promised Messiah

### A Biblical View of the Savior and His Work

When we consider the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, it is imperative that we understand who He is and what He has accomplished through the lens of the Bible, Holy Scripture. Obviously this is because the Bible is the Word of God, given to man to reveal God and communicate the Divine thoughts and intentions of God to mankind and for mankind. Further, the Bible is the most complete accounting of Christ's person and His work. It not only presents accurate historical narratives of Christ's life and teachings, but communicates to us the living and powerful Words of God to us, which are transforming both to our personal life and to our cultures and societies.

**Hebrews 4:12-13** - 12 For the **word of God is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. NASB

Beyond this, it is helpful to understand that **the Bible is a unified whole**. Its 66 books written by 40 authors present to us a complete narrative which outlines human history from the creation of mankind to the destruction of the present heavens and earth and subsequent restoration of the same by God, culminating in the eternal Kingdom of God in the New Heavens and Earth, which God will create. This **unified whole** we refer to as “**REDEMPITIVE HISTORY.**” That is, the History of Redemption, which is the primary purpose of God in the creation of the world and mankind. Since this Redemption is the main theme of the narrative of the Bible, we find the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and His person, who is the Savior of the world, to be the focal point of all of human history.

**John 4:42** - 42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that **this One is indeed the Savior of the world.**" NASB

Jesus Christ is the focus of the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments. Therefore, if we seek to learn about the person and work of Christ, it must come from the special revelation of God in the Bible, given to us to explain and reveal Christ Himself.

### The Plan of Redemption

When we consider the narrative of the Old and New Testaments, it is important to see the **PROVIDENCE** of Almighty God in the outworking of His eternal plans in human history. All of the events of history are the outworking of plans which God has made from all eternity. In fact, Providence is assumed and implied constantly by biblical writers, as we shall see.

**Hebrews 1:2-3** - 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world.** 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power.** NASB

**Colossians 1:16-17** - 16 For by Him all things were created, **both in the heavens and on earth**, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- **all things have been created by Him and for Him.** 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.** NAS

**Acts 17:28** - 28 **for in Him we live and move and exist,** NASB

**Job 34:14-15** - 14 "If He should determine to do so, **If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,** 15 **All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.** NASB

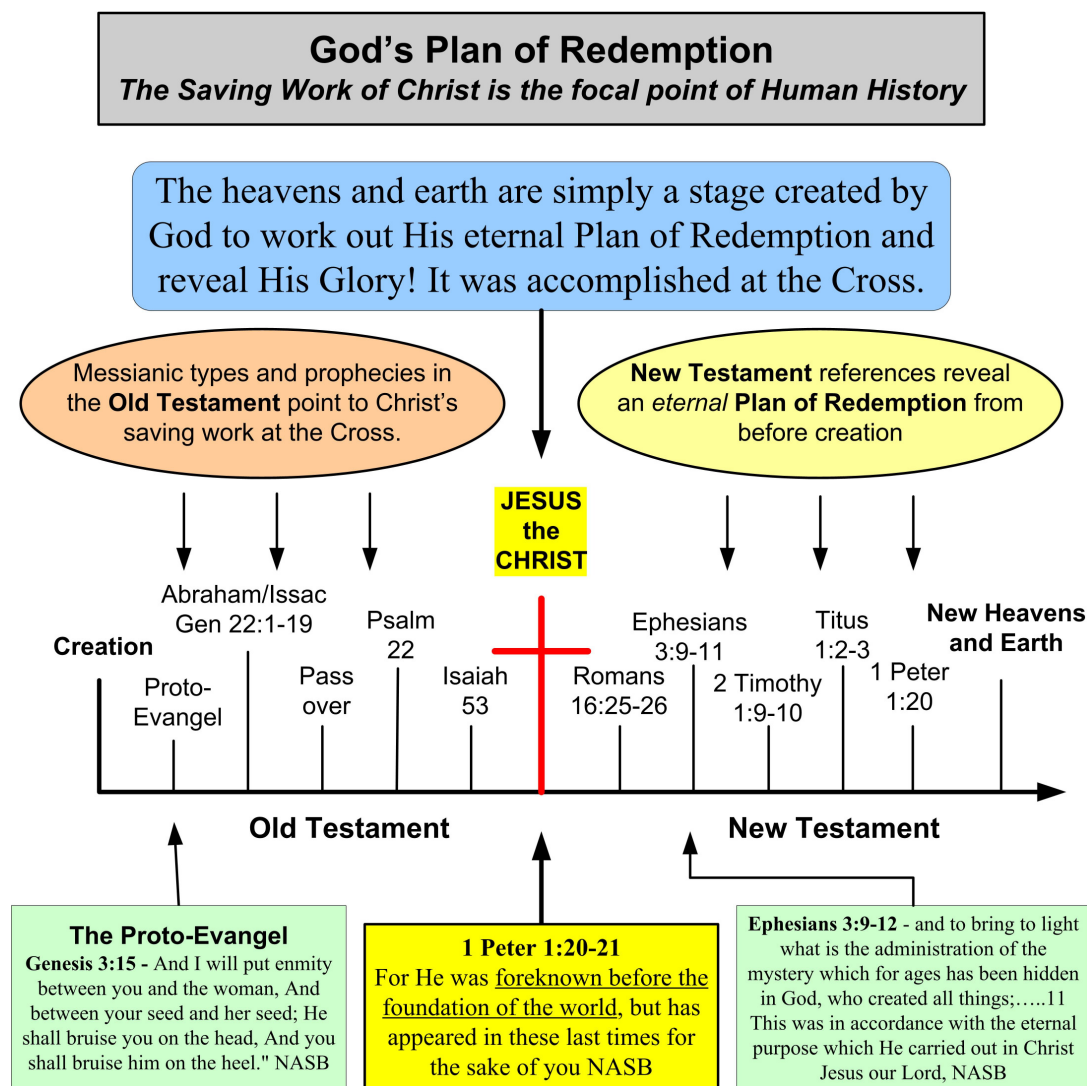
Therefore, when we think about God's activity of Providence in His world, we should think of it as **God working out the plans that He has made** for His creation from all eternity. Not only does God control Nature, but because of this is “in every action directing” the events of History. The **Scripture plainly declares** that God is the primary cause behind everything that happens.

**Lamentations 3:37-38** - 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, **Unless the Lord has commanded it?** 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? NASB  
**Isaiah 45:7** - 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, **Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.** NASB

Now the fact that events are seen to be under the Providence of God is plainly evident in Scripture. God is Providentially working His will in all things to accomplish His own purposes for the display of His own Glory, Name and Power!

**Ephesians 1:9-11** - 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a **view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.** In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,** NASB

Consider then, that in the course of history, God's purpose to redeem fallen mankind from their sin by sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world to give His life as a sacrifice and be raised from the dead, is primary among all the things which God has purposed to do. God is summing up all things in Christ! In fact this is plainly revealed in Scripture as the unified message of **REDEMPTIVE HISTORY.**



This Plan of Redemption opens up a whole new understanding for us then concerning God's activity in directing the events of History. We see then and therefore that Jesus Christ and His

atonement work at the Cross become the very focal point of history, and thus the key event in the history of the world. Another way of stating this is that all things before the cross look forward to the Cross and all things after the Cross look back at the Cross. The Cross of Jesus Christ is everything! More than this, the God-Man Christ Jesus, the One hanging on the Cross is the eternal Lord of history, come to earth to display the awesome beauty of His divine character to us in an unfathomable way as to cause the whole creation to stand in awe, rejoicing with Holy fear, at the marvelous thing that He has done!

**Revelation 5:11-14** - 11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, **"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."** 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, **"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."** 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. NASB

So when we think about Jesus Christ the Savior, we must understand that He is not just some Galilean peasant in history who did some good things and had some wise teachings, but rather He is God very God, embodied as a man, accomplishing the primary work of the eternal plans of God which were made before the creation of the world.

**1 Peter 1:18-20** – 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

## Christ the Messiah Promised in the Old Testament

As we go through the narrative of the Old Testament, we see this **REDEMPTIVE HISTORY** showing up in many places. It is in fact a record of how God has worked out the Plan Redemption down through the ages of history, tracing the genealogy of the Savior all the way from Adam to Christ. (See **Genesis 5, 1 Chronicles 1-9, Matthew 1:1-16**). The Old Testament is filled with **"types"**, **"shadows"** and specific **"Messianic Prophecies"** of the Christ the Messiah. We see **"types"** (**typical prophecies**) or **"shadows"** of the Messiah in different stories of the Old Testament which reveal different aspects of the Gospel or the coming Messiah's ministry. There are also many specific **"Messianic Prophecies"** of the Christ and His ministry in the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament, the coming Messiah would:

- Be a descendant of Abraham (compare Gen. 22:18 with Gal. 3:16)
- Be a descendant of Jacob (compare Num. 24:17 with Lk. 3:23, 34)
- Be from the tribe of Judah (compare Gen. 49:10 with Lk. 3:23, 33)
- Be from the family of Jesse (compare Is. 11:1 with Lk. 3:23, 32)
- Be from the house of David (compare Jer. 23:5 with Lk. 3:23, 31)
- Be born at Bethlehem (compare Micah 5:2 with Matt. 2:1)
- Be the pre-existent one (compare Micah 5:2 with Col. 1:17)
- Be the Lord (compare Psalm 110:1 with Matt. 22:43-45)
- Be God with us (compare Isaiah 7:14 with Matt. 1:23)
- Be a prophet (compare Deut. 18:18 with Matt. 21:11)
- Be a priest (compare Psalm 110:4 with Heb. 3:1; 5-6)
- Be a king (compare Psalm 2:6 with Matt. 27:37)
- Be anointed by the Spirit (compare Is. 11:2 with Matt. 3:16, 17)
- Be zealous for God (compare Ps. 69:9 with John 2:15, 16)
- Have a forerunner (compare Is. 40:3; Mal. 3:1 with Matt. 3:1,2)

- Begin His ministry in Galilee (compare Is. 9:1 with Matt. 4:12-17)
- Have a ministry of miracles (compare Is. 35:5,6 with Matt. 9:35)
- Bring healing and spiritual life (compare Is. 61:1-2 with Lk. 4:18).
- Enter Jerusalem on a donkey (compare Zech. 9:9 with Lk. 19:35-37)
- Be rejected by the Jews (compare Psalm 118:22 with 1 Pet. 2:7)
- Be silent before His accusers (compare Is. 53:7 with Matt. 27:12)
- Be wounded and bruised (compare Is. 53:5 with Matt. 27:26)
- Be smitten and spit upon (compare Is. 50:6 with Matt. 26:67)
- Be crucified with thieves (compare Is. 53:12 with Matt. 27:38)
- Have His garments divided (compare Ps. 22:18 with John 19:23,24)
- Have his side pierced (compare Zech. 12:10 with John 19:34)
- Be buried in a rich man's tomb (compare Is. 53:9 with Matt. 27:57ff)
- Come before Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed (compare Dan. 9:26 with Matt. 24:2)

Even Jesus Himself spoke of the fact that the Old Testament Scriptures bore witness to His coming.

**John 5:39** - 39 "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and **it is these that bear witness of Me**;" NASB

Luke also describes how Jesus taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus from the Old Testament, including Moses and the Prophets, the **"things concerning Himself."**

**Luke 24:27** - 27 And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He **explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures**. NASB

The New Testament speaks in many places about the fact that the Old Testament pointed to Christ as the coming Redeemer and Savior.

**Acts 4:10-12** - 10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ** the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. 11 **"He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone.** 12 **"And there is salvation in no one else;** for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." NASB  
**1 Corinthians 10:1- 4** - For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and **all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;** 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and **the rock was Christ**. NASB

**Hebrews 5:5-6** - 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, **"THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE";** 6 just as He says also in another *passage*, **"THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."** NASB

So when we consider the storyline of the Old Testament, it is important that we see it as a **unified whole**, woven together with the New Testament and fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ. He is the Old Testament Messiah who was promised by God to redeem His people and save them from death and suffering and usher in a Kingdom which shall never be shaken.

### **The Proto-Evangel**

Throughout the Old Testament record, beginning at the fall of man in Genesis chapter 3, the promise of a coming Redeemer is woven into the biblical text. As soon as sin enters into the storyline, redemption becomes necessary as mankind is tragically separated from God by his sin and in a hopeless and desperate state. This was the fearful warning from God about eating from the tree....

**Genesis 2:16-17** - 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 **but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.**" NASB

Upon temptation from that liar the cunning serpent, the woman and man were deceived and ate from the tree, and sin entered the world and all of the subsequent consequences and sufferings of mankind from that day followed.

**Genesis 3:4-7** – 4 And the serpent said to the woman, **"You surely shall not die!"** 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, **she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. NASB

It was right at this point in the biblical record that God enters with a promise of redemption. The Gospel is first announced in Genesis 3:15 when God curses the serpent....

**Genesis 3:15** - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; **He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.**" NASB

This is referred to as the "Proto-Evangel" or the first announcement of the good news in the Bible. Here the woman's "*seed*" is said to "*bruise the head of the serpent.*" This is actually a very profound thought as woman are not said to have "*seed*," that is a male function. Many believe this is none other than a prophecy of the Virgin Birth of Christ! In any case here we have the temptation of man being avenged by Eve's own child, and this we know for sure is carried out by Jesus Christ on the Cross.

## Themes present in OT Messianic Prophecies

Before we look at the clear references of Jesus Christ the Savior in the Old Testament, let us consider that certain themes season these Messianic Prophecies in the Bible. These themes are present to show us the nature of true and acceptable worship to God.

- **Atonement for Sin/Sacrifice** – Sin must be dealt with. OT types almost always stress the need for an "atoning sacrifice." These show us the severe nature of sin and the desperate need we have to be reconciled to God (**Example...Levitical Sacrificial system**)
- **Substitution** – There must be a replacement. Because of the consequences of sin, it becomes necessary for a replacement to be sacrificed "in the place of" the one who has sinned. Otherwise one would have to die and be separated from God. (**Example...the scapegoat in Day of Atonement**)
- **Faith Not Works** – God's Provision not man's efforts. Even the Old Testament stresses God's grace in providing the sacrifice needed for reconciliation. This is to show man's utter inability to save himself and make himself right with God through works. (**Example...Adam/Eve skins, or Abraham's Moriah**)

Therefore when we read the Old Testament narratives, let us open our eyes anew to see these Gospel themes and how God by His Holy Spirit has divinely placed them in the narrative to show us Christ the Savior! Consider the following examples.....

## The Lord Shall Provide

In Genesis chapter 22 we read of the story of God testing Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Of course the background here is that Abraham's wife Sarah was barren all her life until God came and promised them a son that Sarah would bear, and that he would be Abraham's heir. This came after God had made a covenant with Abram and gave him a new name, Abraham, which means "father of many nations", (Genesis 17:4-5).

**Genesis 22:1-2** – 22 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 23 And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; **and offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." NASB



Strange indeed that God would ask Abraham to sacrifice his son. Much could be said here as the story holds many treasures of Bible truth, but consider that in this brief chapter, Christ is foreseen in many ways. Notice here how Christ is pictured....

- The Father is to make a costly sacrifice of His only son
- The willing submission of the son
- Isaac carries the wood for the sacrifice even as Christ carried His cross
- The name given of the place “Moriah” by Abraham, **“The Lord will provide”** (Gen 22:14)
- God does provide the sacrifice, **“a ram in a thicket caught by his horns”** thus showing God’s gracious provision. This foreshadows the truths of faith not works, and substitutionary atonement.
- The place a mountain in the region of “Moriah” is the very place of Christ’s Crucifixion 2000 yrs later, also the mountain on which the Temple was later built and God was worshipped by the Jews (2 Chron 3:1)

In other words, the story of Abraham’s test is a type or **“typical prophecy”** of Christ the Messiah who would become the sacrifice that the Lord provides. Consider the profound words of Derek Tidball... *“Glimpses of Calvary can be seen repeatedly in Genesis 22.... A constellation of clues bursts from the story like the shower of lights that explodes skyward from a splendid firework! Here the father gives. The son surrenders. The Lord provides. The ram dies, and the people profit. Here for sure the cross is anticipated.”*

### **The Lamb’s Blood**

In Exodus Chapter 12 we read of the Lord’s Passover (Ex 12:11). On this day Israel was to prepare a lamb for a meal, an unblemished male roasted with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and the whole family is to eat the lamb. Here the death angel **“passes over”** those families who have the blood of the Lamb smeared over the doorpost of their home as he comes to slay the firstborn. This of course is the night before the Lord will lead His people out of the bondage of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. As they eat, the family is to eat it with their bags packed and ready to leave town. This becomes an annual celebration for Israel in the years to come as God commands them to reenact this Passover each year in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt.

**Exodus 12:11-14** – 11 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: **with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste — it is the LORD'S Passover.** 12 'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments — I am the LORD. 13 'And **the blood shall be a sign for you** on the houses where you live; and **when I see the blood I will pass over you,** and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it *as* a permanent ordinance. NASB

Of course the whole narrative of the Exodus reveals many attributes of God and portrays His gracious dealings with His people, but the Passover specifically points to Christ. Now here again we see in the narrative of the Old Testament Christ the Messiah pictured in a mysterious **“typical prophecy.”** Consider here some of the ways Christ is pictured.....

- A lamb is sacrificed and the blood is seen as a protection from God’s wrath in the plague of the firstborn. The destroying angel passes over all who have the blood applied.
- The lamb is to be an **“unblemished male.”** This portrays the perfect righteousness of Christ the Messiah.

- It is to be ***“roasted with fire, and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.”*** These portray the severe trial, bitter suffering and purity of Christ and His cross.
- The whole family is to ***“eat the flesh”*** of the lamb and it is to be totally consumed. This portrays the union of the sacrificed Christ that He has with His people. Later Jesus says, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. (John 6:56).
- Through this feast the people are set free from a life of slavery, bondage and bitter oppression and led into the desert to be led and shepherded by God Himself.

So here again we see Christ the Messiah portrayed through the storyline of events that happened some 1500 years before He lived. Astounding! This is affirmed by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament when he says in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that ***“Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.”*** It would be good to note that the whole Passover account portrays the faithfulness, compassion, justice, and power of God in many marvelous ways.

### **My God why have you forsaken Me?**

In Psalm 22 we have an amazing text that foreshadows Christ’s crucifixion on the cross, even though the Psalm was penned by King David some 1000 years before Christ was born. The parallels between this Psalm 22 and the Cross are striking. In fact they are nothing less than supernatural!

<b>Messianic Prophecies in Psalm 22</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>OT Reference</b>	<b>NT Reference</b>
The forsaken Christ	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34
Verbally abused by men	Psalm 22:6-7	Matthew 26:67-68, 27:27-31
Trust in God ridiculed	Psalm 22:8	Matthew 27:39-44, Mark 15:29-32, Luke 23:35, 39
Surrounded by enemies	Psalm 22:12	Matthew 27:27-31, Mark 15:16-20
Physically weakened	Psalm 22:14-15	Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26
Thirsty	Psalm 22:15	John 19:28
Surrounded by enemies	Psalm 22:16	Matthew 27:39-44
Hands and feet pierced	Psalm 22:16	John 20:20, 25
Bones not broken	Psalm 22:17	John 19:31-36
Stared at by the people	Psalm 22:17	Matthew 27:55-56, Luke 23:35, 48-49, John 19:20
Lots cast for His clothing	Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23-24
God heard His prayers	Psalm 22:21, 24	Hebrews 5:7-8

It is apparent that this Psalm is a Messianic Prophecy, bright shining as the sun! One can hardly imagine how someone could see the fulfillment of these ancient cries of the Psalmist in the suffering of Christ and not be awed and amazed! More than this, it is the incarnate Son of God pictured here....a bleeding God...What wondrous love is this Oh my soul? How can words describe the profound nature of these events? Ineffable! Let us see here how both Old and New Testaments come together as a unified whole to point us to Christ!

### **Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted**

In Isaiah chapter 53 we have a Messianic Prophecy which is unmatched for its clarity and detail about the suffering of Christ the Messiah. As the Ethiopian Eunuch was riding along and speaking to Phillip, reading from Isaiah 53, Phillip explained to him that he was reading about Jesus the Christ (Acts 8:26-39).

**Acts 8:32-35** - 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. 33 "IN

HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO SHALL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." 34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please *tell me*, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?" 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and **beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.** NASB

Not only does the text describe in detail the suffering of Christ the Messiah, but even explains the benefits of the atonement to us in great detail. This text was written some 700 years before Christ was born. Truly the description here provided of Christ and His suffering is astonishing!

Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah 53		
Description	OT Reference	NT Reference
Who has believed our report?	Isaiah 53:1	John 12:37-38, Romans 10:16
Despised and rejected	Isaiah 53:3	Mark 9:12, Luke 17:25, John 1:10-11, 1 Peter 2:4
He has borne our infirmities	Isaiah 53:4	Matthew 8:16-17
Considered smitten by God	Isaiah 53:4	Galatians 3:13, Matthew 27:38-44, Luke 23:35
Wounded for our transgressions	Isaiah 53:5	Romans 4:25
We are healed by his stripes	Isaiah 53:5	1 Peter 2:24
Jesus was flogged	Isaiah 53:5	Mark 15:15, Luke 22:63-65, John 19:1
Silent before His accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 26:62-63, 27:12-14, Mark 14:60-61, 15:3-15, John 19:9, Acts 8:32-35
Christ died for our sins	Isaiah 53:8	1 Corinthians 15:3
Died with the wicked	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28, Luke 23:32-33
Buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:43-46, Luke 23:50-53, John 19:38-42
Lived a sinless life	Isaiah 53:9	1 Peter 2:22
Jesus was an offering for sin	Isaiah 53:10	1 Corinthians 15:3, Hebrews 10:12-14
He would justify many	Isaiah 53:11	Acts 13:38-39, Romans 5:17-19
He will be great	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 28:18, Luke 24:27
Numbered with transgressors	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28, Luke 23:32-33
Made intercession for sinners	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34, 39-43, Romans 8:34

The accuracy of these prophecies are clear evidence of the supernatural revelation of God in the Bible! If you cannot see it, cry out to God for a new set of eyes, for surely yours are failing. Again let us see here how both Old and New Testaments come together as a unified whole to point us to Christ! The volume of the book is written of Him!



# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Two Natures of Christ

### The God-Man

The fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was a *man* is a fact that is widely known. The historical record of Jesus life and ministry is clear for all to see. In fact there have been more books written about Him, more pictures painted of Him and more attention focused on Him down through ages than any other man who has ever lived. He is the *most famous* person who lived in the history of mankind without dispute. But look closer at the person of Jesus and you find Him to be the *most unique* person who has ever lived as well. He was a man of amazing supernatural powers unlike any other person who has existed. In the Bible, the life, ministry and supernatural power of Christ are seen to be the result of the fact that He is actually the very Son of God. In the Bible, Jesus Christ is presented as **God incarnate in the flesh**. This fact is known as “the deity of Christ”, or “the divinity of Christ.”

**John 1:14** - 14 And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. NASB

So when we consider the *biblical Jesus*, we find Him to be this unique person in history in which God became a man and lived in the flesh as a man, the God-man. In the history of the world, no other claim as this has been the center of more controversy, study, and focus of theologians and religious worshippers as the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. More than this, the claims of this man Jesus Christ and the supernatural powers he bore, witnessed by thousands, makes Him a wonderful and fearful man indeed. Consider just a few of His claims and works....

- He claimed to be God in the flesh (**Matt 26:64, John 8:23, 58, 10:36, 11:25, Rev 1:17, 22:13**)
- He claimed to be the promised Messiah of the Jews (**John 4:25, 6:35-40, 51**)
- He claimed to have pre-existed his life on earth in Heavenly Glory (**John 3:13, 6:41, 17:5**)
- He claimed to be the final judge of all people at the end of the ages (**Matt 16:27, 25:31-46**)
- He claimed to give eternal life to those who embrace His message (**Matt 19:29, John 11:25**)
- He taught with supernatural wisdom never heard of in history (**Luke 6:20-49, 12:1-18:33**)
- He did miracles of healing lame, blind and deaf people (**John 9:1-41, Matt 9:18-35**)
- He raised people from the dead (**John 11:40-46, Luke 7:11-17, 8:49-56**)
- He walked on water and fed 5000 people with a few loaves and fish (**Matt 14:15-32**)
- He made prophecies of future events with pinpoint accuracy (**Matt 17:22, 24:2, Luke 21:24**)

When you combine these claims and works of Jesus, along with the amazing story of His birth, and His Passion and resurrection from the dead, He is an amazing person indeed.

**Acts 10:37-41** - 38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed** by the devil; for God was with Him. <sup>39</sup> "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. <sup>40</sup> "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, NASB

One does not have to think real hard to realize that no one person who has ever lived even resembles the person of Jesus Christ. He is in fact the *most amazing* person of wonder, power and wisdom. Even those who embrace His message today, some 2000 years later, claim to have their lives completely transformed in a supernatural way that brings inner peace, joy and a desire to love and do good like no other thing that has ever happened to them. Consider that if all of this be true about this man Jesus Christ, His person and His message is one that we should give close scrutiny to. Jesus answers all the great concerns about our lives and our world. He claims to hold the keys of death, promises immortality and has manifested God to us in most profound manner. Upon close examination, we are left in awe and wonder, proclaiming with doubting Thomas.....

**John 20:28** - 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, **"My Lord and my God!"** NASB

## One Being Two Natures

Being both the Son of God and the son of man is unprecedented in the world. When Jesus the Christ came into the world, born of a virgin, having been conceived by God Himself, the eternal Son of God manifested Himself as a man.

**Luke 1:35** - 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason **the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.** NASB

Here we have an idea, or a concept which the human mind can hardly grasp, God in the flesh of a man. In the passages below, we will examine the *Deity* and the *Humanity* of Jesus Christ in the Bible. But here we will give a brief definition of what it means that Jesus Christ had two natures. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, the Church finally resolved a long struggle to understand this unique idea that Jesus possessed two natures. This happened when a large church council convened for this very purpose in Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The statement on Christ's two natures that was produced is very comprehensive and is referred to as the **Chalcedonian Definition**. It reads as follows... "We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, **the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood**; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; **consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood**; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, **to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence**, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us."

This definition sought to correct several false teachings about the nature of Jesus Christ, which it did, and has been accepted by orthodox churches ever since its inception. Wayne Grudem comments on this.... "When the Chalcedonian Definition says that the two natures of Christ occur together **"in one Person and one Subsistence,"** the Greek word translated as "Subsistence" is the word *hypostasis*, ὑπόστασις (G5712) "being." Hence the union of Christ's human and divine natures in one person is sometimes called the **hypostatic union**. This phrase simply means the union of Christ's human and divine natures in one being."

The Bible makes very clear statements about the fact that Jesus was both human and divine, and this miracle is a precious treasure for us to embrace as we worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Romans 1:3-4** - concerning His Son, who was **born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead**, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, NASB

**Galatians 4:4** - 4 But when the fulness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, born under the Law, NASB

Many times as we read through the Bible, we will encounter various passages which may stress one or the other nature of Jesus. When this happens we must remember that we understand the verses in the Bible in their larger context of the passage, chapter, book, and even in the context of the whole Bible. Therefore we must understand these difficulties in the light of what the entire Bible teaches about each one. As we see Jesus revealed in the pages of Scripture, let us worship Him with reverence and awe, and with the hymn writer say "hail the incarnate Deity!" "Christ, by highest heav'n adored: - Christ, the everlasting Lord; Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the favored one. Veil'd in flesh, the Godhead see; Hail, th'incarnate Deity: Pleased, as man, with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

# **The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ**

## **The Incarnation and Virgin Birth**

### **The Incarnation – What Does the Bible Say?**

When considering the person of Jesus Christ from the Bible, one soon learns that Jesus is extraordinary. This is because He is the One unique person in all of history in whom God became “**incarnate**.” This is to say that God became “incarnated” as a man in the person of Jesus Christ by the agency of the virgin birth.

**John 1:14** - 14 And **the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. NASB

So when we consider the nature of Jesus from Scripture, we find that He is “**fully man and fully God**.” The Bible teaches that He is God in the flesh.

**1 John 4:2-3** - 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: **every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God**; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. NASB

This is what distinguishes Jesus Christ from every other religious leader, Jesus is in fact God Himself, come into the world to be with us and manifest God to us in a way that we can understand clearly by taking on our very nature. The name Immanuel is a title for Jesus meaning “**God with us**.” God took on a human nature in Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 1:23** - 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, **"God with us."** NASB

### **The Virgin Birth**

The Bible clearly speaks of the fact that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit and that He did not have a human father.

**Matthew 1:18-20** - 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit**. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which **has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit**." NASB

This divine miracle is remarkable indeed. It clearly speaks of the nature of the baby to be born, that it will be divine. This child will be Holy and without the iniquity of an earthly father being passed to Him. He will be the very Son of God!

**Luke 1:35** – 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason **the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God**." NASB

So we see that Jesus not only had a human mother, Mary, but His father is God Himself. This is a thing of wonder indeed. The **humanity and the deity of Christ are clearly seen** in the fact that Jesus is the son of man, being born of Mary, and the Son of God, being conceived of the Holy Spirit. Thus, God took on a human nature and became a man.

**Galatians 4:4** – 4 But when the fulness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, born under the Law, NASB

This was absolutely necessary for Jesus to come into the world to die as a substitution for our sins. No one other man could ever do this for us because Jesus was the only One without sin, and therefore able to die in our place. This doctrine of the Virgin Birth is always and continually under attack for this very reason. If we forsake this fundamental teaching of Scripture, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement loses its foundation of a “lamb without blemish”, and we are therefore left with a less than perfect Savior to die in our place.

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Pre-Existence of Christ

### The Pre-Existence of Christ - What Does the Bible Say?

The fact that Jesus the Son of God existed before His incarnation upon the earth is a fact clearly taught in the Bible. Because Jesus is God, He has always existed and there never was a time when He had a beginning of days. He was God and with God in the beginning.

**John 1:1-3 - 1** **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. NASB

He therefore existed as God the Son eternally in Heavenly glory before He came to earth. He was always rejoicing in the perfection of His own nature, with the Father and the Spirit for all eternity. He speaks of this “*glory*” He had before the world began.

**John 17:5 - 5** "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, **with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.** NASB

**2 Corinthians 8:9-10 - 9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor,** that you through His poverty might become rich. NASB

Jesus Christ existed before all created things and this fact is repeated in Scripture several times.

**Colossians 1:17 - 17** And **He is before all things,** and in Him all things hold together. NASB

Even the Old Testament speaks of Him existing from eternity.

**Micah 5:2 - 2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. **His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.**" NASB

Jesus claimed to have existed before Abraham, who lived in 2100 B.C.

**John 8:58 - 58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **before Abraham was born, I am.**" NASB

Jesus also claims to have come down from Heaven. That is before He walked the earth, He was in Heaven with God.

**John 3:13, 31 - 13** "And no one has ascended into heaven, **but He who descended from heaven,** *even* the Son of Man...31 **He who comes from above** is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. **He who comes from heaven** is above all NASB

**John 6:38 - 38** "For **I have come down from heaven,** not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. NASB

**John 6:62 - 62** "What then if you should behold **the Son of Man ascending where He was before?** NASB

This is also affirmed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 15:47 - 47** The first man is from the earth, earthy; **the second man is from heaven.** NASB

When the Bible speaks about Jesus, it says He “*came forth from God*” and “*was sent*” by God the Father to us. That is, He was with God in the beginning, and left Heaven to come down to earth and live and walk among us.

**Matthew 10:40 - 40** "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives **Him who sent Me.** NASB

**John 8:42 - 42** Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; **for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.** NASB

**John 13:3 - 3** *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and **that He had come forth from God,** and was going back to God, NASB

**John 16:28 - 28** **"I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world;** I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father." NASB

All of this happened by God's plan, at the perfect moment in history, in the “*fullness of time*,” so that God's plan could be fulfilled and we could be redeemed.

**Galatians 4:4 - 4** But when **the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son,** born of a woman, born under the Law, NASB

In this doctrine of the Pre-Existence of Christ we clearly see that Jesus is not like us. He is indeed the Lord of Eternity from outside of time and space. There is no one like Him indeed!

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# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Deity of Christ

### The Deity of Christ – What Does the Bible Say?

It is no surprise to one who has read the New Testament that Jesus is affirmed in Scripture as God Himself. Indeed anyone who embraces the “Trinity” (that God is One being expressed in three persons), would affirm this teaching. Jesus is God the Son, the second member of the Godhead, with all of the divine attributes of God. This is explicitly taught in Colossians 2:9.

**Colossians 2:9** - 9 For **in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells** in bodily form, NASB

In seeking then a biblical understanding of Jesus, let us consider that Jesus is not just a man, but is indeed the God-man. As we have stated already, He is “**fully man and fully God.**” The Bible teaches that He is God in the flesh and makes emphatic and explicit statements about Christ’s Deity, using the term “*theos*” (God) to speak of Him.

**John 1:1-2** - 1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

2 He was in the beginning with God. NASB

**Titus 2:13** - 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of **our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;** NASB

**Romans 9:5** - 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, **who is over all, God** blessed forever. Amen. NASB

**John 20:28** - 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “**My Lord and my God!**” NASB

**Hebrews 1:8** - But **of the Son He says, “THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.** NASB

**2 Peter 1:1** - Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness **of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ;** NASB

At times when referring to Jesus, the Bible uses names of God to refer to Christ. An example of this in the Old Testament is in Isaiah 9 where the coming Christ child is spoken of as the “**Mighty God**” and “**Eternal Father.**” See also Isaiah 40:3, Micah 5:2.

**Isaiah 9:6** - For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God, Eternal Father,** Prince of Peace. NASB

We might also note here that in John 12:41, John speaks of Isaiah’s vision of God in chapter 6 as a vision of the exalted Christ upon His throne in Heavenly glory.

**Isaiah 6:1-3** - In the year of King, Uzziah's death, **I saw the Lord sitting on a throne,** lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, “**Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,** The whole earth is full of His glory.” NASB

In many places, the term “**Lord**” is used to refer to Jesus. This term Lord is known in the Old Testament as the very title of God Himself, a translation of the word “**Yahweh**” or “**Jehovah.**” In Greek the term is “*kyrios*” and can be used of a polite greeting or as the title denoting authority. But in these passages speaking of Jesus, the term implies the very title of God.

**Luke 2:11** – 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, **who is Christ the Lord.** NASB

**Matthew 22:41-46** - 41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “*The son of David.*” 43 He said to them, “Then how does **David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’** saying, 44 ‘**The Lord said to my Lord,** “Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet”?’ 45 “If **David then calls Him ‘Lord,’** how is He his son?” 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. NASB

**1 Corinthians 12:3** - 3 Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “**Jesus is Lord,**” except by the Holy Spirit. NASB

**Revelation 19:16** - 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**” NASB



There are also clear passages in the New Testament speaking of Jesus Christ as the very image of God, that is, the physical, visible image of God in human flesh.

**Colossians 1:15** - 15 And **He is the image of the invisible God**, the first-born of all creation. NASB

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, **who is the image of God**. NASB

Or consider statements in Hebrews chapter one where He is referred to as the “exact representation of God’s nature,” and also the very radiance of the glory of God. In these passages Jesus Christ is also seen as the One who created the heavens and the earth and is sustaining the universe by His own power.

**Hebrews 1:3** - 3 And **He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature**, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; NASB

**Hebrews 1:10-11** - 10 And, "Thou, Lord, **in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Thy hands; 11 They will perish, but Thou remainest**; And they all will become old as a garment, NASB

The New Testament in many places makes explicit statements about the fact that Jesus is the “*One through whom the world was made*,” describing Him as the very Creator of all things.

**Hebrews 1:2** - 2 in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world**. NASB

**Hebrews 2:10** - 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and **through whom are all things**, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. NASB

**1 Corinthians 8:6** - 6 yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, **Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him**. NASB

These texts which speak of Jesus as Creator, also describe the extent of His creation being universal. His work of creation includes “*everything that has come into being*.”

**John 1:1-3** - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being**. NASB

**Colossians 1:16** - 16 For **by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — **all things have been created by Him and for Him**. NASB

Jesus Himself made many claims to deity. When He claims to be the “son of Man”, He describes Himself as the fulfillment of the Messianic Prophecy of Daniel chapter 7:13-14. In the vision this Messiah, is given the highest place of dominion and authority, and comes “*on the clouds of Heaven*.” Jesus claims this unique distinction Himself when testifying before the High Priest...

**Matthew 26:64** - 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see **the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power**, and coming on the clouds of heaven." NASB

This coupled with the many verses of Scripture which ascribe the highest authority to Christ, demonstrate His Deity.

**Matthew 28:18** - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"**. NASB

**Revelation 19:13-16** - 13 And *He* is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and **His name is called The Word of God**. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and **He will rule them with a rod of iron**; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, **"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"**. NASB

There are many Scriptures not mentioned here which clearly describe Jesus as Divine. One more example would be in Philippians chapter 2 where He is described as “existing in the form of God,” and then spoken of as holding the place of Highest authority.

**Philippians 2:5-11** - in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although **He existed in the form of God**, ..... 9 Therefore also **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name**, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NASB

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Humanity of Christ

### The Humanity of Christ – What Does the Bible Say?

Most people agree that Jesus was a man. This is one of the most widely embraced facts in all of history. Hardly anyone would question this because the historical evidence is overwhelming. However the theological implications regarding Jesus humanity have been questioned and scrutinized for centuries. It is important for us to understand how the Scripture reveals the Humanity of Christ so that we can have a biblical and therefore accurate view of who Jesus Christ is. In this consideration it is important to understand that even though Jesus was God incarnate as we have seen, He was also born of a woman and was fully man. The Scripture makes this very plain.

**Luke 2:7** - And **she gave birth to her first-born son**; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. NASB

**Galatians 4:4** - 4 But when the fulness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, born under the Law, NASB

Jesus was seen and known as a man by those around Him and He is spoken of in the Scripture as a man. This is a very obvious fact. In Matthew the folks from His own hometown speak of Him as the man everyone knows.

**Matthew 13:54-57** - 54 And coming to His home town He *began* teaching them in their synagogue, so that they became astonished, and said, "Where *did* this man *get* this wisdom, and *these* miraculous powers? 55 **"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us?"** Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?" NASB

Because Jesus was a man, He had a normal human body just like all men. He was born as a baby, grew up with a normal childhood and matured as a man. Jesus had the regular human weaknesses that accompany all human beings just like us. He is spoken of in Scripture as being thirsty, becoming tired and sleeping and also became hungry. In fact, after being beaten and crucified, He died just like all other people.

**John 4:6** - and Jacob's well was there. **Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey**, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. NASB

**Matthew 4:2** - 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, **He then became hungry**. NASB

**John 19:28** - 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, **"I am thirsty."** NASB

**Luke 23:46** - 46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." And having said this, **He breathed His last**. NASB

Along with His normal body, He had a normal mind and emotions which are seen in many places in Scripture. He faced the whole range of human emotions just as we have. This is also clear in Scripture.

**Hebrews 2:17** - 17 Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things**, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. NASB

### Tempted yet Sinless

In fact, even though Jesus possessed a fully divine nature, the Scripture affirms that he was tempted **"in all things as we are"** and yet was **"without sin."**

**Hebrews 4:15** - 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin**. NASB

**Matthew 4:1-4** - Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness **to be tempted by the devil**. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And **the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."** 4 But He

answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" NASB

**Hebrews 2:18** - 18 For since **He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered**, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. NASB

But how can this be? If Jesus had a divine nature and was fully God, does not the Scripture affirm that God cannot be tempted by evil. Indeed it does....

**James 1:13** - 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; **for God cannot be tempted by evil**, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. NASB

There has been much debate over this question through the ages, but the dilemma is not unclear in Scripture. It is clear that in His divine nature, Jesus could not be tempted, therefore we must conclude that He was in fact tempted in His human nature. It must be very much like the temptation of Adam, as Adam had not sinned prior to the fall, yet when tempted he fell. Jesus unlike Adam, did not fail in His temptation, but triumphed over the works of the devil, remaining steadfast in His obedience to God, and was **"yet without sin."** **Scripture plainly declares** that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life.

**1 Peter 2:21-22** - 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 **WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH**; NASB

**1 John 3:5** - 5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and **in Him there is no sin**. NASB

In fact this is a very important part of our salvation in the fact that Jesus possessed for us what we call **"representative obedience"** before God as our substitute. Thus Jesus is able then to impart to us through **"imputation"** His perfect righteousness.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - 21 He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**. NASB

**Romans 5:18-19** - 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through **one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men**. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. NASB

Because Jesus was sinless, He was therefore able to offer Himself as a **"substitute sacrifice"** on our behalf, because He did not need to die for His own sins. Therefore when He offered Himself for us, He was able to atone for all sin, including all the sins of all the people.

**Hebrews 7:26-27** - 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners** and exalted above the heavens; 27 **who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins**, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did **once for all** when He offered up Himself. NASB

So then Jesus has become for us a High Priest who is able to **"sympathize with our weakness,"** having experienced our humanity and the sufferings and weaknesses that accompany our daily lives. He is the perfect **"mediator between God and man,"** being fully human and fully God.

**Hebrews 4:15** - 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin**. NASB

**1 Timothy 2:5** - 5 For there is one God, and **one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**. NASB

## Jesus our Example

More than this, He has also become for us an **"example of obedience to God"** in all of life. He came and faithfully revealed God to us in a way that makes it crystal clear to us what God is like, and how God would desire for us to respond to the daily circumstances that we face in life. In Jesus example we learn to live and to love in the way God intended for us from the beginning.

**John 13:15** - 15 **"For I gave you an example** that you also should do as I did to you. NASB

**Ephesians 5:1-2** - Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and **walk in love, just as Christ also loved you**, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Humility and Exaltation of Christ

### The Humility of Christ – Condescension

In order to grasp the idea of Christ's humility, it is important to understand the exalted position of Glory that He possessed prior to His Humiliation. This is expressed in the term **“Condensation.”** Christ *“condescended”* from Heavenly Glory to the realm of earth in order to become a man and redeem mankind from His sins. This is an extremely profound idea, one that indeed creates a sense of awe and wonder. As we have stated, the incarnation of Christ, is a divine mystery that we can only comprehend in part. Before His incarnation, Jesus existed eternally as God the Son in Heavenly Glory.

**John 17:5** - 5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, **with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.** NASB

In this state of glory Jesus existed as God in all His heavenly majesty. He is the agent of the Godhead in Creation and Providence, being the One **“by whom all things were created”** and also the One who now **“holds all things together.”**

**Colossians 1:16** - 16 For **by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,** whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — **all things have been created by Him and for Him.** 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.** NASB

In the eternal state of Deity, Jesus possessed the Sovereignty as God over everything. Myriads of angels attended Him, myriads of angels sang to the glory of His name. He always was exalted as head over all.

**John 3:31** - 31 **“He who comes from above** is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. **He who comes from heaven** is above all NASB

So the idea then that Jesus would “stoop” down to earth and become a man is profound indeed. But this is exactly in what His Humility and Condescension consists. He left His highly exalted state to take of the flesh of man. Thomas Watson the beloved Puritan comments on this....

*“What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? but Christ did not disdain to take our flesh. Oh the love of Christ!..... He stripped Himself of the robes of His glory and clothed Himself in the rags of our humanity!.... He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with his life-guard, but he came poor; not like the heir of heaven, but like one of an inferior descent. The place he was born in was poor; not the royal city Jerusalem, but Bethlehem, a poor obscure place. He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions; he descended of poor parents....'God manifest in the flesh.' That man should be made in God's image was a wonder, but that God should be made in man's image is a greater wonder. That the Ancient of Days should be born, that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars should suck the breast; that a virgin should conceive; that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made; ....Christ taking flesh is a mystery we shall never fully understand till we come to heaven...”*

Jesus left the glory of Heaven to redeem those who had shamed His image, spurned His Holy Law, and rejected His fellowship....now in all of this we learn the virtues of Humility and Love! Jesus left the riches of heaven so that we could become rich with heavenly riches!

**2 Corinthians 8:9-10** - 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor,** that you through His poverty might become rich. NASB

Here Humility shines upon us like a sunbeam! Watson goes on to comment on the reason why He came... *“That he might take our flesh, and redeem us; that he might instate us into a kingdom. He was poor, that he might make us rich. 2 Cor 8: 9. He was born of a virgin, that we might be born of God. He took our flesh, that he might give us his Spirit. He lay in the manger*



*that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven, that he might bring us to heaven. And what was all this but love? If our hearts be not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us. Behold love that passeth knowledge! It was love in God the Father to send Christ, and love in Christ that he came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ is God-man, because he is a lover of man. Christ's taking flesh was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love covered with flesh. As Christ's assuming our human nature was a master-piece of wisdom, so it was a monument of free grace.... Christ took our flesh that he might make the human nature appear lovely to God, and the divine nature appear lovely to man." Consider how the Scripture describes this Condescension of Christ....*

**Philippians 2:6-11** - 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 **but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** NASB

Jesus was **"in the form of God"** and took the form of a man. He exchanged a body of perfection, for a frail body of pain and suffering. The Scripture describes this in verse 7 as **"emptying Himself."** He **"emptied Himself"** to come for us. And further, He **"took the form of a bond servant."** King Jesus left His Sovereign throne in Heaven to become a servant of rebel men! What wondrous love is O my soul! And what is more than this, read and fear, **"He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."** Now here is the lowest degree of Christ's humility....the Prince of Life was slain in death! Barnes comments on this.... *"when he became a man, he "emptied himself," or laid aside the symbols of his glory; now, when a man, he humbled himself. That is, though he was God appearing in the form of man--a Divine Person on earth--yet he did not assume and assert the dignity and prerogatives appropriate to a Divine Being, but put himself in a condition of obedience. For such a Being to obey law implied voluntary humiliation; and the greatness of his humiliation was shown by his becoming entirely obedient, even till he died on the cross."* Jesus' humility and obedience was of such steadfast character that He endured the scornful and degrading ordeal of crucifixion, all the way to the point of death. But obedience to death is not the end of the depth of Christ's Condescension. Yet even deeper shall we search, this **"death"** He died, having **"become sin"** for us! Jesus bore the wrath of God in our place, taking sin upon Himself.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - 21 He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** NASB

Consider that the pure and righteous Holy God of Heaven, the infinitely clean and undefiled spotless Son of God **"became sin on our behalf!"** This is a wonder of amazement! And this He did dying at the hands of godless men.... imagine this, a bleeding God.....O wonder!....Almighty God, the Creator of Life, slain by those He gifted with life, and this by willing submission.....

**Luke 23:34** - 34 But Jesus was saying, **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."** And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. NASB

Dear reader, hold your hand over your mouth.....and here learn the nature of true love and divine Humility! So here we see the great depth which Jesus plunged to redeem us from our sins. Let us not forget the great price which He paid for our benefit! Let us adore Him so much that we become like Him! Do you see Christ humbling Himself and will you be proud? Let us have this mind in us that was also in Him!

**Philippians 2:3-5** - 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but **with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;** 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, NASB

Let us aspire to this heavenly virtue and learn to consider others as better than ourselves! Let us make a sacrifice of our time, money and convenience to serve others and be like Jesus!



# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Humility and Exaltation of Christ

### The Exaltation of Christ – Jesus, the Highest Name

Jesus left the Glory of Heaven to humble Himself and become obedient to death on a cross. The Humility of Christ is an example of God's character like no other. But consider that the lowly state to which Christ humbled Himself is not fit for a king. Should Jesus remain in that low estate to which He condescended forever, even though the Scripture should promise that ***"humility comes before honor?"*** (Prov 15:33) ***Jesus will of course be a man forever***, having taken the nature of man, but He shall not be a humbled man, but One who is greatly exalted.

**Philippians 2:9-11** 9 Therefore also **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,** 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NASB

See here that God has exalted Christ ***in His humanity and given Him a name among men*** and angels which is ***"above every name."*** Because Jesus became obedient to death to serve God's purpose in redemption as a man (Phil 2:6-11), God has ***"therefore also highly exalted Him!"*** Consider the *nature* of this exaltation, ***"that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father"*** See here that now Jesus the man will be exalted by all His creatures, and they shall be made to publicly confess His Lordship and pay homage to His great name, and this to ***"the glory of God the Father!"*** Consider what a *contrast* this is with His humiliation at Calvary. Jesus, who was scorned, shamed and beaten to death by men, shall now be their exalted King and Sovereign Judge! Thomas Watson comments.. *"Christ shall judge his judges, he shall judge Pilate that condemned him; kings must leave their thrones and come to his bar. And this is the highest court of judicature, from whence is no appeal....See the different state of Christ on earth and in heaven. Oh how is the scene altered! When he was on earth, he lay in a manger; now he sits on a throne. Then he was hated and scorned of men; now he is adored by angels. Then his name was reproached; now, 'God has given him a name above every name.' Then he came in the form of a servant, and as a servant, stood with his basin and towel, and washed his disciples' feet; John 13:3, now he is clad in his princes' robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before him. On earth he was a man of sorrows; now he is anointed with the oil of gladness. On earth was his crucifixion; now his coronation. Then his Father frowned upon him in desertion; now he has set him at his right hand. Before, he seemed to have no form or beauty in him; Isa 53:3; now he is in the brightness of his Father's glory. Heb 1:1. Oh what a change is here! 'Him has God highly exalted.'"*

### Seated at God's Right Hand

The Scripture speaks in many places of His exaltation now at the ***"right hand of God."*** The term ***"right hand"*** means that God has given Him the greatest honor, dignity, and power, as princes set the next in honor and authority to themselves at their right hands: It was esteemed the place of the highest honor to be seated at the right hand of a prince. So, to be seated at the right hand of God, means only that Jesus is exalted to the highest honor of the universe. So we are told in Scripture that when Jesus ascended into Heaven, He sat down at God's right hand!

**Mark 16:19** - 19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, **He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.** NASB

**Hebrews 12:2** - 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and **has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** NASB

Further, He has now been seated at Gods' right hand and is awaiting the complete subjection of His enemies ***"under His feet."***

**Psalm 110:1** - 110 The LORD says to my Lord: **"Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."** NASB

This place of honor is in fulfillment of Jesus prophecy to the Jews and the High Priest at His trial. There the Lord told them the truth, namely that they would see Him "sitting at the right hand" of God!

**Matthew 26:62-65** - 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, **hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power**, and coming on the clouds of heaven." NASB

The Scripture describes the full extent of this honor which the Father has bestowed upon Him. His Exaltation is of such nature that it is ***"far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named."*** This is to say that the extent of His authority is infinite, being equaled to God Himself.

**Ephesians 1:19-23** - 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and **seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,** 23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. NASB

So not only did He possess this Sovereignty from all eternity as God the Son, but now the man Christ Jesus sits at the throne of God with a name among His creatures that is exalted above every name! And they shall give Him the glory due His name, and not a single creature shall fail to glorify Him and confess His Sovereign Glory and pay homage to Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

**Revelation 5:9-14** - 9 And they sang a new song, saying, **"Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."** 11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, **"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."** 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, **"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."** 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. NASB

## Ruler of the Nations

What is more is that this man Christ Jesus will reign as King over all the earth from His throne in Jerusalem. Jesus will be the ruler of the nations of the earth, and ALL the nations will come and worship the Lord and acknowledge His Lordship. This will happen during the Millennium.

**Psalm 86:9-10** - 9 **All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify Thy name.** 10 For Thou art great and doest wondrous deeds; Thou alone art God. NASB

**Psalm 22:27-28** - 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, **And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.** NASB

There will come a day yet future when God will establish Christ's throne and kingdom and He will rule all other nations. His kingdom will never end or be destroyed.

**Daniel 7:27** - 27 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; **His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.**' NASB

**Daniel 2:44 - 44** "And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed**, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; **it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.** NASB

In this Kingship, all the nations of the earth will come and pay homage to Jesus the King. This is God's warning to all the king's of the earth.

**Psalms 2:8-12 - 8** 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Thy possession. **9 "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware."** **10** Now therefore, **O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth.** **11** Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. **12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled.** How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! NASB

Christ will yield exceeding great power over them and they shall live under His rule or be destroyed. He will Judge the nations with justice and they will obey Him.

**Psalms 110:5-6 - 5** The Lord is at Thy right hand; **He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He will judge among the nations.** He will fill *them* with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. NASB

The kings of the earth will be in subjection to Him and will serve Him. The extent of this rule will be worldwide including men from every tribe and language.

**Psalms 72:10-11 - 10** Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. **11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him.** NASB

**Daniel 7:13-14 - 13** "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. **14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.** NASB

**Zechariah 14:16-20 - 16** Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. **17** And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** **18** And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. **19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

His throne will be *located* in Jerusalem and from Mount Zion Jesus the King will reign over all the earth! At this time God will restore His people Israel to Himself, and they will dwell in the land of Israel which He promised to them.

**Ezekiel 20:40-41 - 40** "For **on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel,**" declares the Lord GOD, **"there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I shall accept them,** and there I shall seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. NASB

**Micah 4:7 - 7** "I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcasts a strong nation, And **the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on and forever.** NASB

**Ezekiel 37:21-22 - 21** "And say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD," Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; **22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them;** and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. NASB

There God's people Israel will have Peace as the Prince of Peace their Messiah has brought them great security.

**Zechariah 14:8-11 - 8** And it will come about in that day **that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem,** half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. **9 And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.** **10** All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but **Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site** from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. **11 And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.** NASB

So it will be in the latter days, Jesus the King will be highly exalted in the sight of all nations and kingdoms, and they will give Him glory and serve Him. This will happen during the Millennium, the 1000 year period of Christ physical Rule upon the earth with His Saints. During this time Satan will be bound and have no influence upon mankind.

**Revelation 20:1-3** - And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And **he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years**, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. NASB

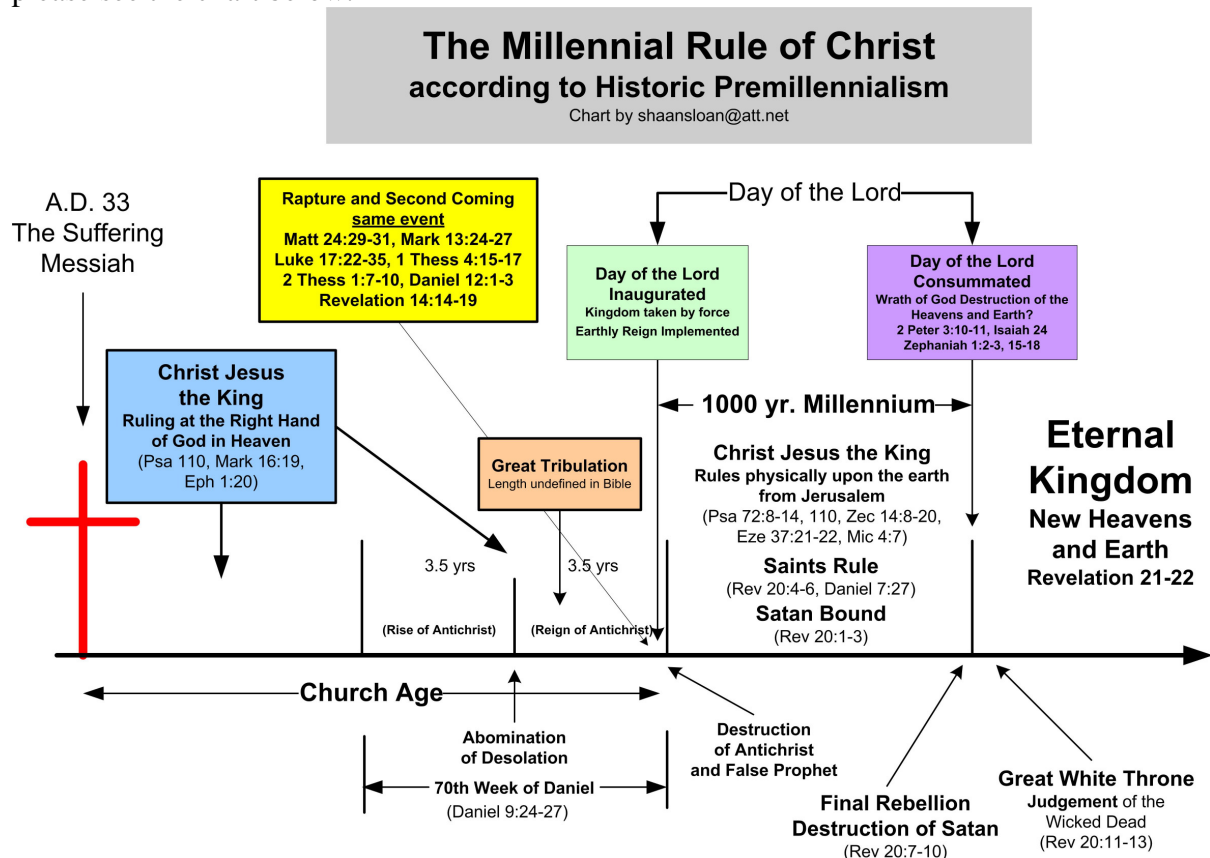
Toward the end of the Millennium, there will be a final rebellion against Christ by the nations, at which time He will destroy them forever, along with Satan. This will be the final doom of Satan and all the wicked, and the Eternal State will be ushered in.

**Revelation 20:7-10** - 7 And when the thousand years are completed, **Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war**; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and **fire came down from heaven and devoured them**. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASB

In this Eternal State there will no longer be any sin in God's Kingdom and the inhabitants of the earth will rest in peace forever.

**Revelation 21:24-27** - 24 And the nations shall walk by its light, and **the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it**. 25 And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and **they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it**; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. NASB

To clarify questions of timing and distinctions between the Millennium and the Eternal State, please see the chart below.



# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Offices of Christ – Prophet, Priest, and King

### Jesus the Prophet

There have been many true prophets of God through the ages. Most of their prophecies are recorded in the Bible and are considered the very “Words of God.” But of all of the prophets who have ever lived, there are none greater than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *“the prophet”* which was prophesied by Moses to come.

**Deuteronomy 18:18-19** - 18 **I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth**, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him. NASB

Of Jesus’ prophetic office, the New Testament speaks of it as the final *“Word”* from God concerning His plans and purposes for the world.

**Hebrews 1:1-2** - God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 **in these last days has spoken to us in His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. NASB

Jesus possesses this *final* prophetic office because He is, God Himself. He has come and given us a witness of God far beyond any other revelation from any other prophet, being the very Word of God Himself. Jesus is the living Word of God.

**John 1:1-2** - 1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** 2 He was in the beginning with God. NASB

**John 14:9** - Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? NASB

Jesus is Himself the revelation of God in the flesh.

**John 1:14** - 14 And **the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. NASB

Jesus, being the greatest prophet in History, gives us wisdom and understanding like no other prophets who have gone before or ever will come again. He is the very *“Light of the World.”*

**John 8:12** - Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, **I am the light of the world**; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." NASB

This means that He Himself is “that which causes the eye to see (definition of light).” That is the real eyes of the heart, where our innermost secrets and thoughts are exposed. The wisdom and understanding that Jesus gives us about God and human nature is far more profound than that of any other prophet. **Jesus teaches us the true value of things**, both physical and spiritual. He teaches us true wisdom and how to assess our lives in this world and in relation to God.

**Matthew 6:25-27** - 25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, *as to* what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you shall put on. **Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?** 26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not worth much more than they?** NASB

**Matthew 10:28-31** - 28 "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; **but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Therefore do not fear; **you are of more value than many sparrows.** NASB

**Jesus teaches us to see and judge our own hearts according to His perfect values**, and this helps us to make a right assessment of our lives and how to correct our way. He guides our path like no other.

**Matthew 5:27-28** – 27 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; 28 but I say to you, that **everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.** NASB



**Luke 6:45** - 45 "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for **his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.** NASB

Jesus doesn't just deal with external issues of behavior, with a list of rules and commandments, but shines light into our hearts so that we can see the motives and intentions of our hearts. He explains the meaning of the commandments to us. He does this so that we can be changed down deep inside and have an inner virtue which is genuine and real.

**Hebrews 4:12** - 12 For **the word of God is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** NASB

**Jesus gives us insight into the unseen spiritual world and the eternal kingdom of God like no other, because He came from there.** He shines light on the things we cannot see with our physical eyes, but can only understand with the eyes of our heart. What prophet ever promised us eternal life by believing in Him, or told us we must be born again in order to see the Kingdom of God? What prophet ever spoke of the final judgment of the world with such clarity and insight?

**John 3:12-13** - 12 "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, **how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?** 13 "And no one has ascended into heaven, but **He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.** NASB

**Matthew 16:27** - 27 "For **the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man** according to his deeds. NASB

**John 3:14-15** - 14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that **whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.** NASB

Jesus has opened our understanding into eternity so that now we know everything we need to know to be **reconciled to God forever.** He has spoken to us about how our **soul can be saved** from death. His way of salvation results in a completed and fully restored relation to God.

**Matthew 16:24-26** - 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "**For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.** 26 "**For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul?** Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? NASB

**John 14:6** - 6 Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.** NASB

Jesus is indeed the prophet of prophets and the final word from God. He has explained our origin, our reason for existence, and given us instruction about all the details of life and death in a very clear and concise manner. In Him we know everything we need to know about our life and our death.

**Colossians 2:2-3** - 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, ***resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*** NASB

## **Jesus, Our Great High Priest**

Because of the fall of man and his becoming the object of God's disfavor and wrath because of sin, it is necessary for us to have a mediator between God and man. Here lies the awesome power of Christ's cross toward mankind, saving him from God's wrath by accomplishing for mankind what he could have never done on his own.

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** - 5 For **there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,** 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

Christ became this mediator for us and fulfilled the ministry of the Priesthood to us. In this priestly work, Jesus did everything right and **He satisfied the requirements of the Holy Father perfectly.** He was a holy and undefiled sacrifice which appeased God's wrath "***once for all.***"

**Hebrews 7:26-27** - 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners** and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high

priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because **this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.** NASB

Because Jesus priestly work was holy and undefiled, His work was sufficient to make us perfect in God's sight forever. There is no other sacrifice needed except for the "One" that has been offered by Christ. It is the **final priestly work needed** to mediate between God and man, so when Christ had completed it, He ***"sat down at the right hand of God."***

**Hebrews 10:11-14** - 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 **but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,** 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified. NASB

Jesus priestly work has cleansed us in such a way that we have been **completely sanctified**, washed and cleansed from the guilt and shame of our sins. So the scripture declares..

**1 Corinthians 6:11** - 11 And such were some of you; but **you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

In this, we can have great assurance in the salvation that Jesus has worked for us. It is indeed complete and comprehensive. Jesus priestly work on the cross is perfectly complete so that our sins are completely forgiven in a way that **we stand before God holy and blameless** and beyond any reproach.

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach** NASB

Because Christ has died one time for the sins of all of His people, He therefore has provided a complete and **eternal reconciliation** with God and He Himself is the mediator between God and man forever. God will never again have His holy anger aroused by our sins because of the perfect priesthood of Christ. This intercession is not only "one time" at salvation, but is an **ongoing ever-present intercession** which satisfies God and provides a way of eternal reconciliation to God.

**Hebrews 7:23-27** - 23 And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, 24 **but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.** 25 Hence, also, **He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.** 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this **He did once for all when He offered up Himself.** NASB  
**1 John 2:1-2** - 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;** 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. NASB

Therefore we can have **confidence in approaching God** because Jesus has perfectly interceded for us with God and opened a way for us to approach God and find help from Him for all of our needs.

**Hebrews 10:19-22** - 19 Since therefore, brethren, **we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,** 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and **since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,** having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. NASB

**Hebrews 4:15-16** - 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.** NASB

In Christ's human nature He has faced the limitations and sufferings which are common to man. Because God has in Christ become a man and walked where we walk and experienced our suffering, He is therefore able to relate to and sympathize with our weakness. With Jesus we will

find **a compassionate and loving priest**, the true heavenly Priest of God Most High, who cares for us and who is sympathetic to our needs and opens His heart of mercy to help us.

**Hebrews 2:17-18** - 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, **that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, **He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.** NASB

Let us therefore learn the great benefit that is ours through the Priestly ministry of Jesus our Lord. He has performed everything necessary to reconcile us to God so that now **we have peace with God through Him** and help in our time of need from Him.

**Romans 5:1-2** - 1 Therefore having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. NASB

## Jesus the King

Jesus is a King like no other king. He is the King of Heaven, much less the earth. Jesus testified of this before Pilate when He said,.....

**John 18:37** - 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, **"You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born,** and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." NASB

Indeed when the Scripture describes Jesus Kingship, it speaks of it in a way which is unmistakably the greatest of all.

**Revelation 19:16** - 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, **"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."** NASB

**Psalms 48:1-2** - Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, In the city of our God, His holy mountain. 2 Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion *in* the far north, **The city of the great King.** NASB

He is the King of all Kings and the ruler of all other kings.

**Revelation 1:5-7** - 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and **the ruler of the kings of the earth.** To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, 6 and **He has made us to be a kingdom,** priests to His God and Father; to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. NASB

His Kingdom is the largest dominion of all kingdoms because He possesses the entire heavens and earth. His authority is higher than every other because He is Himself is the ONLY Sovereign. He is the supreme authority and possesses dominion over all others.

**Ephesians 1:19-23** - 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and **seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,** 23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. NASB

His throne will last forever and His dominion will never end.

**Hebrews 1:8** - 8 But of the Son *He says,* **"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,** And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. NASB

**Daniel 7:13-14** - 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 **"And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.** NASB

At this point in time Jesus is at the right hand of God in Heaven. He is awaiting the plan of God to unfold as the Church is preaching His Gospel to the nations. His rule is currently a spiritual rule from Heaven in which subjects come willingly to Him and surrender to His Lordship by

faith in Him and all that He has accomplished. He rules in the hearts of people in this Church age and has invited all people to come to Him and pay Him homage as King and Lord. During this time of Christ's spiritual rule, as people come to Him, they endure with much reproach the suffering of Christ. However this reproach will turn to Glory when Christ returns!

**2 Timothy 2:10-13** - 10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; 12 **If we endure, we shall also reign with Him**; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself. NASB

**Romans 8:17** - 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.** NASB

**2 Thessalonians 1:10** - 10 **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

These shall also be rewarded when Christ comes and takes His throne forcibly to rule upon the earth. They shall be kings and priests and possess His authority to rule with Him upon the earth.

**Daniel 7:27** - 27 **Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One**; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

**Revelation 2:26-27** - 26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, **to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.** as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received *authority* from My Father; NASB

**Revelation 5:10** - 10 "And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they will reign upon the earth.**" NASB

After we have examined these things, it should be no surprise to us to find out that **Christ's earthly Kingship was planned and decreed by God from eternity.** Indeed as Jesus told us, He was born to be a King.

**Psalms 2:6-7** - 6 "But as for Me, **I have installed My King Upon Zion**, My holy mountain." 7 "I will surely tell of **the decree of the LORD**: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.' NASB

**Micah 5:2** - "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One **will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.**" NASB

**Isaiah 9:6-7** - 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And **the government will rest on His shoulders**; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, **Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom**, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. NASB

He will subdue and rule the nations along with His saints, and they shall be lifted up in the eyes of all their enemies. Their enemies shall come and bow down before the Lord and give Him Glory and render obedience to Him. (**Rev 22:5, Luke 19:17-19**)

**Psalms 22:27-28** - 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, **And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.** NASB

**Psalms 66:3** - Say to God, "How awesome are Thy works! Because of the greatness of Thy power **Thine enemies will give feigned obedience to Thee.**" NASB

More than this Jesus will be a benevolent King like no other king that has ever reigned! Grace and Truth will thrive on the earth under His reign! The widow will have a husband and the orphan a father! **He will bring peace to the earth and subdue all evil under His feet** and the world will be filled with His Glory to the ends of the earth.

**Habakkuk 2:14** - 14 "For **the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord**, As the waters cover the sea. NASB

**Micah 4:3** - 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; **Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war.** NASB

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## The Supremacy of Christ in All Things

### Jesus is LORD in Authority

As the Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ there is no mistaking the clear portrait that it paints of His person. He is **“Lord!”** Without apology He is lifted up and proclaimed as the **“Lord of all.”**

**Acts 2:36** - 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel **know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ** — this Jesus whom you crucified." NASB

**Romans 10:12** - 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; **for the same Lord is Lord of all**, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; NASB

**Revelation 17:14** - 14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because **He is Lord of lords and King of kings**, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful." NASB

The word **“lord”** implies His authority. He is the supreme authority. Christ claims to have ALL authority in Heaven and on earth.

**Matthew 28:18** - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**" NASB

This authority is described in no uncertain terms in the New Testament. The authority of Jesus Christ is the *highest* authority and He is in fact the Sovereign, the supreme authority in the universe. He is described as **“the head over all rule and authority.”**

**Colossians 2:9-10** - 9 For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and **He is the head over all rule and authority**; NASB

### Jesus is the Lord of Mankind and Angels

The fact that Jesus is the Lord over all intelligent beings in creation is clearly seen in Scripture. Jesus is held forth as possessing all authority and judgment for the express purpose that all mankind may honor Him.

**John 5:22-23** - 22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but **He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 in order that all may honor the Son**, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. NASB

He is clearly seen in the New Testament as having power over every angel, authority and dominion forever.

**1 Peter 3:22** - Jesus Christ, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, **after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.** NASB

**Ephesians 1:21-22** - 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named**, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 **and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things** to the church, NASB

Scripture makes emphatic statements about His authority over all things even going so far as to say that the eternal destiny of mankind, whether they have life after death, or perish in under God's wrath forever, all hinge on their obedience to Him.

**John 3:35-36** - 35 "The Father loves the Son, and **has given all things into His hand.** 36 "He **who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life**, but the wrath of God abides on him." NASB

The New Testament describes the fact that eventually all created intelligent beings will one Day give allegiance to Christ and verbally confess His Lordship over them.

**Philippians 2:9-11** 9 Therefore also **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name**, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NASB

The fact of the matter is, Jesus is Lord whether one recognizes it or not. Just because one has not submitted their life to Him, does not mean that one is not accountable to Him. For He will come



to judge every person for the deeds done in the body, as the gospel declares. And He alone possesses the authority to determine one's eternal destiny. ***Ultimately, every person that has ever lived will bow their knee before Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as the Lord.*** That day will either be a day of glorious celebration for the faithful, or day of shocking terror for the wicked and unbelieving.

**2 Timothy 4:1** - I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead**, and by His appearing and His kingdom: NASB

**Matthew 16:26-27** - 26 "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For **the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.** NASB

Dear reader, if you have never acknowledged Jesus as the Lord of your life, today is the day! ***You are not guaranteed tomorrow, and there will be no second chances on the other side of the grave.*** Turn from your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus, and He will give you eternal life! Reject Him and pay the wages of your sin, which is death, eternal separation from God and everything that is good.

**John 3:18** - 18 "**He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. NASB

**Matthew 13:41-43** - 41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and **they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire**; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. NASB

The door of God's free grace and mercy is now wide open awaiting for you to walk through and be forgiven! Come to Christ in repentance and faith and be saved!

### **Jesus is the Lord of Providence and History**

Because Jesus has existed eternally as God the Son in Heavenly Glory, and because His nature has not changed since the incarnation (He simply took on the additional nature as a man), He still possesses the full attributes of Deity, including all incommunicable attributes of God such as Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence. ***He is in fact the very agent of the Godhead in Creation and the Providential control of the universe.*** The **Scripture plainly declares** that Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything that exists, including everything that is visible and invisible which is to include "***all things***" in existence. These statements in Scripture are emphatic, exhaustive and comprehensive.

**Colossians 1:15-16** - 15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 **For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by Him and for Him.** NASB

**Hebrews 1:2-3** - 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, **whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.** NASB

**John 1:3** - 3 **All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.** NASB

But notice that the primary reason for this stated in Colossians 1:18 is so that He might come to have "***first place in everything.***"

**Colossians 1:17-18** - 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; **so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.** NASB

That is that He might be the **PRE-EMINENT ONE**, or that He would have **SUPREMACY IN ALL THINGS**. This means that **Jesus is the very Lord of History** and that, because all things were created by Him and "***for***" Him, that all things exist for the "***end***" or "***purpose***" for which He made them, He being the proprietor and executor of His own works. Jesus is **SUPREME** in His person and being because He **IS** the eternal God, the One Creator of all that exists, the man who is this God incarnated in human flesh, the focal point of human history, and the One for whom all things exist for His own purposes, to magnify and exalt His fame, beauty and power.

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Charles Hodge comments..... *“The person to whom they are to bow the knee is Jesus, not the Logos, but the God-man. And the acknowledgment which they are to make is, that He is Lord, i.e., their Lord, their absolute proprietor and Sovereign. It is in this sense also, that the Apostle says (Heb. i. 2), that God hath appointed the Son heir of all things. It is in virtue of this dominion over the universe that Christ is called Lord of lords and King of kings, i.e. the Sovereign over all other sovereigns in heaven and on earth. This universal authority is exercised in a providential control, and for the benefit of his Church. He employs the angels as ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of salvation. He controls and restrains the principalities, powers, world-rulers, and spirits of wickedness. (Eph. vi. 12.) He overrules all the affairs of nations and of individuals to the same end. He directs all events concerning his people severally and his Church collectively. Paul constantly recognized this providential control of Christ as directing all his steps. Under the present dispensation, therefore, Christ is the God of providence. It is in and through and by Him that the universe is governed. This dominion or kingdom is to last until its object is accomplished, i.e., until all his enemies, all forms of evil, and even death itself is subdued. Then this kingdom, this mediatorial government of the universe, is to be given up.”* The fact that Jesus is the agent of God in Providence is clearly seen in Scripture. He literally **“upholds all things by the word of His power”** and **“in Him all things hold together.”** This means that all the molecules of the physical and non-physical universe are governed by Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 1:3 - 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.** When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; NASB

**Colossians 1:17 - 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.** NASB

He is directing History to accomplish His purposes and is bringing it to an expected end, the end for which He planned and decreed that it should all exist, from before the ages began. The **Scripture plainly declares** that everything that happens is happening ultimately under the Sovereign Authority of God as He **directs them** so that **in the end His purposes are fulfilled.** Paul affirms that God works **“all things after the counsel of His will”** and to His **“ends.”**

**Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to **His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

**Romans 8:28 - 28** And we know **that God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NASB

**Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 - 3** Consider the work of God, For **who is able to straighten what He has bent?** 14 In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider- **God has made the one as well as the other** So that man may not discover anything that will be after him. NASB

**Daniel 4:34-35 - For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,** And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But **He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth;** And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' NASB

**Psalms 135:5-6 - 5** For I know that **the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does.** In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. NASB

When Christ has accomplished His purposes, and the end of the ages arrives, His enemies will be dashed under His feet and Peace will reign forever.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-28 - 22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 **then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.** 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. NASB

# The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

## Learning to Love Christ Supremely

### Jesus is Supremely Valuable

As we have stated above, Jesus Christ is supreme in all things. He is Lord over the entire Creation, being not only the Creator Himself, but also the sustainer of everything in existence.

**Acts 17:24-25** - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since **He is Lord of heaven and earth**, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things**; NASB

He is the very Lord of History, directing all things to fulfill the purposes for which He made them. Everything was made by Him and for Him, and therefore exists for His own purposes, pleasure and satisfaction.

**Proverbs 16:4** - 4 **The LORD has made everything for its own purpose**, Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

Does not reason therefore demand that we understand Jesus Christ to be the most valuable *being* in existence? If He is the source of all other things, then He is infinitely more valuable than everything He has created! What thing in existence could it be said is of greater worth than the One who created it? The very thought is ridiculous. If Christ created the mountains and the valleys, are they of greater worth than He? If He made the most majestic, beautiful and powerful angels in Heaven, are they more beautiful than Him? If He made man and woman, the very pinnacles of His creative acts, and endowed them with splendor and beauty, intelligence and emotions and creative minds, are they more splendid or beautiful, more joyful and wise than the One who spoke them into existence? Of course the obvious answer is by all means NO! In Scripture the Psalmist wonders how God can be so gracious to mankind as to endow him with such gifts, and sees God the Creator as infinitely higher and exalted above mankind the creature.

**Psalm 8:3-5** – 3 when I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 **What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him?** 5 Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, And dost crown him with glory and majesty! NASB

The fact of the matter is, Jesus Christ is infinitely more valuable than everything He has created. When we see the creature, we should see in it just a glimmer of the infinite majesty of the One who created it. The earth and the heavens, in all their glorious beauty, only show us a small portion of the infinite beauty of Christ their Creator! When we look at mankind, and see the virtues in us, lovely things which are valuable, we see only a dim reflection of the infinite virtue of Jesus Christ, the very source of all virtue and goodness in the creation. In Jesus is the fullness of every grace, goodness and virtue! He is altogether lovely! He is glorious in His perfections! He is infinitely wise and powerful and loving and righteous! He is supremely valuable! This is why the greatest commandment in all the Scripture is to.....

**Matthew 22:37-38** - 37 And He said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**" 38 "**This is the great and foremost commandment.**" NASB

This loving of our Lord is expressed briefly by the great Puritan Pastor Thomas Brooks....

*"There is not only fulness, but an overflowing of fulness in Jesus Christ. All wisdom, all knowledge, all light, all life, all love, all goodness, all sweetness, all blessedness, all joys, all delights, all pleasures, all beauties, all beatitudes, all excellencies, all glories are in Christ. The true lovers of Christ know that Christ loves as a head, as a king, as a father, as a husband, as a brother, as a kinsman, as a friend. The love of all relations meets in the love of Christ; and this raises up a believer to love Christ with a transcendent love. They know that Christ loves them more than they love themselves; yea, that he loves them above his very life. And magnes amoris*

*amor, love is the magnet of love. Christ is amiable and lovely; he is famous and conspicuous; he is spotless and matchless in his names, in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his gifts, in his revelations, in his appearances, in his ordinances. He is full of gravity, majesty, mercy, and glory. "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." His mouth is sweetness; yea, all of him is desires, or all of him is delights, [Song 5:10-16](#). Christ is wholly delectable; he is altogether desirable from top to toe; he is amiable and lovely, he is glorious and excellent. Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely. He is "the express image of God;" he is "the brightness of his Father's glory." If the soul can but discover him, it shall find in him all high perfections and supereminent excellencies. And upon these and such like considerations the saints are led forth to love Jesus Christ with a most transcendent love."* Now if these things be true, and they are, then our value system, the principles by which we value things, must come into conformity with what is truly valuable. Therefore if our affections are to be properly placed, they must be placed upon Him.

### **Jesus Must be Supreme in Our Affections**

What do you love? What do you treasure? Of what can it be said about you that you long for and desire it above all other things in your life? Whatever that thing may be, it can be said that this is what you *worship*. That is because the word *worship* originates from the idea of "**ascribing worth**" or "**value**" to something. So then, that which you worship is that which you value or ascribe worth to, that which you treasure or adore. It is that which you revere or honor, that which you venerate or idolize, it is that which you glorify or consider to be highly valuable. Now if Christ is supremely valuable in reality, and there is truly nothing that even comes close to being as infinitely worthy of all glory and honor, worship and adoration as Him, it only stands to reason that to fail to give Him this proper place of honor is our hearts and affections is to be sorely mistaken and self-deceived in our value system. This is because He is the One who is worthy of Glory and honor!

**Revelation 4:11 - 11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power;** for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created." NASB  
**Revelation 5:12-14 – 12 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."** 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, **"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."** 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. NASB

If we love something more than Christ, we have misplaced affections. He is altogether lovely, therefore not to love Him is to have a degraded mind, and to throw contempt on the highest manifestation of human excellence and Divine love. This is why the Scripture pronounces a curse upon those who fail to love Christ.

**1 Corinthians 16:22 - 22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed.** Maranatha. NASB  
 This is to say if you do not love Christ, you are accursed already! In fact, the very state of being accursed is the state of not properly valuing that which is truly valuable. If we love and adore that which is wretched and worthless, we are then by virtue of this, wretched and worthless. If we truly love what is supremely lovely and virtuous and valuable, we will then be lovely and virtuous in ourselves, because we properly value what is *truly* virtuous. You see, **we become what we value. We become what we worship.**

**Psalms 135:15-18 - 15** The idols of the nations are *but* silver and gold, The work of man's hands. **16** They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; **17** They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths. **18 Those who make them will be like them, Yes, everyone who trusts in them.** NASB

So this is what the Scripture says, if we worship dead idols which are mute, deaf and dumb, we shall become like them, mute, deaf and dumb! This only stands to reason, does it not? If we



ascribe worth to anything, it is that thing that we pursue, and ultimately seek to possess. If that is a dead idol, a piece of wood and metal, than wood and metal we will have! What a wretched state we are in when we value dead and lifeless things! Consider what ignorance is in man that he would value and honor a worthless thing above the Great and Glorious Creator who made it all! With what blindness has man been stricken as to do such a deplorable thing? ***What profit would be gained to a man for bowing down to a block of wood? Indeed those who worship a dead lifeless thing will become like them, a dead lifeless thing!*** They will be cut off from the Author and Source of life! The Scripture addresses this “folly of idolatry” in Isaiah 44.....

**Isaiah 44:9-11** - 9 Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and **their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame.** 10 Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit? 11 Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame. 12 The man shapes iron into a cutting tool, and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers, and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary. 13 *Another* shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes, and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house. 14 Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak, and raises *it* for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and **the rain makes it grow.** 15 Then it becomes *something* for a man to burn, so **he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image, and falls down before it.** 16 Half of it he burns in the fire; over *this* half he eats meat as he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." 17 But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god." 18 **They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend.** 19 **And no one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say,** "I have burned half of it in the fire, and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat *it*. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!" 20 He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" NASB

So then we see what a ridiculous endeavor it is to worship that which is less than valuable. Knowing this, we should be all the more eager to worship the Glorious Creator, Jesus Christ! Even Jesus Himself taught us that our love for Him was to exceed all other loves and affections in our lives.

**Luke 14:25-27** - 25 Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 **"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.** 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. NASB

The word *hate* here does not suggest positive antagonism but rather "to love less". Our love for Christ must be so strong that all other love is like hatred in comparison to it. In fact, we must hate our own lives and be willing to lose our lives and carry our own cross to follow Him. We must love Him more than our own very lives because He is more valuable than our very lives themselves. When we do this, we have properly placed our affections on that which is worthy of our love, and we will then become like Him because we value His virtue and long to possess it more than anything else. If your treasure joy, you will seek to be joyful. If you honor and esteem justice, you will seek to be just in all your affairs. If you esteem love and compassion as most valuable, then you will become loving and compassionate. If you honor, esteem, venerate, treasure and glorify God more than anything else, in all of His glorious virtue, then you will become like Him, because you seek to possess Him above all other things. The most loving and beneficial thing that God can command us is to treasure, esteem and love Him more than anything. This because He is what is in reality most worthy of being loved, and this causes us to become like Him because we seek His virtue and want to possess it more than anything else. Thus we see the reason why the greatest of all commandments is to love God! In other words the



highest of priorities for our lives is the love and honor of God. This is said in many ways in Scripture, consider these few.

**Matthew 6:33** - 33 "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

**Exodus 20:2-7** - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "**You shall have no other gods before Me.** 4 "**You shall not make for yourself an idol**, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 **You shall not worship them or serve them**; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 "**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain**, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. NASB

Consider how in commanding these things for us, to treasure Him first, God really does the greatest service to us because, in doing these things, we will ultimately be benefited more than any other thing because our value system will be transformed so that we assess our lives according to truth and reality, and make decisions according to God's heavenly wisdom! **God's gives us His commandments for our good!**

**Deuteronomy 10:12-14** - 12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but **to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?** 14 "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. NASB

### **Love What He Loves, Hate What He Hates**

How then can we cultivate affections for Christ? One very obvious way is to begin to value things which He assigns value to, and also to disdain things which He disdains. We begin to love Christ and value Him when we begin to see life as He sees it and begin to conform our lives to that which He values. When our value system becomes defined by His value system, He is then honored, esteemed and valued by us. It only stands to reason then, that we must come to know what He values and what He disdains. And this dear reader, is the great purpose that the Scripture fulfills in us. It causes us, by the power of the Spirit, to be transformed in our thinking so that we come to know what God loves and what He hates and what is His perfect and pleasing will!

**Romans 12:1-2** - I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And **do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** NASB

So then, as we go to the Holy Scriptures each and every day, there we feed on the heavenly delights that God gives us by His Holy Word! We feed on the bread of Life, and we partake of God's wisdom, which causes us then to hunger and thirst for His righteousness and His Kingdom and His person like no other thing. The Scripture is pure revelation of God and His wisdom! So as we go to the Scripture, we seek for nuggets of truth, and morsels of heavenly wisdom that change us and cause us to become like Him. More and more being filled and blessed with His virtue, which we see revealed in all of its Glory in the revelation of Scripture. And this dear reader, is how we become blessed! In fact this is the state of being blessed, it is properly assessing God, His Kingdom, and His virtue so that we properly and appropriately see our world through the eyes of true wisdom from the Creator God, who made everything for His own purpose and for His own glory!

**Psalms 1:1-3** - **How blessed is the man** who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But **his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.** 3 And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. NASB

## How we may know that we love Christ

Consider that of all the things that God commanded us to do, the greatest is to love Him supremely, then this ought to be our response. Consider with me if God is the Sovereign, the Supreme Authority, if He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and He has given us high and holy commandments, our response should then be one of unwavering obedience. If a powerful earthly authority gives us a directive, what would we do? We would obey. How much more should we honor God with obedience to Him? Shall we rail against our maker? We had better be sure to obey God lest we be found to be rebels against our Sovereign Creator and our Righteous Judge! Jesus said,

**John 14:15 - 15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments". NASB**

*"If"* you love me, *"you will"* keep my commandments. In other words, it will be plainly seen if you really love me when you obey my commandments. Love for Christ produces obedience to His commandments. If we look at our lives and see disobedience to Christ's commands, then we have good reason to question whether our love for Him is genuine.

**John 14:21-24 - "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me";** and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. NASB**

If we truly love God we will in fact obey Him. This is how we prove our love for God, through our obedience to Him....

**1 John 5:3 - 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;** and His commandments are not burdensome. NASB

Obedience to Christ is proof positive that we in fact love Him and honor Him from our hearts! We obey Him because we love Him and we know that His commands are what are best for us. But what are other ways that we can see that we love Christ? Consider these few .....

- **Christ will be the most engrossing subject of thought.** Are you enamored with thoughts of Christ? Does Christ occupy your thought life with intensity, or do you give your thoughts to lower earthly things?
- **Christ will be the attractive theme of conversation.** What do you spend your time talking about? The weather, sports or God forbid the latest gossip about other people? We know what is in our hearts by what flows out of our mouths.
- **Christ will be the source of the greatest delight in pleasing.** What is it that in your heart brings the most gladness to you? Do you treasure Christ more than anything else in the entire world? If you love Christ, He is your greatest delight!
- **The most transforming power of character.** Are you becoming like Him? If so, you can know that you love Him. Pursuing Christ results in becoming like Him!
- **If you love Christ, you love His cause.** That His kingdom may come, that people might be saved, that is love would abound to every person is your great pursuit.
- **If you love Christ You love His people.** How can we say we love Christ and do not love His people. We know we love Christ by how well we love and serve His church!  
**1 John 5:1-2 – 1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. NASB**
- **If you love Christ, you love His Word and His commandments.** Love for Christ is clearly seen in a great hunger and desire for His word.

Let us cultivate our love for Christ by seeking after Him and treasuring Him each and every day. Let us give serious thought on regular occasion to our love for Him and our devotion to Him!

## 9 Things we can do to cultivate a love for Christ!

There are many ways that we can cultivate and grow in our love and esteem for Christ! In these things we are seeking Christ, and our relationship to Him and our worship of Him that we seek to enhance. These things do not replace Christ, instead they enhance and cultivate our love for Him.

1. Treasure and esteem God and His Word above any and every other thing in your life. Let it become a consuming passion in your life to come to know God and see His Glory.  
**Psalm 119:47-48** - 47 And **I shall delight in Thy commandments, Which I love.** 48 And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, **Which I love; And I will meditate on Thy statutes.** NASB  
**Job 23:12** - 12 "I have not departed from the command of His lips; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.** NASB
2. Have a daily time of meditation and contemplation in the Word of God, undistracted. Allow the Word to judge and confront the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Seek God's face and His truth as for hidden treasure.  
**Psalm 1:1-2** - How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 **But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.** NASB
3. Do what the bible says. The revelation of truth comes through obedience to God's Word.  
**Luke 11:28** - 28 But He said, "On the contrary, **blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.**" NASB
4. As we read through the Word, we stop to ponder how great God is, and how wonderful He is! We marvel, and worship with intensity as we ponder the Majesty of His being and the transcendence of His works and purposes in the world! We consider the perfections of His being and attributes, and we drink from them as a thirsty man in the desert!  
**Psalm 73:25-26** - 25 **Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.** 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. NASB
5. Remember that God is personal! He has created us in such a way that we can fellowship with Him intimately through these means and experience the power and fulfillment of relationship with Him! We can treasure Him for He is our possession!  
**Song 6:3** - 3 **"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine,** He who pastures *his flock* among the lilies." NASB
6. Remember to be thankful and rejoice with thanksgiving for the great things God has done! Revel in and cherish the goodness of God and the blessing that He pours out in our lives!  
**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** - 16 **Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks;** for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB
7. Sing joyfully to the Lord. This is the only proper response for the victory we have been given. More than this, we Him, the highest reason for rejoicing and singing has become our possession!  
**Psalm 68:4** - 4 **Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Lift up a song for Him** who rides through the deserts, Whose name is the LORD, and exult before Him. NASB  
**Colossians 3:16-17** - 16 **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. NASB
8. Fellowship regularly with people who have a love for Christ and a devotion to Him.  
**Acts 2:46-47** - 46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, **they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God,** and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. NASB
9. There are many very good things for Christians to read, listen to, and watch that help us grow in our appreciation and love for Christ! There also is need for discernment here! Look here for a start.... <http://www.heavenslight.org/resources.html>

# The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

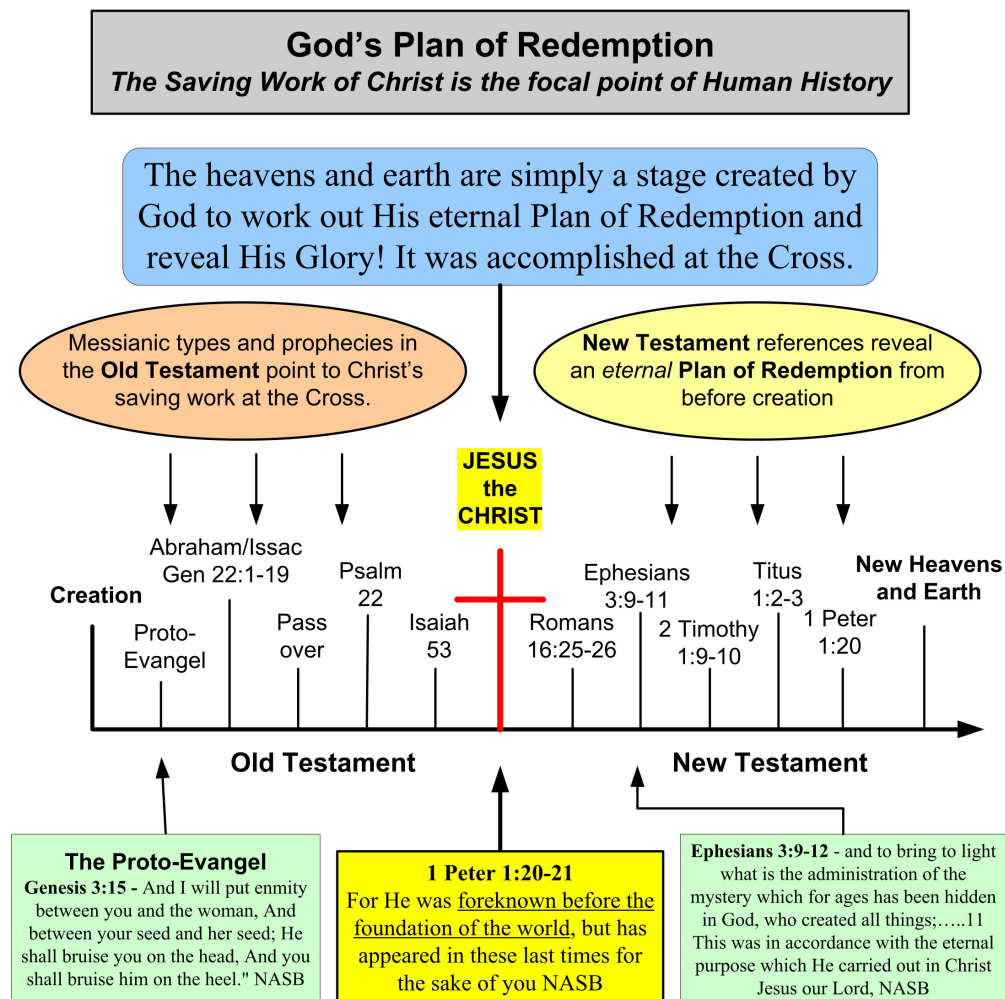
## The Atonement – Salvation Accomplished

### The Cross – What Happened There?

In the beginning of our lesson on The Saviour, The Person of Jesus Christ, we discussed the fact that God had created the world to display His glory through His work of Providence in and through History. Further that the Bible is a *“unified whole”* narrative recording for us the history of God’s work of redemption in the world. This unified whole we refer to as **“REDEEMPTIVE HISTORY.”** That is, the History of Redemption, which is the *primary* purpose of God in the creation of the world and mankind. Since this Redemption is the main theme of the narrative of the Bible, we find the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and His person, who is the Savior of the world, to be the focal point of all of human history.

**Galatians 4:4-5** - 4 But **when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law, **5 in order that He might redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. NASB

Jesus Christ is the focus of the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments. He is the Saviour of the world, and ***His saving work was accomplished at the Cross of Calvary***. Consider then, that in the course of history, God’s purpose to redeem fallen mankind from their sin by sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world to give His life as a *“sacrifice”* and be raised from the dead, is *primary* among all the things which God has purposed to do. This is God’s Plan of Redemption!



This Plan of Redemption opens up a whole new understanding for us then concerning God's activity in directing the events of History. We see then and therefore *that Jesus Christ and His atoning work at the Cross become the very focal point of history*, and thus the key event in the history of the world, and this by the eternal plans of God Himself. God planned to crucify Jesus on the Cross from before the creation of the world.

**Acts 2:22-23** - 22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know, 23 **this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross** by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. NASB

So when we think about the Cross of Jesus Christ the Savior, we must understand that He is not just some Galilean peasant in history who did some good things and had some wise teachings, but rather He is God very God, incarnate as a man, accomplishing the *primary* work of the eternal plans of God which were made before the creation of the world.

**1 Peter 1:18-20** – 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

Therefore when we consider the Cross of Christ, we must realize that there the perfect plans of the perfect God, plans to save mankind from sin, have found their fulfillment. More than this, that Jesus the Christ is that God Himself, come to earth for this great purpose, to save His people from their sins. And that is exactly what He has done!

**Matthew 1:21** – 21 And she will bear a Son; and **you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.**" NASB

**2 Timothy 1:8-10** - 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 **who has saved us**, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**, 10 but now has been revealed **by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**. NASB

Because the Cross is the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption, it is absolutely sufficient to accomplish the ends for which God planned it. The redemption that was obtained by God in Christ at the Cross was altogether sublime and magnanimous, it was a display of divine wisdom and love beyond wonder and filled with amazement! *The Cross was, as some have said, the blazing center of the Glory of God!* It was there that all of the attributes of God become crystal clear for all to see, and that they reach red hot intensity! O Sovereign Love, Oh blessed mercy! At the Cross divine justice was met and heavenly goodness was poured out like a river! At the Cross God's wrath has been satisfied and sinners have been cleansed, washed and restored to loving fellowship with God once again! The Cross richly affords all the blessing of God for whom He intended it, and they shall be the recipients of it, for God will see to it.

**Titus 3:4-7** - 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, 5 **He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 **whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior**, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life. NASB

In summary, what happened at the Cross was the main event of God's redemptive plan was completed. It is an historical event, an objective fact, a reality of paramount importance. At the Cross, Christ died for sinners, in their place, to redeem them from sin. At the Cross, God's wrath for sin was satisfied by Christ's sacrifice and this reconciled mankind back to God from whom they had been estranged, for all who will embrace it by faith.

**Colossians 1:22** -22 yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death**, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach NASB



## Defining the Atonement

The Atonement has become a term with many theological implications. It is not just merely a biblical word with a single idea, but has become a term which describes *“the whole scope of Christ’s saving work.”* It is a word describing the salvific or redemptive results arising from Jesus death. Atonement puts forth the idea of reconciliation between God and mankind, and this accomplished solely by the work of God in Christ’s sacrifice. Many have used the description of “at-one-ment” to describe the result of atonement brought about between God and mankind. It therefore has emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It is an English word used by translators in both an Old and New Testaments. The two Old Testament Hebrew words commonly translated as *“atonement,”* [kippur 3725], and [kaphar 3722] carry with them the idea of *“expiation”* (to remove offense or guilt) or to *“cover over.”*

- 3725 – **kippur** – ; expiation, -atonement.
- 3722 – **kaphar** - ; to cover, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel:-- appease, make (an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, (make) reconcile(-liation).

The New Testament word normally translated as *“propitiation”* is the Greek [hilasterion 2435] and also carries with it the idea of *“expiation”* (to remove offense or guilt) or to *“cover over.”* In fact, the Greek term actually holds a more personal meaning to the means of expiation, namely that of *“an atoning victim”* or the actual sacrifice of atonement.

- 2435 – **hilasterion** - ; an expiatory (place or thing), an atoning victim, or (specially) the lid of the Ark (in the Temple):--mercy seat, propitiation.

In summary of the use of the biblical words, we can say that although the meaning of the words themselves is rather clear, the idea or concept of the atonement has taken on a theological meaning used to refer to the *“the whole scope of Christ’s saving work.”* In this scope of meaning, there are words which are frequently used to describe the nature, quality and character of the atonement. This is because Christ’s work is so profound, that the Bible uses many terms to describe it. These would be but are not limited to words like;

- **Substitutionary** – in the place of, *“Christ died in our place.”*
- **Vicarious** – in our place, for us, substitution implied personally, *“Christ died for us.”*
- **Propitiatory** – appeasement or satisfaction of God’s wrath toward sin, *“Christ satisfied God’s divine justice and paid the actual debt of our sin.”*
- **Expiatory** – the remove of guilt, *“Christ cancelled out or released us from the debt of sin.”*
- **Justification** – a legal declaration of righteousness, *“Christ justified us before God’s court on the basis of His own merit.”*
- **Sacrifice** – the personal cost to Christ was death in our place, *“Christ was the actual victim of divine justice, he was the sacrifice that died for us.”*
- **Reconciliation** – the restoration of relationship of mankind to God, *“Christ reconciled us to God and repaired the alienation we once had with Him.”*
- **Redemption** - to buy back, to pay the redemption price, *“Christ paid the price demanded by divine justice for our sins.”*
- **Salvific** – of salvation or according to salvation, saving quality, *“Christ saved us.”*

All of these terms deal with and relate to the alienation that has taken place between God and man because of sin. *Sin has brought about the desperate need of mankind to be reconciled to God, lest they be destroyed forever away from the presence of God.* The Bible plainly sets forth the doctrine that man as a sinner is guilty of breaking the law of God, of violating His righteousness. God has, therefore, judicially delivered man over to his own will so that

corruption has entered in, whereby he has lost all desire to serve God.

**Romans 5:12** - 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and **death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned** NASB

This means that man has no ability to save himself, for he does not realize his need nor has he the righteousness to provide atonement for his sin.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** - 14 But **a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised. NASB

The atonement is what God has done to reconcile us, and to deal with God's alienation *from us* on account of our sin. God, by taking away sin, removes the ground of this alienation, and peace with God is the effect.

**Romans 6:23** - 23 **For the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

God was not obligated to save us, redeem us or do anything on our behalf. He was the offended party, and we were and are worthy of eternal wrath because of sin. ***But God because of His great love and mercy, freely chose to redeem us from that which we could not redeem ourselves.***

Grace is favor that God gives, that is unmerited by the recipient, and God is in no way obligated to give it but is free to do as He pleases.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** - 4 **But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us**, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), NASB

It must be understood that this saving work of God in the atonement is in fact wholly God's work. The Scripture plainly declares that God reconciled us to Himself, it was His doing.

**2 Corinthians 5:18** - 18 Now **all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ**, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, NASB

People cannot save themselves from the desperate plight of sin, because this would cost them the ultimate payment of eternal separation from God. Therefore, if God does not act to save us, we will be hopelessly lost. ***The atonement is what God has done to save us.*** It is the historical events and objective facts of the actual sacrifice that God made on our behalf. The sacrifice of Jesus was the payment of our sin debt and did in fact redeem us and purify us by the removal of our guilt.

**Titus 2:14** - 14 who gave Himself for us, **that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession**, zealous for good deeds. NASB

We were, by this atonement sanctified or cleansed from the corruption of sin so that we could be received into the holy presence of the infinitely pure God of Heaven.

**Hebrews 10:10, 14** - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**..... 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. NASB

Now then let us marvel together at the great things God has done! Let us see the desperate plight from which we have been snatched by the life and death of God Himself! What amazing love is this, that God would come and die in our place.

**1 John 4:10** - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

It is this amazing love of God that has motivated Him to such actions! And by these things He has in fact worked all of these great works of salvation and reconciliation for us. Consider how Scripture describes these things. They are very profound!

**Romans 5:8-10** - 8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died **for us**. 9 Much more then, having now **been justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him. 10 For if while **we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. NASB

Let us respond in an appropriate manner with thanksgiving and praise! Let us rejoice in what God has done for us through Christ Jesus, and give Him the glory due Him!

## The Necessity of the Atonement

When we speak about the “*necessity*” of the atonement, it is important to realize that there is more than one issue at hand. *First, mankind has a great “need” to be saved because of sin, and he has an utter inability to save himself.* If God does not act to save mankind from this desperate plight, mankind would be hopelessly lost and destined to perish. This is because of the Holiness of God. God cannot allow sin to go unpunished, His justice will not allow it. If He did He would not be truly just or righteous. But He is in fact righteous, and His nature demands the just satisfaction of the consequences for sin.

**Deuteronomy 27:26** - 26 **'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.'**

And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' NASB

**Romans 1:18-20** - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.** NASB

Sin is a violation of the very nature of God which is expressed in the Law of God. By this Law, the whole world has become aware of its desperate plight before God and is now accountable to God.

**Romans 3:19-20** - 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God**; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; **for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.** NASB

This is the reason why God gave the Law. It was to make it painfully obvious to us that we have violated God's nature continually, and this has brought death upon us and brought about our great need to be saved from the wrath of God.

**Romans 7:12-13** - 12 So then, **the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.** 13 Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of death* for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that **through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.** NASB

The Law also teaches us that God's standard of righteousness is unattainable for sinners. *This purpose of the Law is to show us our great need for justification before God's holiness.*

Because we are in such a desperate plight, the Law leads us to the obvious conclusion, that we need a Savior.

**Galatians 3:19-22** - 19 **Why the Law then?** It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, **until the seed should come** to whom the promise had been made. 20 Now a mediator is not for one *party only*; whereas God is *only* one. 21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For **if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.** 22 But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. NASB

Therefore when we see our utter inability to measure up to or keep the Law of God, we are driven to a hopeless and desperate state in ourselves to meet God's demands of righteousness. This then teaches us that we must look outside of ourselves to Christ Jesus to be saved.

**Galatians 3:23-24** - 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.** NASB

Therefore is absolutely necessary that mankind have a way to become justified before God. This now is why the atonement is necessary for mankind to be justified before God. Without it mankind is guilty under God's law and hopelessly awaiting His fearful judgment which His nature demands. God cannot be violated by sin without reacting to it according to His nature. Consider how John Murray has expressed this.... “*Sin is the contradiction of God and He must react against it with holy indignation. This is to say that sin MUST meet with divine judgment. It is this inviolable sanctity of God's law, the immutable dictate of holiness and the unflinching*

*demand of justice, that makes mandatory the conclusion that salvation from sin without expiation and propitiation is inconceivable. It is this principle that explains the sacrifice of the Lord of glory, the agony of Gethsemane, and the abandonment of the accursed tree. It is this principle that under girds the great truth that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. For in the work of Christ the dictates of holiness and the demands of justice have been fully vindicated. God set Him forth to be a propitiation to declare His righteousness."*

These ideas illustrate another aspect of the "**necessity**" of the atonement. **Secondly, if God decides to save mankind, there becomes a "need" for the means by which God will do it.** Because mankind cannot provide a way for himself to be justified before God, having violated Gods Law and become accountable to him, God must now act to save mankind, or they will perish. Now concerning this matter, there are two views about the necessity of the atonement.

- **Hypothetical Necessity** – This view was held by good men in the church such as Augustine, Aquinas, and even Calvin for many centuries. It is the idea that God has no necessity to save mankind by means of the vicarious substitution of Christ, but could have used other means to bring about atonement. But God in His wisdom chose to use the means of the atonement of Christ, to save mankind because it was the way in which the greatest number of advantages concur and in which grace is most marvelously exhibited. In other words, the Cross was not absolutely necessary to be the means of salvation, but the means that God chose to use by His own sovereign decree.
- **Absolute Necessity** – This view is the classic protestant view held by such men as Turretin, RL Dabney, Berkhof, Murray and both A.A. and Charles Hodge. In this view, the atonement is seen as necessary because God had purposed by His free and sovereign grace to save mankind in His decree, and because of His perfect nature, vicarious sacrifice was the only means by which it could be brought about. Murray states, *"while it was not inherently necessary for God to save, yet, since salvation had been purposed, it was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption."*

Concerning these two views of the necessity of the atonement one might ask, why does it matter? The answer to this question is of paramount importance, as to see the infinite value of the Cross of our blessed Savior. Why did Christ die? Was it absolutely necessary? Could some other person have achieved this great salvation? Might we have been saved some other way, or was this just a "**hypothetical**" set of circumstances that God chose to use of which He had many choices? On these questions we shall look to the Scripture. It is rather clear in the text of Scripture that the atonement of Christ was in fact the only means by which salvation could be obtained. In Hebrews chapter 2 we see that in order for Christ to "**make propitiation**" or satisfaction for divine justice, and also to be merciful to mankind, "**He had to be made like His brethren in all things.**"

Hebrews 2:17 - 17 Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things**, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. NASB

More than this, because of the infinite perfections of God, we needed a high priest that was undefiled and without blemish so that He could die for the sins of others and not His own sins.

Hebrews 7:26-27 - 26 For **it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;** 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. NASB

Also, we needed an undefiled high priest who could enter the tabernacle in heaven, and sprinkle the mercy seat there, in the presence of the Holy God, once for all.



**Hebrews 9:23-24** - 23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but **the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these**. 23 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, **but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us**; NASB

The sacrifice of Christ was absolutely necessary because it is impossible for the blood of goats and bulls to take away sins.

**Hebrews 10:4-7** - For **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, **BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME**; 6 **IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE**. 7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.'" NASB

Because of God's inviolable holiness and perfection, in order to be accepted by Him a person must be holy and righteous. Because all mankind have sinned, they cannot therefore be accepted by God without a justification **brought about by God Himself**. He must be "*the justifier*," and this justification must be of such quality that it actually provides and infinitely perfect righteousness for the person being justified. This can only be provided by a vicarious substitute, since mankind can in no way become this. This is why the redemption in Christ is absolutely necessary.

**Romans 3:25-26** - 25 whom **God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood** through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed*; 26 for **the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness** at the present time, **that He might be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus. NASB

Further, this atonement is absolutely necessary to be the supreme display of the love of God and the costly value of it. It is the greatest demonstration of the love of God and this love could not have been displayed apart from the infinitely valuable price of the death of His perfect Son.

**1 John 4:10** - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

If there could have been *any* other way than the sacrifice of Jesus to save sinners, surely God would have answered Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane!

**Mark 14:35-36** - 35 And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell to the ground, and *began* to pray **that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by**. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; **remove this cup from Me**; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." NASB

Of all of the reasons why it is absolutely necessary that Christ's Cross be the only means of propitiation for sinners, it is because God, in His infinite wisdom and omniscience, has set forth in the divine decree that it should be so. In other words, God has decreed that salvation be wrought by this means, and this makes it absolutely necessary because God does not deliberate in moments of time in His consideration of decrees, but rather in perfect omniscience decrees that which is perfect in one simple and *eternal* act.

**1 Peter 1:20** - 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

Praise God, the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to meet all of these demands of God's holiness, and the Cross does provide for us a righteousness before God.

**Hebrews 9:13-14** - 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 **how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God**, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? NASB

The demands of divine justice have been satisfied by Christ, and sin has been put away.

**Hebrews 9:26** - 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now **once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**. NASB

Let us therefore see and affirm that it was absolutely necessary for Jesus to die in our place, and for us, and this to be a propitiation for our sins. In light of this, let us consider the infinite value of His death, and may His blood be to us what it truly is, "*precious blood!*"

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## The Nature of the Atonement

The atonement has several very important *characteristics* which are important to realize. In the hymn “For Man the Savior Bled,” the writer makes the statement, “*Oh what heavenly wonders dwell in Thy atoning blood!*” Now when we consider the nature of the atonement, this truth is displayed wonderfully. There is so much depth of character in what Christ has done, it sends one’s heart and mind soaring! Let us consider then some of these matters. As we think about the very ground of the atonement we must consider that it is ***grounded in God’s Sovereignty and Eternal Decree***. This is to say that God planned the atonement, and all of its intricate aspects to come to pass exactly as they did from before the creation of the world.

**1 Peter 1:20** - 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

This, of course, is true about everything that happens, but nonetheless also true of the atonement. Therefore, it was always the intended purpose of God for Jesus the Christ to come and give His life as a ransom for sinners, to satisfy and appease His divine wrath, by His sacrifice to stand in the place of those sinners whom He has chosen to save, and by these to reconcile them to Himself. This is very clear in Scripture. This is why God “*sent*” Jesus, to fulfill the plan of redemption He had purposed from all eternity.

**1 John 4:10** - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

**John 5:36** - 36 "But the witness which I have is greater than *that of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, **that the Father has sent Me**. NASB

God is seen in Scripture as the cause of the atonement, the great architect behind it all.

**Isaiah 53:6** – 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But **the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him**. NASB

**Romans 3:25** - 25 **whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith**. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;* NASB

Atonement for sin is therefore CERTAIN! The awesome and wonderful thing about this is that since God has intended to save from the beginning, then that is exactly what He will do and has done. This is expressed in the very name of Jesus, which means, “*the Lord saves!*” In other words, this makes the atonement **sufficient** to achieve its ends, since its ends are the thing for which it was designed by God. This is greatly reassuring! We can rest in the fact that God has intended to save us, so we will be saved! This is the very purpose that Jesus has come, to consummate the ages by His great work of redemption!

**Hebrews 9:26** - 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now **once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**. NASB

But what was it that moved God to design such a thing as this? Well, the answer to this question sheds more light on the *character* of the atonement. ***The death of Christ upon the cross is motivated by free and sovereign love!*** This is to say that what moved or motivated God to design a world with fallen people and give the life of His Son in sacrifice for their sins, was the desire to display His love in an amazing and death defying way! What words could be used to describe the profound depth of the love of God! Only Jesus the Living Word could do that through all that He has done!

**1 John 4:10** - 10 **In this is love**, not that we loved God, but **that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

**John 3:16** - 16 "**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. NASB

**Ephesians 5:2** - 2 and walk in love, just as **Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

God was not obligated to save us, but in fact purposed to save us *freely*. God did not owe mankind a debt, on the contrary, He is the one offended by the actions of people. Therefore, if He plans to save the offending rebels, He does it by His own sovereign and free prerogative! He does it because He is gracious and merciful! Therefore God's love is not constrained by anything except the perfect, free and sovereign pleasure of His will.

**Ephesians 1:4-6** - 4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. **In love 5 He predestined us** to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, **which He freely bestowed on us** in the Beloved. NASB

This love is so profound that He Himself is willing to be the atoning victim and bear the very penalty which is reserved for those who induce His holy wrath. He is the sacrificial lamb which has to die, in my place, for my sin! What amazing love is this?

**1 John 2:2** - 2 and **He Himself is the propitiation for our sins**; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. NASB

As we have stated there is a host of biblical terms which describe the character of the atonement. This is to say that the Bible uses many different terms in different passages to describe what it is and what has been accomplished by it. Its very nature is that which is pictured in the Old Testament "**sacrifice**." Therefore, Christ is our "**sacrifice**," our Passover lamb that died "**vicariously**" (for us) and as a "**substitute**" (in our place). In speaking about this Old Testament sacrifice, John Murray states.... "*The sacrifice was the divinely instituted provision whereby the sin might be covered and the liability to divine wrath and curse removed. The Old Testament worshipper when he brought his oblation to the altar substituted an animal victim in his place. In laying his hands upon the head of the offering there was transferred symbolically to the offering the sin and liability of the offerer. This is the pivot on which the transaction turned. The notion in essence was that the sin of the offerer was imputed to the offering and the offering bore as a result the death penalty.*" Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover, and the very sacrificial Lamb portrayed by it. He is the reality to which the Passover pointed, the ultimate sacrifice to cover our sin, so that the death angel of God's wrath could pass us by and we could be set free from the bondage of sin (Egypt-Slavery-Pharaoh).

**1 Corinthians 5:7** -7 Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just **as you are in fact** unleavened. **For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed**. NASB

Not only this but Jesus death has an eternal and perfect efficacy that the Old Testament sacrifices of goats and bulls could never afford. This is because Jesus Himself entered heaven and the true tabernacle of God to offer His blood there in the presence of God.

**Hebrews 9:11-12** - 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, **He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle**, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and **not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood**, He entered the holy place once for all, **having obtained eternal redemption**. NASB

He obtained an eternal redemption. His death was "**one sacrifice for sins for all time**," that is, it was final, complete and sufficient to atone.

**Hebrews 10:11-13** - 11 And every priest stands **daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins**; 12 but He, having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. NASB

Because God has instituted the sacrificial system as a means of atonement, he has therefore been pleased to have a sacrifice appease or satisfy His wrath. This we call "**propitiation**." **Propitiation is an "appeasement" or "satisfaction."** The holy anger and wrath of God toward sin demands a satisfaction of justice, and His vengeance is enraged toward sin and must have a subject to inflict the good and righteous penalty of death.

**Romans 6:23** - 23 **For the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

Therefore we must have a substitute to satisfy God's wrath or be consumed ourselves. This is what sets Christianity apart from every other world religion. Jesus Christ is the only sufficient substitute who can meet the just requirements of God's law in order to die vicariously (for us) as a substitute (in our place). Jesus becomes then this propitiation *Himself* to appease the wrath of God.

**Hebrews 2:17** - 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** NASB

Therefore, the atonement does in fact "appease" or "satisfy" God's holy wrath toward sin. ***Because this is true, the atonement is also "expiatory." This is to say that it removes our guilt by meeting the demands of holy justice, fully.*** The offense of our sins has been absorbed by the *sacrifice* of the body of Jesus for us, and the requirements of God's justice for sin have been "cancelled out."

**Colossians 2:13-14** - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way,** having nailed it to the cross. NASB

The penalty deserved in our guilt, has been paid in full by the sacrifice of Christ. ***This is to say then that the atonement is "redemptive," that it pays the price required by justice.*** Jesus death on the cross is seen as a ransom price paid to redeem us from the penal sanctions of the law.

**1 Timothy 2:5-7** - 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 **who gave Himself as a ransom for all,** the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

Jesus death is the full payment price demanded by the law because of our violations of it. He redeemed us from the *curse* of the law.

**Galatians 3:13** - 13 **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law,** having become a curse for us — for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" NASB

It is important to recognize that this redeeming from the law is in relation to the violations we committed against the law in our sin. However, there is expressed in the law the very character and nature of God to which we look and eagerly desire to possess. We are not redeemed from this eager desire and love for God's holy law, but only the penal sanctions it imposes upon us because of our failure to meet its holy requirements. So we honor and love the law in all of its goodness, and the holy price it imposes upon our failures to obey it, have been fully paid by the redemption of Jesus the Christ.

**Ephesians 1:7** - 7 **In Him we have redemption through His blood,** the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, NASB

**Revelation 5:9** - 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for **Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men** from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. NASB

To this end therefore, the redemption that is in Christ has redeemed us from the very *power* of sin, that we might live a new life, free from the penalties of divine justice and eager to do what is good.

**Titus 2:14** - 14 who **gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself** a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. NASB

Through Christ's redemption, the consequences of the devil's temptations to sin have been fully paid, and he can no longer accuse and threaten us with the holy demands of the law because we have been set free from these to now honor and serve God, not by the motivation of fear, but of thanksgiving and devoted love! In this redemption, Christ destroyed the devil's work!

**Hebrews 2:14-15** - 14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might **render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those** who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. NASB

**1 John 3:8** - 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.** NASB

## The Sufficiency of the Atonement

This work then, opens the door for our relationship with God to be restored! Because of this wonderful redemption paid by Christ, God is no longer alienated from us. ***This is to say that the atonement brings about “reconciliation” between us and God.*** By taking away sin, God has removed the ground of alienation between us and Him, and thereby restored our relationship to Him. This work was initiated by God who reconciled us to Himself (2 Cor 5:18).

**Romans 5:8-11** - 8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us**. 9 Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son**, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but **we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation**. NASB

We see then, that all these things that have been accomplished by God through Christ in the atonement, have reconciled God to us and us to God, and our relationship has been restored.

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 22 But now **he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight**, without blemish and free from accusation- NASB

Through Jesus' redemptive death upon the Cross, we have been *fully* reconciled to God. This is because Jesus *fully* met the demands of God's righteousness in the Law for our sins, having paid the penalty the Law demanded for sins, but also having earned a positive righteousness before God by His perfect obedience to the perceptive requirements of the Law. John Murray comments on this.... *“Christ as the vicar of His people came under the curse and condemnation due to sin and He also fulfilled the law of God in all its positive requirements. In other words, He took care of the guilt of sin and perfectly fulfilled the demands of righteousness. He perfectly met both the penal and the perceptive requirements of God's law.”* Therefore the demands of the Law have been fully met in Christ, and this is the ground of our reconciliation to God. ***In legal terms, the Bible describes us having been justified before God.*** Justification is the act of God declaring us righteous now based on the merits of Christ through faith in Him. This means that we have a *foreign* righteousness that is *“not our own,”* but is ours by faith in Christ.

**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that **which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, NASB

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

This is good news. This life and death of Christ is so complete before God that it not only meets the legal demands of God's Law, but ***even cleanses and washes away the defilement of our sins so as to purify us before God's spotless holiness so that we are fully sanctified.***

**Hebrews 10:14** - 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**. NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

This ***“justification”*** and ***“sanctification”*** before God is so complete that it has removed any and all condemnation of God from us so that we are set free the tyranny of the Law's demands, which a sinner can never meet.

**Romans 8:1-2** - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

Jesus then, is the consummation of God's Law for us, and we now rest in freedom from its demands. We now have perfect freedom to obey the Law because, if and when we fail, Christ is our righteousness, and we can be resolved once again to obey it, without having the penalty of death inflicted upon us. Every moment is new for the Christian!

**Romans 10:4** - 4 For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**. NASB



*We must conclude then from these things that Jesus life and death are sufficient to redeem us from sin and reconcile us to God.* And that this reconciliation is final, complete and eternal, so that nothing more is required to be justified or sanctified before God.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 **not as a result of works, that no one should boast**. NASB

**Romans 3:27-28** - 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For **we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law**. NASB

It is therefore imperative to recognize the many false distortions of the Gospel which call people to some further obedience required than that of simple faith in Christ. It is Christ in whom we have believed, and He Himself is our righteousness before God, and we have received Him by simple faith.

**John 6:28-29** - 28 They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.**" NASB

There are no works that we can perform that somehow merit Christ for us, rather if we look beyond Christ to find merit before God, we forfeit Christ and this is the *ultimate* offense to God.

**Galatians 5:1-4** - 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. NASB

This was the tragic mistake of Israel which ultimately brought the judgment of God upon them.

**Romans 9:31-10:4** - 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. 32 Why? **Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works**. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For **not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own**, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**. NASB

We do not seek to be justified before God by the works of the Law, but rather because we have been justified by Christ, we now live by faith in Him, continually looking to His life and death on the Cross as our righteousness before God.

**Galatians 2:20-21** - 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; **for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly**." NASB

**John 3:14-15** - 14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must **the Son of Man be lifted up**; 15 **that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life**." NASB

The Law then is a display of what Christ's life looks like in practice, so that we learn how to walk in His Spirit and fulfill the righteousness of the Law toward God and other people.

Obedience to Law is something we greatly desire, as a result of being justified by God through Christ, because we are motivated by gratitude for what he has done and a desire to honor Him with our life. But it is not, and never will be the grounds of our justification and sanctification before God. We have become recipients of the love and mercy of God *in spite* of our life of sin and disobedience.

**Titus 3:4-7** - 4 But when **the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared**, 5 **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that **being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life. NASB

We have been released from our sins by the blood of Jesus the Christ, because of His love.

**Revelation 1:5** - 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. **To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood**. NASB

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## The Results and Benefits of the Atonement

The Atonement is the ground of God's blessing upon us and the very fountain from which flows all of the riches of His grace toward us. ***Here we are saying that the atonement is the wellspring of all benefit and blessing of God toward mankind.*** It is because of Christ's atoning work that God can even look upon the world and mankind, with all of its sin and rebellion against Him, and sustain their life until such time as He puts everything in its proper place and order.

**Romans 2:4-6** – 4 Or do you think lightly of **the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience**, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**, 7 who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: NASB

The atonement is the ground of *common* grace. Common grace is that grace or favor that God dispenses to unbelieving sinners who do not come to faith in Christ and be saved. In this common grace, God bears patiently with sin until such time that He brings it to justice at the final judgment. In other words, God did not immediately bring judgment upon man when Adam and Eve sinned by destroying them, but instead patiently waited through the ages as He brought about His eternal purpose in Christ. Even now, He is still fulfilling His plan of redemption and bearing patiently with sin and sinners until such time that His purposes are completed. At that time He will bring sin to its final justice and it will be eradicated from His Kingdom and His people forever. Therefore because God is fulfilling His eternal purpose in Christ through the Atonement, He not only patiently bears with sin and sinners, but showers innumerable blessings upon them which they have neither deserved nor are they thankful for them.

**Romans 1:20-21** - 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For **even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks**; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. NASB

God gives even to the wicked and unbelieving all that they need to sustain their lives, giving them food and shelter, sunshine and rain, even their very life and breath.

**Matthew 5:44-45** - 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; **for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.** NASB

Not only this but God gives them knowledge of Himself (Rom 1:21), help in restraining evil through conscience (Rom 2:15), and government (Rom 13:6), and also warnings against sin and all of its destruction and death (Rom 6:23). In fact, because God is providentially governing the history of the world, every blessing that the unbeliever receives in this life comes ultimately from an unmerited favor that God gives including life and breath and existence.

**Acts 17:24-28** - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things**; 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 **for in Him we live and move and exist**, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' NASB

In contrast to common grace, the believer in Christ receives *eternal* blessing from God which is infinite and inexhaustible. In Christ, believers are showered with all of the blessings of God, and He now views them *only* with favor. In this He has made countless promises for provision and care, love and blessing.

**2 Corinthians 1:20** - 20 **For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes**; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. NASB

The **Scripture plainly declares** that God will **"cause all things to work together,"** including every single thing whether good or bad, **"for good"** to those who love Him.

**Romans 8:28** - 28 And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. NASB

In fact, God will in Christ, spend the endless ages showing believers the “*surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward*” them.

**Ephesians 2:7** - 7 in order that **in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** NASB

This is because we have been fully reconciled to God in Christ and now rest in His favor and presence to bless. In this favor God is said to “*freely give us all things!*”

**Romans 8:32** - 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** NASB

The sufficiency of this blessing of God toward believers is complete so that He promises to meet all of our needs in this life.

**Philippians 4:19-20** - 19 And **my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.** 20 Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen. NASB

**2 Peter 1:2-3** - 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,** through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. NASB

**2 Corinthians 9:8** - 8 And God is able to make **all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance** for every good deed; NASB

The believer is rich in every way! We, having been made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, possess all things so that we could not be richer! We have become very children of God!

**2 Corinthians 8:9** - 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, **that you through His poverty might become rich.** NASB

**Romans 8:16-17** - 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit **that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,** if indeed we suffer with *Him* in order that we may also be glorified with *Him*. NASB

**1 Corinthians 3:21-23** - 21 So then let no one boast in men. **For all things belong to you,** 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; **all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ;** and Christ belongs to God. NASB

This blessing and favor of God is so exceedingly great that Paul prays that God would open the eyes of the believer to see and understand just how marvelous it is!

**Ephesians 1:18-19** - 18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is **the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.** *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might NASB

Not only temporal benefits come to us through Christ, but also all of the *heavenly* benefits of God’s character and virtue are ours through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Galatians 5:22-23** - 22 But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;** against such things there is no law. NASB

Of course in all of these blessings of God the greatest is that of God Himself. We now have, because of the Atonement, received God Himself as our “*exceeding great reward,*” and have fellowship with the Father and the Son.

**1 John 1:3** - 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that **you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.** NASB

This means that we have come into an intimate knowledge of Christ Himself, so that we can experience all of the blessing of His power and presence through our relation to Him.

**Colossians 2:2-3** - that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, **and attaining to all the wealth** that comes from the full assurance of understanding, **resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** NASB

The number of passages in the Bible describing the benefits of coming to know God, are simply staggering. Let us offer to God a heart of thanksgiving and a mouth filled with praise for all of the good things He has done for us in Christ! Let us rejoice in all of His goodness toward us and acknowledge His amazing love with lives that honor and worship Him!

# The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

## Salvation, Sanctification, Glorification

### Distinctions in the process of Salvation

When we use the word “*salvation*” in the biblical sense, we speak of the whole scope of Christ’s saving work, from first to last, as it applies to the believer. This salvation was planned and promised by the Father, wrought and purchased by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit to all whom God has intended to save. The nature of salvation however, even though it is an eternal work, is much like a process that is worked out in time and space, which culminates in eternal glory in the presence of God in the eternal state. Thus, the Bible makes a distinction in the different stages of this process. These stages are referred to as “*Salvation, Sanctification and Glorification.*” Although the term “*salvation*” can be used to speak of the whole scope of these stages, it can also be distinguished from them. This is because salvation is described in three tenses, past, present and future. We were saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

However we are being saved even now.

**Philippians 2:12-13** - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. NASB

We will also be saved in a yet future sense at the return of Christ (Heb 9:28). At this time we will be completely delivered from the power and presence of sin and enter into the glorious presence of God.

**Romans 8:23-25** - 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body**. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, **with perseverance we wait eagerly for it**. NASB

Therefore in order to understand this great salvation we possess, it is important to grasp these different stages which are expressed in the Bible.

### Salvation

The idea or concept of salvation is necessary from the fact that mankind has been alienated from God because of sin. Mankind has fallen under the darkness and power of sin, through the destructive work of Satan, and now exists in a world hopelessly destined to perish under the wrath of Almighty God.

**Ephesians 2:1-3** - And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we 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**. NASB

Sin has *personally* alienated mankind from God and caused us to be the objects of His wrath, that is, the manifestation of His holy moral judgment against it. This wrath is culminated in death, *eternal* separation from God’s good presence to bless.

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-10** - dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And **these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**. 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

Therefore being saved, or the idea of salvation, is to be saved from sin and death, so that we are delivered from its power and transformed into a new creation of God. But this deliverance from

sin and death is really only secondary. It is important to note that in a *primary* sense we are really being saved from God Himself. God is the One who is personally offended by sin, and unless we are reconciled to Him, having our relationship restored and His holy wrath because of sin satisfied, we will perish under the just consequences due to us because of sin. This wrath is God's wrath, His personal outrage toward sin, and the persons who perpetrate it.

**Romans 1:18-19** - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. NASB

We are saved then from the being of God Himself, who is governing the universe by His Providence, and is Himself the avenger of sin. God will make sure that every unrepentant sinner receives the just recompense for their sins and is destroyed in hell forever.

**Psalms 145:20** - 20 The LORD keeps all who love Him; **But all the wicked, He will destroy**. NASB

**Romans 2:5-9** - 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation**. 9 **There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek**. NASB

It is God who has been offended by sin, and it is God who will inflict His wrath upon those who continue in sin and do not believe the Gospel. Dear reader, if we do not believe the Gospel, we will fall hopelessly under the judgment of Almighty God. Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved from the wrath of God, which is coming upon every person who has not taken refuge in Him. This we should greatly fear. You or I cannot imagine the severity of these words! They are very severe indeed. Let us be careful to heed the warnings of God in the Scripture.

**Hebrews 10:26-31** - 26 For **if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries**. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God**. NASB

Reconciliation to God then is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. This reconciliation not only requires our *negative* guilt to be removed (expiated), but also a *positive* righteousness credited (imputation) to us. This salvation from the wrath of God then, is exactly what the Gospel declares is available to all who will by faith trust in the finished work of Jesus the Christ.

**Romans 5:9** - 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him**. NASB

Through Jesus and the finished work offered in the Atonement, we can be fully reconciled to God and saved from the wrath of God, and the power of sin. This salvation is pictured in many ways in the Old Testament, but its most *vivid* picture is that of the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. That deliverance brought them from tyranny in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In this, the mighty saving power of God was demonstrated dramatically as the Israelites formed a holy nation of priestly servants of the Lord. In the Exodus we have a pattern (or *type, shadow, analogue*) of the reality of salvation which has now come to us in our Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself, the Savior, the promised One who fulfills all of the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

**Hebrews 10:1** - For **the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things**, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. NASB



**Colossians 2:16-17** - 16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — 17 **things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.** NASB

The New testament then is the account of how Jesus the Christ did come and actually bring the fulfillment of all of the promises of God to save His chosen people from the bondage of sin and its destructive consequences of wrath and death. Now we read of the realities of Salvation which **“have been”** accomplished already by Christ, and we now eagerly await the fulfillment of all that He has worked as the stages of that Salvation are being brought to pass in time and space which will all culminate in the eternal state. This will happen when Jesus returns and brings all earthly rule and power under His dominion and destroys all His enemies, including death itself.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-26** - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all shall be made alive.** 23 But **each in his own order:** Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 **For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.** 26 **The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** NASB

We are now in that stage of fulfillment where we eagerly await His second coming. During these **“last days”** (*gk. eschaton*), this Salvation is now being applied by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all the elect people of God, during **“this age,”** as we await the future fulfillment of **“the age to come”** when Christ will consummate the ages.

## Sanctification

It is no small thing that God has **“sanctified”** those who are in Christ. Indeed for those who have come to Him, they are reckoned as **“holy and without blemish”** in POSITION before God. ***The sacrifice of Christ has completely covered over the sin of His people and His sinless life of perfect righteousness has been imputed to their account.*** Christ Jesus is a perfect priest who accomplished a perfect mediation between God and man. We can have confidence and assurance before God because of what Christ has done. Jesus has merited for us eternal salvation by His broken body and shed blood. The debt of our sins has been paid in full (redemption), our guilt has been removed (expiated), and the wrath of God on our behalf has been satisfied (propitiated).

**Hebrews 10:10, 14** - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**..... 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.** NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 22 But now he has reconciled you **by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-** NASB

**1 Corinthians 6:11** - 11 And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified,** but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

Indeed it is true that Christ Jesus died to sanctify and cleanse us from our sins and that through Him we have been justified (declared righteous). ***Although we have been sanctified in POSITION before God, the Lord is actively sanctifying us in our conduct and PRACTICE.*** The work of salvation is continuing in those of us who are actually being saved. God is the *primary* agent in this process. We as humans are no more capable of sanctifying ourselves as we are of saving ourselves. Without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we would be powerless against temptation and sin, continuing to trample the grace of God under our feet. This practical aspect of salvation will not be completed until the resurrection of our bodies.

**Philippians 1:6** - 6 For I am confident of this very thing, **that He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus. NASB

**John 17:17,19** - 17 **"Sanctify them in the truth;** Thy word is truth.....19 **"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.** NASB



1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 23 Now **may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely**; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.** NASB

1 Corinthians 1:7-8 - 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 **who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Although it true that in Christ we have been justified (declared righteous), and also that God is the One who continues to sanctify us by His Spirit, nevertheless we are commanded to pursue righteousness and holiness in our conduct. We are admonished again and again to be holy and to purify ourselves by remaining in repentance. This is the practical aspect of salvation. We are to pursue Christ in our behavior and to bring honor to His name by our holy and righteous conduct. ***Therefore, sanctification is a progressive work of God in which we cooperate with God to become free from the practice of sin and progressively practice righteousness in our conduct.*** In this sense, sanctification is the work of God and the work of the believer.

Leviticus 20:26 - 26 Thus **you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy**; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine. NASB

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - 3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,** 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 **For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.** 8 Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

2 Peter 1:5-10 - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply** moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness; 7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be **all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you**; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; NASB

2 Peter 3:14 - 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.** NASB

1 John 3:3 - 3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him **purifies himself, just as He is pure.** NASB

Further, this progressive work of sanctification begins at regeneration (the moment in time when we were born again), and increases throughout our lives so that there is a decreasing practice of sinful conduct and an increasing practice of righteous conduct. We are being transformed progressively into the character and likeness (image) of Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,** just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

Romans 6:19 - 19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For **just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.** NASB

Romans 8:29 - 29 For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,** that He might be the first-born among many brethren; NASB

Colossians 3:9-10 - 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, 10 and have put on **the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him** NASB

This progressive sanctification continues until death, or the resurrection (whichever happens first). At that time we will be resurrected into a completed and glorified body which is no longer subject to the corruption of sin. This is called "**Glorification.**" Sanctification continues until we die at which time we are glorified.

## Glorification

Simply defined, Glorification is that state of perfection and glory into which the believer will be transformed in the resurrection, at the second coming of Christ. Indeed God has called those who are in Christ to share in His glory! This is a profound promise and a tremendous privilege!

**1 Peter 5:10** - 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, **who called you to His eternal glory in Christ**, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. NASB

**2 Thessalonians 2:14** - 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, **that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**. NASB

In fact, it will take eternity for us to experience the glorious riches of His kindness as we partake of His glory in Christ.

**Ephesians 2:7** - 7 in order that **in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**. NASB

It was promised to us before the beginning of time, the prophets cried out in hope of it, Christ Jesus purchased it for us, it has come to live in us *in part* now through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and we now eagerly await the full manifestation of it when Christ returns.

**1 Corinthians 2:7** - 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory**; NASB

Like other aspects of salvation, ***glorification is the work of God***. To this state of glory believers are effectually called, drawn, brought, predestined and foreordained, all by God Himself.

**Romans 8:29-30** - 29 For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and **whom He called**, these He also justified; and whom He justified, **these He also glorified**. NASB

**Hebrews 2:10** - 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. NASB

God is said to ***"make known to us the riches of His glory"*** and that He has even ***"prepared us beforehand for glory."***

**Romans 9:23-24** - 23 And *He did so* in order that **He might make known the riches of His glory** upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called**, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

When Christ returns, we shall be with Him in His presence, as He takes us unto Himself. Even as we speak ***Christ is preparing a place for us***, and we will by inheritance receive this glory to which we have been called!

**Ephesians 1:18** - 18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, NASB

**John 14:1-3** - 1 "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a place for you**. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and **receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also**. NASB

When we speak of ***"glory,"*** as it applies to the believer's state at the resurrection, we speak of that quality of life and exceeding joy in the presence of God, ***as our entire person is transformed, into a state of immortality and perfection***. This state of glory is the partaking of the divine nature and we will be ultimately conformed into the perfect image and likeness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**1 John 3:2** - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. NASB

Glorification also speaks of the sanctification and moral perfection that we will take on at the resurrection, when Christ appears. ***We shall be made like Christ and take on His holiness, perfection and immortality***. The process of sanctification is at work in us now, but moves from one degree of glory to another until it reaches final glory, the eternal state.

**2 Corinthians 3:18** - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

If you are in Christ, spiritually you have been born again and raised up with Christ from that dead state of sin that you were formerly in. Your mind, will, and emotions have been transformed by the Spirit of God, you have experienced *regeneration*. But you still live in a mortal body, which is subject to sin and temptation, which will shortly die physically. But this physical death for the Christian is the portal by which we enter into glory. ***Here is our great and blessed hope, that our earthly, physical and mortal body will be transformed to be like Christ's heavenly, spiritual and immortal body is!*** Our bodies will no longer be subject to sin and temptation, indeed we will put on immortality and being immortal, we will never again be subject to death or dying or pain.

**Philippians 3:20-21** - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

**1 Corinthians 15:42-44** - 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, **it is raised an imperishable body**; 43 it is sown in dishonor, **it is raised in glory**; it is sown in weakness, **it is raised in power**; 44 it is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. NASB

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed**, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed**, 53 **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality**. NASB

These things will have their fulfillment at the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is at this time that we shall be changed and become like Him! The Bible plainly declares that ***at the second coming of Christ, we will participate with Him in His glory and power over death and sin***. These things will happen when He comes in power and glory, when He appears, and we are gathered together with Him, and not a moment before.

**Colossians 3:4** - 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then **you also will be revealed with Him in glory**. NASB

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-17** - 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. NASB

**Matthew 24:29-31** - 29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and **they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other**. NASB

**Daniel 12:2-3** - 2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "And those who have insight **will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven**, and those who lead the many to righteousness, **like the stars forever and ever**. NASB

Therefore ***with hope we look beyond our present sufferings to that day*** when we will be transformed and come into His presence. The suffering of this present life, is not even worthy to be compared to the surpassing greatness of the future state of glory we will partake of!

**Romans 8:18** - 18 For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us**. NASB

**2 Corinthians 4:16-17** - 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For **momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**, NASB

Glorification is that sure and firm promise of God, that, He shall deliver us to His presence where sin will be finally eradicated from our lives, and we will be transformed to become like Him. There we shall share in His glory, with gladness and everlasting happiness in his kingdom.

# **The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ**

## **The Atonement – Applied to Our Daily Life**

### **Atonement Applied**

Dear Friends consider the magnificent things that Christ has done! We have in fact been redeemed from our sins and reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We can therefore walk in the assurance, confidence and freedom in our relationship with God, based on the power of Christ's saving work for us. We can now rest in His work and appreciate the great things He has done. This appreciation and worship of Christ, should therefore drive us to apply what He has done in our daily living so that we live the free and powerful life that God has intended for us by His Spirit. These doctrinal truths should have a very practical affect upon our thinking and living. Let us consider a few ways how we should view these truths in our daily life and practice.

- **Substitutionary** – in the place of, *“Christ died in our place.”*

Because Jesus died in my place, I should consider that it should have been ME that had to die and not HIM. Instead He was willing to be the atoning victim and bear the very penalty which is reserved for ME. He is the sacrificial lamb which died, in my place, for my sin! What amazing love is this?

1 John 2:2 - 2 and **He Himself is the propitiation for our sins**; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. NASB

Consider then, how this should motivate us with thankfulness in our hearts toward God. More than this, how it should create in us a hatred for the sin which caused God's wrath to fall upon Him, instead of me. Motivated now by gratitude for what He has done, I should despise my sin for it was the reason that Jesus died for me! Oh Blessed Mercy!

- **Vicarious** – in our place, for us, substitution implied personally, *“Christ died for us.”*

As the hymn writer sings.....

*“And can it be that I should gain, An interest in the Savior's blood?*

*Died He for me, who caused His pain, For me, who Him to death pursued?*

*Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? “*

As we consider in amazement that Jesus died for us personally, we should consider His goal and purpose in this matter as Paul states in Titus...

**Titus 2:11-14** - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 **instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age**, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 **who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people** for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. NASB

Oh believer, think about this. Did Jesus die for nothing? No indeed, He died for **your sin and for mine!** Therefore we should be eager to *“deny ungodliness and worldly desire and to live sensible, righteously and godly in this present age!”* Our Lord has sought to *“purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds,”* therefore we should be exactly that, zealous for good deeds. Christ's death for us personally should motivate us to put away sin and to walk in Christ's love and in His godly character. This is brought to pass in us as we trust in and rely upon the power of the indwelling Spirit to produce in us His godly character.

- **Propitiatory** – appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath toward sin, *“Christ satisfied God's divine justice and paid the actual debt of our sin.”*

Jesus death on the cross satisfies the wrath of God toward each one of us sinners who has trusted in Him. This is the ultimate display of God's love toward those who trust in Christ! In fact this satisfaction is so complete, it is said to *“justify us by His blood,”* and to *“save us from the wrath*



*of God!”* More than this, it completely *“reconciles”* us back to God, and the perfect life of Jesus now *“saves us”* from sin and death!

**Romans 5:8-10** - 8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died **for us**. 9 Much more then, having now **been justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him. 10 For if while **we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. NASB

Because this is true, consider that how we should rejoice that the furious wrath of the Holy God has been spent on Him and none remains for us, who are infinitely deserving of it! Even more how this should motivate us with a holy fear to keep our life pure from sin! Further, it should create in us a gratitude that strengthens us to honor Him for what He has done, with lives of purity rather than dishonor Him by continued sin, which brings disgrace to His name.

- **Expiatory** – the remove of guilt, *“Christ cancelled out or released us from the debt of sin.”*

Free at last! We have been set free from the guilt of our sins! No longer do my past sins rule over me with guilt and condemnation, rather I am free to love and enjoy God freely!

**Romans 8:1-3** – 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death**. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, **God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin**, He condemned sin in the flesh, NASB

Because Christ has cancelled the debt of our sin and guilt, we should look forward to our days in how we may glorify God with our lives, rather than be depressed with hopeless despair wondering if God can really forgive us. There is *“no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* Therefore, since we have been *“set free from the law of sin and death,”* we can live to the glory of God with hearts of thanksgiving and gratitude!

- **Justification** – a legal declaration of righteousness, *“Christ justified us before God’s court on the basis of His own merit.”*

Though the devil may accuse us, we have an advocate with the Father who has dealt with our sins completely.

**1 John 2:1** - 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**; NASB

Because God has justified us in Christ Jesus our Lord, we should appreciate and glorify God for this great thing that He has done. This is because we could have in no way brought about this justification on our own, but it is in fact come to us by GRACE alone, through FAITH alone, in CHRIST alone! We have been justified on the basis of Christ’s work, and this should cause us to worship and thank God for His amazing grace!

- **Sacrifice** – the personal cost to Christ was death in our place, *“Christ was the actual victim of divine justice, he was the sacrifice that died for us.”*

Consider that God so loved us that He sent Jesus to die for you and for me!

**1 John 4:10** - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. NASB

This love of God should then motivate us to want to be like Him. This is practically played out in our lives as we live a life of sacrifice to love others in many practical ways. If we truly glorify God for His love, we should show it by making sacrifices of our time, talent and money to display His love now through our very lives! These sacrifices glorify God and are part of our priestly ministry to Him.

**1 Peter 2:4-10** – 4 and coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, **are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**.....9 but you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you** out of darkness into His marvelous light; NASB



- **Reconciliation** – the restoration of relationship of mankind to God, *“Christ reconciled us to God and repaired the alienation we once had with Him.”*

Now through our Lord Jesus we have had our relationship with God restored! Not only this but we stand in God’s favor because of Him. We now stand in Christ’s perfect righteousness, holy blameless and beyond any reproach!

**Colossians 1:22** -22 yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death**, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach NASB

Consider then, that since God has loved us with such an amazing love, how we should embrace His love and return it to Him! Since God has reached out to us and embraced us, shall we not embrace Him back? Indeed we should! Let us consider how profound God’s grace is in forgiving and reconciling us to Himself and cherish His love with a devoted life or worship and thanksgiving!

### **His Grace is greater than all of our sin**

Dear reader, consider that if in fact you are a Christian having trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, then the reality of God’s forgiveness for your sins is true, objective and eternal. This means that the FACT is your sin IS forgiven by God, and you are free from it completely. Consider that no matter how great your sin may have been in the past, or how great it is now in the present, if you believe in the Lord Jesus and His atoning death, and this with a repentant heart, God’s grace is much greater to forgive you than His Law is to condemn you! This is because Jesus atonement for your sin is absolutely perfect and complete!

**Romans 5:19-21** - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. 20 And **the Law came in that the transgression might increase**; but where sin increased, **grace abounded all the more**, 21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so **grace might reign** through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. NASB

*“Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”* The mountain of God’s grace **“abounds all the more”** over the mole hill of our sin! Sin is serious. More than that it is dangerously deadly, but God’s provision for our sin in Jesus is more powerful to forgive than His Law is to condemn. This is because Jesus has met both the penal sanctions and the perceptive requirements of the Law. It is fulfilled in Christ and we are in Him! The Gospel tells us that there is **“no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1). So the question becomes will we believe our feelings and emotions or will we believe Christ Jesus and His Gospel? CJ Mahaney in his book, *“The Cross Centered Life”* gives a word about how to beat condemnation.... *“Here’s how to beat condemnation. **Confess your sin to God. Then believe in Him.** Exercise the gift of faith that God has given you to believe that Jesus died for the very sins you’re being condemned for. The punishment He received was for you. His resurrection is proof that God accepted Jesus sacrifice. The sins of your past and the sin you just committed were all atoned for; you need carry their weight no more. You can’t do it. That’s why Jesus did it for you. Being freed from condemnation doesn’t require that we forget or deny the depth and depravity of our sins, whether they are sins committed prior to our conversion or sins committed since our conversion. In fact, if we want to know the joy and gratitude that the woman at Jesus feet experienced, we must start by acknowledging and owning up to our many sins. Paul called himself the worst of sinners (1 Tim 1:16). He wasn’t paralyzed by condemnation. He was exalting God’s grace by recognizing his own unworthiness and sin as he marveled at the mercy of God.”* Now friends, this is where we should be in our struggle against sin. We should be marveling at the grace of God. Our sin is real, and it is deplorable. But God’s grace in Christ is greater than all of it! Therefore let us come clean and acknowledge our sins, and then let us remind ourselves of the glorious truth of the Gospel, **“sin increased, grace abounded.”**

## Preaching the Gospel to yourself daily

Dear friends, if the Cross and Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central event in all of human history, and it is, then shouldn't it also be the central theme of our daily lives? Yes indeed! As we seek to glorify and enjoy God all the days of our life, we will never see and appreciate the glory of God as clearly as we do when we reflect on Calvary's Cross. There is the blazing center of the glory of God! There we see the attributes of God with piercing clarity! There is cause for worship and adoration toward God and His Son, our blessed Savior Jesus Christ! Consider how Paul saw his life as defined by the very Gospel itself.

**Galatians 2:20** - 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.** NASB

To Paul, the cross was very personal, and it should be to us. *"I have been crucified with Christ,"* exclaims Paul, and *"I no longer live!"* These are powerful words indeed, but he goes on, *"the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."* Paul's life is defined by the Gospel. The *"life I live"*, he says, is defined by what Jesus did for me! Oh dear reader, how we need to be reminded of this everyday! Each and everyday we need to come to God through the cross, and see all of His beauty and the design of our lives as fulfilled in and through our Lord Jesus and what He has done for us! CJ Mahaney outlines in his book, five ways that we can keep the cross central in our daily lives. Here they are with a few comments both from him and myself.

1. **Memorize the Gospel** – Memorizing Scripture about God's grace and forgiveness in Christ is a powerful way to be always and continually reminded of what he has done! (Gal 2:20-21, Isa 53:3-6, Rom 3:21-26, 5:6-11, 8:32-39, 1 Cor 15:3-4, 2 Cor 5:21)
2. **Pray the Gospel** – As we approach God in prayer, let us be reminded just how heinous our sin is and how glorious is the life and death of Christ to overcome it. This will surely enrich our prayer life like no other thing can.
3. **Sing the Gospel** – Each day is another opportunity to celebrate and relish in the goodness of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus! Dear Christian, has God given you a voice? Then employ it for that which it was created, to sing the high praises of God and His Christ! Make sure your songs are centered on the cross and the atonement.
4. **Review how the Gospel has changed you** – Consider that you are not the same person you used to be! You have come a long way in Christ! It is a very helpful and encouraging thing to remember all that Christ has done to change us and how far we have come! It is important for us to consider what pitiful sinners we were, and how deplorable our sin was. More than this, we glorify God for His grace when we see how the power of the cross has literally changed our life! Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!
5. **Study the Gospel** – Oh so much to learn about our glorious God and all that He has done for us in Christ. Surely the deeper our knowledge and understanding of the cross, the deeper and more profound our worship and appreciation to God for what He has done. Below is a list of good books which will help you in your understanding of the Bible concerning the cross and the Gospel. There is also a web link to some great material.

John Stott – *The Cross of Christ*

Leon Morris – *The Atonement*

Jerry Bridges – *The Discipline of Grace*

The Power of the Cross – *CH Spurgeon*

The Cross and Christian Ministry – *DA Carson*

Living the Cross Centered Life – *CJ Mahaney*

The Cross and Salvation – *Bruce Demarest*

<http://firstimportance.org/the-heart-of-the-gospel/>

# The Cross – The Work of Jesus Christ

## The Atonement – Seeing and acting as if Christ is our Righteousness

### The Gospel is Objective Reality

This is to say that the righteousness which was merited by the life and death of Christ is *outside* of us, immutable and fixed. Our right standing with God does not change or shift with our feelings, circumstances or performance, but is that which rests solely on the merits of Christ and His perfect righteousness. He Himself is our righteousness and sanctification, therefore our right standing with God is **“in Christ”** and always steadfast, unchanging and adequate.

**1 Corinthians 1:30** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** NASB

If you are **“in Christ,”** you have trusted in what He has done by His perfect life and death, and not in your own works or performance. On the contrary, our performance was a huge failure and by it we merited God’s holy wrath and deserve to die as a rebel and enemy of God. But Christ is our righteousness and we have believed in Him. Therefore our faith has laid hold of Jesus and His perfection and our righteousness before God is not subject to anything except that fixed reality that Christ IS righteous. The righteousness which we possess is a foreign righteousness, which is NOT our own, but is Christ’s and is complete and adequate.

**Philippians 3:9** - 9 and **may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ,** the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, NASB

Our faith is placed in an *historical* fact which has happened and is accomplished. That is, that Jesus Christ lived a perfectly righteous life in my place, and that He died to absorb the wrath of God for me and these He both accomplished completely and perfectly. The resurrection is proof of the fact that it was accepted by the Father and that He did indeed triumph over sin and death. The grave could not hold Him because the effectual power of His life and death does **“much more abound”** over sin and death. Therefore the life and death of our Lord is an historical fact which is then outside of us and *objective*. It is not *subject* to any other thing which can change its merit or value, but is in fact a reality which stands, fixed in the heavens, unmovable and complete. Because of this objective reality we confess that our salvation is by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. This is to say that we are saved because God is rich love toward us and gives us favor which we have not merited, but rather in Christ ONLY we have favor with God and this is applied to us by simply trusting in what He has done for us!

**Ephesians 2:8-9** – 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves,** it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

Therefore we can derive from this objective reality a sound and tremendous *assurance* of God’s love and favor for us. God only designs that which is good for the Christian and tends to our benefit and blessing. Even the worst circumstances of our lives work together for our good because God **“causes all things to work together for good.”** If God would not spare His own Son, but would give Him in sacrifice to justify us, will He not also graciously give us all things? What more could God do to prove His love and favor for us?

**Romans 8:31-34** - 31 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 **Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns?** NASB

What then shall we say in response to this? How should we face our daily life in regard to this reality of God’s love and favor for us! We should live our life in view of what God *has* done, and live in the fullness of the blessing He has worked with a devoted life of love toward God and thanksgiving for His marvelous grace!

## A response worthy of Christ

When we live our life in view of the cross, and allow it to define our lives, it changes the whole context in which we respond to the circumstances and relationships in our life. Consider once again the words of the apostle Paul in Galatians....

**Galatians 2:20 - 20** "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. NASB

***"I have been crucified with Christ"*** says Paul. What he means to say is that just as Jesus died to put away sins, we die to sins in regard to our behavior and live in the resurrection of Jesus life by faith. We are to consider the heavenly reality of our death to sin and our life is now purchased and defined by Christ's death to sin and righteous obedience to God. In Colossians he tells us then to seek this heavenly reality in our thinking and be transformed in our behavior because of the reality of what Christ has done.

**Colossians 3:1-4** - 1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.** 3 **For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

***"Seek the things which are above."*** That is, allow the heavenly purpose of God's love in Christ to change the way we view our life, relationships and circumstances. We do this because, he says, ***"we died and our life is hidden with Christ in God."*** We died to sin when we embraced Christ and His cross, therefore Paul tells us, to consider ourselves dead to sinful behavior.

**Colossians 3:5-11** - 5 Therefore **consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.** 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 **But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.** 9 **Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,** 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him 11 — *a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.* NASB

He then goes on to describe how this knowledge of what Christ has done should change the way we view our relationships and it defines the context of how we respond to others in light of the knowledge of the cross.

**Colossians 3:12-4** - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;** 13 **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.** 14 And beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,** to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful.** 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Here Paul describes how the knowledge of the ***"things above v-2,"*** changes the context in which we view our relationship to others. If Jesus died to give His life as a sacrifice for us, surely we can view others with ***"compassion, kindness, humility gentleness and patience!"*** If Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross for our forgiveness, surely we can now ***"bear with one another and forgive each other."*** This, he says, is ***"just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you!"*** In other words, Jesus life and death on the cross becomes an **example** to us of how we treat others and express His heavenly love and virtue through our relationships now in our daily life. He describes Christ's love as if it were a garment to ***"put on"*** and tells how we are to let His peace ***"rule in our hearts"*** and to do this while being ***"thankful!"*** Further we are to teach and admonish one another along with songs of praise and this also with ***"thankfulness in your hearts to God!"*** Our entire life, all our actions he says, are to be done ***"giving thanks through Him!"*** Let us therefore see how Christ's cross is the wellspring of God's virtue in our daily life!

# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## The Gospel Defined – What is the Gospel?

### The Gospel is a Message

The word “*gospel*” comes from the Greek word “*evangelion*” ...2098 meaning “a good message, i.e. the gospel,” or “the good news.” This is where we derive our word “*evangel*” and also “*evangelical*,” two words which are commonly used in Christianity to speak of “the Gospel” or of “being Gospel believing.” When we use the word “Gospel” in Christianity it takes on a very specific and defined meaning which has its origin in the Bible, and more specifically in the New Testament (even though the Old Testament pointed to it frequently). It is in fact “the message of the good news” of Jesus Christ and the free offer of salvation from sin and reconciliation to God through Him. So to define the Gospel in a brief statement it would look something like this.....

The *message* or “*good news*” of the person and work of Jesus Christ, God the Son, come to the earth to fulfill God’s eternal plan of salvation. The message carries within it the power to transform the sinner by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, into a child of God and grant them eternal life. It furthermore includes the proclamation of all of God’s promises to mankind in Christ, as well as His threatenings to those who continue in their sin and rejection of God’s way of salvation provided “freely” through Jesus Christ. Primarily, mankind has been separated from God by willfully sinning against Him, is subject to His wrath, but that *mankind can be saved from God’s wrath by repentance from sins and faith in Jesus Christ*. This faith is defined as “trusting in and relying upon the person and work of Jesus Christ alone, receiving Him as both Savior and Lord.” It also announces the Kingdom of God, come to the earth now, under the rule of the King, Jesus Christ, and that He will soon return to the earth to destroy sin and evil forever, and renew all things in creation to God’s intended state of glory. Secondly, that this gospel message is to be preached among the nations, so that mankind can be saved from sin and death and reconciled to God through adhering to it. (Romans 1:16-17, 3:19-28, 5:19-21, 10:9-10,17, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Acts 17:24-31, John 3:16-18, 1 John 5:11-13)

This message of the Gospel is at its core rather simple, and yet at the same time has many complex elements and nuances that are very important to understand.

### The Gospel is Simple

When we consider the basic elements of the Gospel it is really rather simple. 9Marks.org has classified them in these four basic categories.....

- **God** – It is a message about the One true and living God and His claim on our lives as our Sovereign Creator and Righteous Judge.
- **Man** – Man was created by God, in God's image, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But man sinned against God by disobeying His holy law. Man therefore separated himself from God's holy and satisfying presence, and incurred His wrathful displeasure.
- **Christ** – Christ’s death was the substitute payment for the penalty that we deserved for our sin. His death is God's only provision for the forgiveness of man's sin and the appeasement of God's wrath against him. His life provides a perfect righteousness for us in the sight of God.



- **Response** - We are called to respond to this good news in repentance and belief - turning away from our sin and self-sufficiency toward God, and trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the substitute penalty that we deserved for our sin.

In these basic elements the Gospel is rather **simple**. In one sentence, ***“Man has been separated from God because of sin, and Christ is God’s provision to atone for man’s sins, and man can simply receive God’s provision through repentance and faith.”*** This is the good news about Jesus Christ that historic Christianity has always proclaimed and this is the *essential* message that we still proclaim today. The message is timeless and not subject to modernity, or culture or any other influence that would change its meaning until Christ returns in power to establish His Kingdom physically upon the earth.

### **The Gospel is Complex**

Although the essential message of the Gospel is rather simple, it has many details and related matters that cause it to blossom and bloom into a very complex and beautiful saga of immense proportions. In fact, the Gospel is the central theme in History and the crowning achievement of God’s work in creation. The creation was created so that the Gospel story could be accomplished by God and this is what we call Redemptive History. The entire Bible is devoted to revealing this Gospel to us as the central focus of all of the History of mankind, both now and forever. In fact, Heaven is now and will be filled with high praises of the Lamb of God for His very loving and gracious sacrifice at Calvary!

**Revelation 5:8-14** - 8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, **“Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”** 10 “And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” 11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, **“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”** 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, **“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”** 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped. NASB

Therefore, the essential message of the Gospel is simple and clear, but the ramifications behind what it is proclaiming is complex and involved in a very awesome way. For example ***the Gospel confers on us a KING and a KINGDOM*** which has **now** broken into time and space in a certain spiritual way, but has **not yet** reached its fulfillment. Jesus reigns as KING from the right hand of God and is awaiting His enemies to be put under His feet. The Lamb of God has come and given His life as a sacrifice for sins to offer us forgiveness, and He calls us to willingly repent and follow Him. But this same Jesus, the suffering Lamb, is also portrayed in the Bible as the Lion of Judah who is a soon coming King who is coming to conquer and take His Kingdom by force, and warns all who do not obey Him willingly, that rejection of His Kingship will result in the worst possible consequences of all, eternal damnation. (**John 3:36, 2 Thes 1:7-10**) The KINGDOM has come in a very real way, but it has a “NOW” but “NOT YET” characteristic to it.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-28** - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all shall be made alive.** 23 **But each in his own order:** Christ the first fruits, **after that** those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 **then comes the end**, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, **when** He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 **For He must reign until** He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in

subjection to Him. 28 And when **all things are subjected to Him, then** the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. NASB

Notice the terms used in this passage, ...order....after that....then....when....until...etc. Thus the Kingdom of God has "stages of fulfillment" which have "NOT YET" reached their climax. All of this is conferred upon us in the Gospel message because in the Gospel we proclaim Jesus as King, and Judge of the living and the dead. All men will face King Jesus in judgment, at death, and will be judged by Him for the "**deeds done in the body.**" The Gospel calls us to obedience to Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord, a Lord who rules over us as our King as well as a Priest who intercedes between us and God.

**Acts 10:42-43** - 42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that **this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.** 43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that **through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**" NASB

**Romans 2:5-6** - 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in **the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to every man according to his deeds:** .....16 on the day when, **according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.** NASB

Notice how both Peter and Paul tell us that the message or Gospel they are preaching contains this element of judgment to come as well as forgiveness of sins. Or another example of elements in the Gospel is that ***the Gospel proclaims to us the One true and living God who is the Creator of all things.*** Christianity is *monotheistic*, as there is only one God and there is no other. (Isa 45:5-6) This is a fundamental part of the Gospel message. Without it, the Gospel makes no sense at all.

**Acts 14:14-16** - 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out 15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and **preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.** NASB

**Acts 17:24-28** - 24 "**The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth,** does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;** 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 **for in Him we live and move and exist,** as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' NASB

It was important when Paul was preaching to the pagan *polytheistic* (many Gods) people in Lystra and again in Athens, for Him to lay the foundation of monotheism before He could proclaim the entire Gospel to them. This is not unlike the pagan pluralistic culture we find ourselves in here in *postmodern* America. Many people do not have a *monotheistic* worldview, so we must lay that foundation in their understanding so as to make sense out of; - God, Man/Sin, Christ, Response. These things show us how the Gospel is also a complex message made up of many different elements that all work together to display the glory of God and His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul and the other Apostles, were preaching the full Gospel, which included all of God's manifold blessings, threatenings and promises as He brings the creation to its ultimate fulfillment when His Kingdom is established and all His enemies, including death, are destroyed and forever removed, and all things are made new.

**Ephesians 3:8-12** - 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, **to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,** 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places.* 11 **This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,** 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. NASB

This is another important aspect of the Gospel. The Kingdom will soon reach its fulfillment and all things will be made new, death and hell no more shall awe us, the old creation will be destroyed and God's people will forever enter His rest, and He will dwell among them!

**Revelation 21:1-5** – 1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for **the first heaven and the first earth passed away**, and there is no longer *any* sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and **He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them**, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be *any* death; there shall no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, **"Behold, I am making all things new."** And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." NASB

In fact, all of the categories of doctrine in the Christian faith are inseparably tied to the Gospel and provide for it a foundation and support. All of these great doctrines have important ramifications to the support of the Gospel and work together to weave the tapestry of God's amazing redemptive purpose as He unfolds it in the History of the world.

- **Authority of Scripture** – Apart from the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture the Gospel has little credibility.
- **Theology** – The Gospel proclaims the existence of God and His claim upon mankind as His creatures.
- **Salvation** – The Gospel presents fallen man with the only way to be saved from God's wrath and given eternal life with Him forever through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.
- **Ecclesiology** – The Gospel calls out a people from the darkness of sin and the world to become the people of God through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. All of these redeemed people comprise the Church.
- **Eschatology** – The Gospel proclaims the Kingdom of God and His rule, coming to lay claim to His creation and banish His enemies forever.

And this is not all. The Gospel has other important ramifications as well. Consider this brief outline given by DA Carson in his sermon, **"What is the Gospel?"**

#### **8 defining words**

- **Christological** – A message about Christ, incarnate God, Lord and Savior.
- **Theological** – A message about God and His relations with mankind.
- **Biblical** – A message thoroughly defined by the Bible.
- **Apostolic** – A message preached and established by the Apostles.
- **Historical** – A message based on historical facts.
- **Personal** – A message for paramount importance for every single individual .
- **Universal** – A message to be preached to the entire world.
- **Eschatological** – A message which reveals the purpose and fulfillment of all things and the ultimate ends of the world.

#### **5 clarifying sentences**

- The Gospel is heralded through proclamation.
- The Gospel is received in authentic persevering faith.
- The Gospel is disclosed in personal self humiliation.
- The Gospel is the central confession of the whole Church.
- The Gospel is boldly advancing under the contested reign and inevitable victory of King Jesus.

Or consider these elements added to the list by Tim Keller's survey of the Gospel in His sermon **"Gospel Centered Ministry."**

- **Doxological** – The Gospel is a message that teaches us to glorify, enjoy and worship God and His Christ as the great purpose of all of life.

- **Cultural** - The Gospel is a message that has power to transform the moral fiber of a culture. It cuts to the heart of how people relate to one another with conviction.
- **Transformational** – The Gospel transforms us into new creations in Christ as it is God’s very power to save and transform.
- **Wonderful** – The Gospel is a glorious display of the character and nature of the wonderful God.

All of these things show us clearly that **the Gospel is complex and multifaceted message** about God and His eternal purpose accomplished through Jesus Christ, which encompasses the entire record of human history and the fulfillment of the ages.

## Jesus is the Gospel

But in its most basic element it is a message about Christ. Jesus Himself is the beginning and the end of the Gospel. Paul when writing to the Corinthians tells us.....

**1 Corinthians 1:20-24** - 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know God*, **God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.** 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but **we preach Christ crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:30-2:2** - 30 But by His doing you are in **Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 **For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.** NASB

Here Paul says Jesus is the power of God and He is the wisdom of God. What Paul is communicating is that we cannot experience the power or wisdom of God apart from the person of Christ because He is the central theme of God’s wisdom and power. We see the power and the wisdom of God through the Gospel, as it explains to us God’s amazing love expressed through Jesus and His passion on the Cross. **“We preach Christ crucified”** says Paul. His message is one about how the death of a certain man can redeem the entire creation from death and decay! This he says is a **“foolish”** message to the Greeks and a **“stumbling block”** to the Jews, but to those whom God has called, **“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”** He goes on to tell us that Jesus has become for us....wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. Not that Jesus gives us these things, but that He, His person, is those things for us. Now dear friends, here is true freedom....Jesus IS my wisdom....Jesus IS my rightstanding with God....Jesus IS my holiness before God....and Jesus IS my redemption, my personal payment for my personal horrendous sins! Christ IS these things for me, because I am unable to be these things on my own! Oh what a Savior! Jesus’ very name means “The Lord saves!” Jesus is the Gospel! This reminds me of a word from the man of God John Newton.....*“My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.”*

## The gospel never changes

What we preach is a very old, old story. The message about Christ and His death, burial and resurrection is fixed historical fact. Further, God sent Him to accomplish redemption for us and it was therefore planned and accomplished by God Himself. It is therefore the fulfillment of the exact requirements of God to meet the demands of His own justice, and Christ performed that perfectly. It ever remains therefore, the unchanging power of God for all who receive it with authentic, persevering faith.

**Romans 1:16-17** - 16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,** to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."* NASB

# Romans 3:19-28

## An Exposition – The Righteousness of God in the Gospel

### Brief Outline Romans Chapters 1-5

I.	Introduction	1:1-17
II.	Condemnation: The Need for God's Righteousness	1:18—3:20
	A. Guilt of the Gentile	1:18-32
	B. Guilt of the Jew	2:1—3:8
	C. Conclusion: All Are Guilty before God	3:9-20
III.	Justification: God's Righteousness	3:21—5:21
	A. Description of Righteousness	3:21-31
	B. Illustration of Righteousness	4
	C. Benefits of Righteousness	5:1-11
	D. Contrast of Righteousness and Condemnation	5:12-21

The book of Romans is comprehensive and technical discourse on Salvation by grace through faith in Christ, and on the Gospel message. In the above outline we get a picture of the foundation Paul has been building in order to deliver the Gospel message to us. In chapter one he tells us that ***“the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation”*** (v-16) and he then tells us that it reveals the ***“righteousness of God”*** (v-17). He begins to establish the case of why God’s righteousness is important and necessary explaining that both Gentile and Jew are under the condemnation of God and in desperate need to be justified. In chapter 3:19-28, he explains this ***“righteousness of God”*** which is revealed in the Gospel in very certain terms. The following is an exposition of this text.

**Romans 3:19-20** - 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. NASB

A. 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; -

Paul, having made his case that both the Gentile (1:18-32) and the Jew (2:1-3:8) are guilty before God, this is his final concluding remark stating that they are all liable and ***“accountable to God.”*** In establishing the extent of this accountability, he states that ***“every mouth may be closed and the whole world may become accountable.”*** By this he surely means that they have no defense or excuse to speak of the guilt of their sin, but that both their conscience (2:12-16) and God’s Law (here) testify against them.

B. 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. -

In regard to being ***“justified”*** in God’s sight, Paul again established the guilt of the entire world with the reference ***“no flesh,”*** that is, no human being. These he says, cannot be ***“justified”*** by obedience to the Law, rather that their failure to keep it establishes what sin



is, transgression of His Law. Mankind has failed not only at *violating* what the Law forbids (penal sanctions), but also at *fulfilling* what it commands (perceptive requirements). The Law, with all of its high and Holy commands, has indeed caused the sin of mankind to be seen with utmost clarity and it *condemns* us all as guilty before God's judgment bar. It has given us a measuring line that reveals our treason and rebellious refusal to submit to our Creator in His commands to love Him and our neighbor. Here Paul establishes **two very important elements** in the Gospel:

- 1) The UNIVERSALity of the guilt of mankind before God (Jew and Gentile).
- 2) The inability for anyone to be justified before God by good works or obedience to the Law of God because of their utter failure to fulfill it. It is PERSONAL.

This is consistent with Paul's Gospel in other sections of Scripture as well.

(Rom 2:13, 7:7-9, Gal 2:19, 3:10-13, Eph 2:8-9, Tit 3:5-7)

Galatians 2:16 - 16 nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since **by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified**. NASB

**Romans 3:21** - 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, NASB

A. 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, -

Paul had explained in chapter 1:16-17 that the Gospel revealed "*the righteousness of God*" and that this was the "*power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.*" Here he tells us that this "*righteousness of God has been manifested,*" and this "*apart from the Law.*" When Paul speaks of the righteousness of God here, he does not speak of that righteousness which God requires only, but a righteousness which of itself comes from God and is an objective reality that has now been "*revealed*" (v-1:17) or "*manifested.*" This was Martin Luther's great discovery, that is, that the righteousness of God was a foreign righteousness apart from our own works and apart from the very Law of God itself. Now this is **THE essential part of the Gospel**, and of the Christian Faith, the principle of *sola fide*, that is, that the righteousness of God is an objective foreign reality provided by God and received by faith, not merited of our own works.

Here see also, that God's righteousness "*has been manifested.*" It is an historical reality that we observe from outside, that is, the life and death of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ! The life and death of Jesus Himself, is the "*manifested*" righteousness of God. Jesus is our righteousness. This righteousness "*has been manifested*" in Jesus! It is Historical.

1 Corinthians 1:30 - 30 But by His doing you are **in Christ Jesus, who became to us** wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption,

See also, that it is the righteousness of God, that is, it is theological. It is that righteousness that God BOTH *requires and provides*. Here Paul establishes **two more very important elements** in the Gospel: It is HISTORICAL and THEOLOGICAL.

B. being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, -

Here he establishes that the entire Old Testament is a witness to this "*righteousness of God, apart from the Law.*" That both the Law and Prophets (a reference to the entire Old Testament, that being the Pentateuch and the historical, wisdom, and prophetic literature) have testified that rightstanding with God is obtained by faith and not by works. Here he is

saying that the entire Old Testament witnesses and testifies that the righteousness of God *“has been manifested apart from the Law!”* See then another **important element** in the Gospel, it is BIBLICAL.

**Romans 3:22** - 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; NASB

A. 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ –

Having established two very important points;

1) That the entire world, all mankind, is guilty before the tribunal of God’s judgment because of the failure to fulfill the Law of God.

2) That God’s righteousness now *“has been manifested apart from the Law”*

Paul delivers the sweetest, most glorious and soul freeing words which can be spoken to a guilty sinner who is under the threat and condemnation of God’s fierce wrath. That is, that God has provided the righteousness that He requires in Jesus Christ, and that we can possess it through faith alone in Christ alone! This is THE GOSPEL in a verse, and it is GOOD NEWS! Make no mistake, here the sinner is told explicitly how he/she can be made right with God, *“through faith in Jesus Christ.”* Here is **another element** then, the GOSPEL is CHRISTOLOGICAL. Jesus Christ is the center of the Gospel, it is Christocentric.

B. for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; -

Here we see a great paradox in the Gospel. It is both, all inclusive and very exclusive! It makes *“no distinction”* between Jew and Gentile, but *“all”* mankind can be included in being *“justified”* before God. However, this righteousness of God is very exclusive because it is provided only for those who *“believe.”* See then that God’s righteousness is UNIVERSAL in its scope, but given exclusively to those who believe (have faith) in Jesus Christ! And so, in the words of DA Carson, the Gospel is *“received in authentic persevering faith.”*

**Romans 3:23-24** - 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

A. 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, -

Here Paul repeats the point he had earlier established that *“all have sinned”* and *“fall short”* of *“God’s glory,”* that is, of His glorious perfection which He requires in His Law. Notice the terms *“glory of God”* are used to speak of God’s nature which is equivalent to His holy Law. Learn here that when we sin we *“fall short of the glory of God,”* yes, we fail to glorify God. Sin is a defamation of the *“glory of God”* and an offense to His holy perfection.

B. 24 being justified as a gift by His grace -

Here is Paul’s explanation of the gratuitous and unmerited nature of God’s FREE grace. Now he elaborates on the GOOD NEWS that *“all”* can be *“justified as a gift by His grace!”* Here is the GOSPEL, that in spite of the fact that *“all”* mankind have *“sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”* they can be *“justified”* by God as a FREE *“gift.”* By FREE we mean FREE to the one who receives it, but very costly to the One who gives it! Now this is what we mean when we speak about *“grace!”* GRACE is unmerited (not earned) and gratuitous

(freely given). No one can earn the “justification” or “*righteousness of God*,” because, “*all*” have forfeited it by sinning against God and offending His Glory, rebelling against His holy commands and spurning His threats to punish. Therefore, justification is provided as a gift by grace ONLY and NOT by any form of merit. This is why we say that salvation is by Grace ALONE. It is unmerited by the recipient, but rather freely given. The “Solas” of the reformation express the exclusive role of each one of the elements of salvation.

- *Sola Gratia* – GRACE ALONE – not merited by works, but freely given
- *Sola Fide* – FAITH ALONE – received only by belief and trust, apart from works
- *Sola Christus* – CHRIST ALONE – the righteousness provided by His merit ONLY

Grace has its emphasis on God’s part of salvation being the originator and the giver of salvation. This is why the doctrine of election is also inseparably tied to grace. But faith has its emphasis on the recipient of grace, the sinner who receives the gift by faith. Faith is the conduit or vehicle by which grace is received.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God**; 9 **not as a result of works**, that no one should boast. NASB

C. through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; -

See now where the merit lies. It is in “*the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*.” Here, the “*being justified as a gift by His grace*,” is merited by the “*redemption*.” Of course here the term “*redemption*” speaks of a price paid for the debt. It is a monetary term. Therefore the “*being justified as a gift by His grace*” is provided by the price which was paid by Christ Jesus. Consider here also the word “*through*.” The object of this adverb is the clause, “*being justified as a gift by His grace*.” Therefore justification is a “*gift*” provided “*through*” Christ’s “*redemption*.” See here again therefore that justification is NOT merited by any form of good works or obedience to the Law, but is “*through faith*” (v-22) and received as “*a gift by His grace*” and provided “*through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*”(v-24).

**Romans 3:25** - 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; NASB

A. whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. -

Paul now points to the redemption price which was paid by Christ Jesus. The “*whom*” speaks of Christ. But notice here that it was “*God*” who “*displayed publically*” Christ. It was “*God*” reconciling us to Himself by “*a propitiation in His blood*.” Here “*propitiation*” speaks of an atoning sacrifice which was placed on an altar. This atoning sacrifice propitiates God’s holy wrath towards sin, which means it satisfies or appeases God’s holy anger because of sin. To state this another way, God sacrificed Christ publically, to appease His own holy wrath. Here again notice these **two important elements** of the Gospel, it is THEOLOGICAL because it has been wrought by God and it is CHRISTOLOGICAL because it has been purchased by Christ.

The terms “*in His blood*” speak of Christ being a blood sacrifice that appeases the holy God to provide the justification that is received by faith. God is “*He who requires blood*” (Psalm 9:12) because the wages of sin is death and without the death of someone, sin cannot be

atoned for, because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness or remission of sins (Heb 9:22).

Notice again Paul's emphasis on faith. This "*propitiation*" is provided "*through faith.*" Faith is the vehicle "*through*" which the "*propitiation*" is applied. God's wrath is appeased and satisfied for every individual who receives the satisfaction "*through faith.*" No one can merit this appeasement of wrath without becoming the appeasement themselves. This is why salvation is NOT of works, but rather "*through faith*" in Christ who worked it for us.

B. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; -

Now this blood sacrifice was God making a "*demonstration of His righteousness.*" This is the "*manifested righteousness of God*" (v-21). Consider here, God has something to demonstrate, His righteousness. How did He do that? He sacrificed Christ Jesus publically to "*demonstrate His righteousness.*" Here Paul gives us the reason why God needed to demonstrate His righteousness. "*Because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.*" Here Paul simply means that God needed to demonstrate His righteousness because He had not burst forth in wrath against all sin in all the previous ages on mankind to destroy them, but rather "*in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins*" that were "*previously committed.*" Here learn also that justification for sinners in previous ages was completed by Christ.

**Romans 3:26** - 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. NASB

A. 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, -

Here Paul describes that Christ's death was a demonstration of God's righteousness "*at the present time*" to explain that it is now fulfilled at the advent of Christ. This is the "*fullness of time*" when God has once for all time (Heb 10:10-14) demonstrated His righteousness through the sacrifice (propitiation) of Christ.

Galatians 4:4-5 - 4 But **when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. NASB

B. that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. -

Here Paul states that God is "*just*" in this act of propitiation and that He is the "*justifier*" as well. God is the One who justifies (Rom 8:33), and He justifies "*the one who has faith in Jesus.*" See then in this glorious verse, justification is by faith, and in this God has demonstrated His justice.

**Romans 3:27-28** - 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. NASB

A. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. -

Here Paul points to mankind and asked how we can boast before God somehow of our own merit. Here he plainly states that *“boasting is excluded.”* In other words, we have no place to boast of our justification before God because it was completely unmerited and gratuitous, not being earned by us but rather freely given and earned by Christ. Further that this justification comes now *“by a law of faith,”* and NOT *“of works.”* The idea of justification *“apart from works”* in this context is emphatic and repeated several times for Paul states just a few verses later.....

Romans 4:5 - 5 But **to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies** the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, NASB

Notice how many times in this short context this idea of justification by faith apart from works has been mentioned.

1. v-21 (But now apart from the Law)
2. v-22 (even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;)
3. v-24 (being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption)
4. v-2 (as a propitiation in His blood through faith.)
5. v-26 (the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.)
6. v-27 (Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.)
7. v-28 (For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.)

B. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. -

Here Paul summarizes the main point of this passage in very certain terms. This statement emphatically sets forth the idea that justification happens *“by faith”* and is *“apart from works of the Law.”* This is the heart of the Gospel that could not be stated in any clearer terms than are given here. This is a major theme in Paul’s doctrine of salvation.

Romans 5:1-2 - 1 Therefore **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our **introduction by faith into this grace** in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. NASB

Galatians 2:16 - 16 nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may **be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law**; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. NASB  
Philippians 3:9 - 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but **that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, NASB

Justification before God is by God’s Grace ONLY, and received by faith ONLY, because of what Christ ONLY has done.



# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## Two Great Benefits – The Death and Life of Christ

### Two Terrors of the Law

Mankind is guilty of treason against the highest authority that exists, God Himself. The Bible describes this treason as sin. Sin was first committed by our father Adam and subsequently passed to all his succeeding generations (Romans 5:12-21), having become part of our nature. Here is a brief and helpful **definition of sin** from Nelson's Bible Dictionary....

***SIN** - Lawlessness (1 John 3:4) or transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what it forbids. The transgression can occur in thought (1 John 3:15), word (Matt 5:22), or deed (Rom 1:32)..... Sin is not represented in the Bible as the absence of good, or as an illusion that stems from our human limitations. Sin is portrayed as a real and positive evil. Sin is more than unwise, inexpedient, calamitous behavior that produces sorrow and distress. It is rebellion against God's law-the standard of righteousness (Ps 119:160)..... Since God demands righteousness, sin must be defined in terms of mankind's relation to God. Sin is thus the faithless rebellion of the creature against the just authority of his Creator. For this reason, breaking God's law at any point involves transgression at every point (James 2:10). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)*

Now in regard to how we have sinned against God by transgressing His holy Law, there are basically two categories of sin that we are guilty of. There are sins of *omission*, where we fail to do what God has required of us and sins of *commission*, where we do something God has forbidden us to do. This is because God's Law has both preceptive requirements and penal sanctions.

<b>Sin</b> <b>Transgression of God's Law in thought, word or deed</b>	
Preceptive Requirements	Penal Sanctions
<b>Omission</b> – Omitting to do what God requires	<b>Commission</b> – Doing what God forbids

Judicially speaking therefore, we are in guilty in both aspects of transgression against the Law, and we have need to be justified before God on both accounts. Even if our sin debt was paid in regard to the penal sanctions, we still would not have fulfilled what God has required of us and therefore our righteousness before God is found lacking. For this great treason against God then, the whole world is accountable to God, having sinned and fallen short of His glory.

**Romans 3:19-20, 23** - 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that **every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God**; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for **through the Law comes the knowledge of sin**.... 23 **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, NASB

We have transgressed God's holy Law in every point so that we are subject to the wrath of God (Eph 2:1-3) and the curses of the Law, and the ultimate penalty for sin which is death. It is in this dreadful state that all mankind abide naturally, and this explains the great need for salvation. Mankind needs to be **saved** from sin and death. It is from this state of sin and death that Jesus

Christ saves, to all who call upon Him for salvation, and this salvation is the good news held out in the Gospel.

**Romans 6:23** - 23 For **the wages of sin is death**, but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus** our Lord. NASB

When someone places faith in Christ, they enter into a state of “*justification*” before God, which is wholly complete in both aspects of the Law. Through faith in Christ people can be declared just or righteous in the sight of God.

### **Substitutionary Atonement and Imputed Righteousness**

Now this is the great good news that is the substance of the Gospel in its most basic form. That is, that all who believe in Christ, can be justified before God, not by any merit of their own (or works of the Law), but by faith in Jesus Christ ONLY.

**Galatians 2:16** - 16 nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may **be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law**; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. NASB

This is called “*justification by faith*.” This “*justification*” is a *declarative act* on God’s part toward us on the basis of what Jesus Christ has accomplished in His life and death. When we trust in Christ, we are declared righteous by God because of Christ’s merit. Christ’s merit is wholly complete before God because He paid the *penal sanctions* of the Law in His death, and He fulfilled the *preceptive requirements* of the Law in His life, having perfectly carried out all of God’s precepts in His lifetime. He never omitted to do what God had required and He never did anything that was forbidden by God. Therefore, on this basis, God’s Law has been fulfilled in Christ, and God offers this “*justification*” to all who have faith in Christ.

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sins by dying as a sacrifice in our place. This is called “*substitutionary atonement*,” as discussed earlier in our lesson *pages 39-50*. This atonement was pictured in the Old Testament “*sacrifice*.” Therefore, Christ is our “*sacrifice*,” our Passover lamb that died “*vicariously*” (for us) and as a “*substitute*” (in our place), *ref pg 45*. Therefore Christ died as a “*substitute*,” a “*sacrifice*” to pay the debt of death which was owing to God because of our sins. God reckons Christ’s payment of death to us through faith and on this basis cancels the debt we owed because of the Law’s *penal sanctions*.

**Colossians 2:13-14** - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross. NASB

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to **present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation**.

In the same way, God reckons to us the perfectly righteous life of Christ through faith, so that in Christ God sees us as having fulfilled all the *preceptive requirements* of the Law as well. This is called “*imputation*.” Christ’s perfect life is credited to those who have faith in Him.

**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is **through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, NASB

**Romans 4:5-6** - 5 But to the one who does not work, **but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness**, NASB

These then are the **two great benefits of the Gospel**. Both the life and the death of Christ are reckoned to us by faith, fulfilling God’s righteousness wholly and completely for us! In the Gospel therefore we not only proclaim that Christ died for us, but that He also lived for us!

# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## Thy Kingdom Come – More than Personal Salvation

### The Gospel proclaims a King and a Kingdom

Christianity expresses its hope in terms of the Kingdom of God. It looks to the King to bring His rule to the earth and restore all things to a never ending world of peace and righteousness. Toward this Kingdom, the Old Testament prophets looked forward and told of days that would be very much unlike the current days of warfare and hatred, disease and death, along with drought and famine and pestilence. It would be a day of peace and prosperity where all the world's problems would be resolved as God would bring His rule to bear upon the earth and drastically renew and recreate the world. Of this Kingdom, George Ladd writes.....

*“Then came Jesus of Nazareth with the announcement, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt 4:17). This theme of the coming kingdom of God was central in His mission. His teaching was designed to show mankind how they might enter the kingdom of God (Matt 5:20, 7:21). His mighty works were intended to prove that the kingdom of God had come upon them (Matt 12:28). His parables illustrated to His disciples the truth about the kingdom of God (Matt 13:11). And when He taught His followers to pray, at the heart of their petition were the words, **“thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matt 6:10). On the eve of His death He assured His disciples that He would yet share with them the happiness and the fellowship of the Kingdom (Luke 22:22-30). And He promised that He would appear again on earth in glory to bring the blessedness of the Kingdom to those for whom it was prepared (Matt 25:31,34).”*

This Kingdom then is a major theme of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a proclamation that God's Kingdom has arrived in the person of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus first began His ministry he announced **“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**

**Matthew 4:17** - 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** NASB

With this announcement of the Kingdom, comes a summons to *repentance* from sin. This is because the nature of God's Kingdom is primarily about His sovereign authority and rule as the King. The holy God will not always strive with sin in His presence, but has now proclaimed that His rule has come and He has issued warning that **“all men every should repent.”**

**Acts 17:30-31** - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.** 31 because **He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness** through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NASB

Now that God has long **“overlooked the times of ignorance”** He is **“now declaring”** that men must repent of sins because He has **“fixed a day”** of judgment. This summons to repentance was also one essential element of the Gospel that was preached by the apostles as well.

**Mark 6:7-12** - 7 And **He summoned the twelve and began to send them out** in pairs;.....12 And they went out and **preached that men should repent.** NASB

**Acts 3:19-20** - 19 **“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away,** in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; NASB

**Acts 20:20-21** - 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks **of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

**Acts 26:20-21** - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.** NASB

In this sense then **the Gospel is a warning.** Because Christ is now bringing His authority as King to bear upon all mankind, He is commanding that all rebels who sin against His holy Law, should stop sinning and surrender to His Lordship or be judged and banished from His Kingdom forever. Moreover, they shall perish and die forever under the wrath of Almighty God.

**Luke 13:3** - "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.** NASB

**John 3:36** - 6 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**" NASB

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9** - 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** 9 **And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction,** away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, NASB

Therefore the great King has now warned of the arrival of His Kingdom and has mercifully invited men to repent from sins and be saved from this awful wrath which is to come. He has graciously given rebel sinners an opportunity to freely surrender or else suffer the consequences. However, along with the warning of the consequences of continued rebellion comes all the promises of God as expressed in the hope of the coming Kingdom of God. Accordingly, those who respond to the Gospel with repentance and faith receive and enter the Kingdom of God, the realm of His rule, and forever live in the fullness of its blessing. The experience of this blessing is glorious and fulfilling beyond what words can express.

### **Three Expressions of the Kingdom in the New Testament**

The language of the New Testament speaks about the Kingdom of God in various ways. Primarily, there are three different ways in which the Kingdom of God is expressed.

1. **The Kingdom is God's reign, His Authority, His sovereign rule as King.** – In almost every case of the usage of the term Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven the Scripture is speaking of God's rule, His dominion and sovereign authority as King. So when this term is applied we speak of the realm of His authority and the blessing and power of it.

**Psalms 145:11-13** - 11 They shall speak of **the glory of Thy kingdom, And talk of Thy power;**

12 To make known to the sons of men Thy mighty acts, And the glory of the majesty of Thy kingdom. 13 **Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Thy dominion endures throughout all generations.**

NASB

**Psalms 103:19** - 19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; And **His sovereignty rules over all.** NASB

We are told to ***"seek first His Kingdom"*** so the Kingdom is something we seek.

**Matthew 6:33** - 33 "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness;** and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

Or we are told that they were ***"preaching the Kingdom"*** so that they were telling people of the reign and rule of God and warning men to come and surrender and receive its blessing.

**Acts 28:30-31** - 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 **preaching the kingdom of God,** and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered. NASB

Or we are told of its nature as it exists now in the church.

**Romans 14:17** - 17 for **the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.** NASB

Also it can be expressed in terms of the fact that we suffer for the Kingdom.

**2 Thessalonians 1:5** - 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered **worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.** NASB

2. **The Kingdom the present realm into which we may now enter to experience the blessings of His reign.** – When Jesus came preaching the Kingdom he told us it was now at hand.

**Matthew 4:17** - 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" NASB

**Luke 17:20-21** - 20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as **to when the kingdom of God was coming**, He answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;** 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' **For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.**" NASB

As He taught, He described the Kingdom as something we could now enter or not enter based on certain conditions.

**John 3:5** - 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, **he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**" NASB

**Luke 18:17** - 17 "Truly I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter** it at all." NASB

He described it as something that had now come and that He was its chief representative. because the Kingdom had now arrived.

**Matthew 12:28** - 28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, **then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**" NASB

It is also expressed in terms of our present state having been delivered from the "domain of darkness" and transferred to the Kingdom of God.

**Colossians 1:13** - 13 For He delivered us **from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,** NASB

3. **The Kingdom is a future realm which will come only with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ into which we will then enter and experience the fullness of His reign.** – The Kingdom of God is also expressed in terms of its future fulfillment and the fact that it is yet to come. As Jesus taught of the Kingdom He would speak of it not only in terms of its present reality, but also in terms of it being yet future.

**Matthew 25:34** - 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**" NASB

**Luke 22:17-18** - 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, **I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.**" NASB

Or the Apostles would speak of it as something yet to be "*inherited*" in the future or something yet to be entered into to.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10** - 9 Or do you not know that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall **inherit the kingdom of God.** NASB

**2 Timothy 4:18** - 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, **and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom;** to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. NASB

Furthermore, the Kingdom has different stages of its fulfillment as it reaches its climax in History. Of this fact the Bible has much to say. There are many prophecies in the Bible describing these different stages of fulfillment and events that yet shall be in the future as we see the Kingdom of God unfold in the course of world History.

**1 Corinthians 15:23-24** - 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 **then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father,** when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. NASB

**Matthew 24:14** - 14 "And **this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world** for a witness to all the nations, **and then the end shall come.**" NASB

And so the Kingdom is described in these three ways. It is the realm of God's authority which has **now** broken into time and space in a certain spiritual way, but has **not yet** reached its climax. Jesus reigns as KING from the right hand of God, and has established the Gospel of the Kingdom as a way for mankind to be reconciled to God and surrender freely and receive amnesty from His fierce wrath. However, this period of God's patient forbearance with evil in the world



will soon end and Christ will return in Glory with all of His angels to take His rightful place as King. This is typically referred to as the Second Coming of Christ.

## The Second Coming of Christ

An essential element of the Gospel is that we preach Christ Jesus as Lord and King. We *warn* mankind to come voluntarily under His authority and rule before it is too late and they die in their rebellion against Him and face Him in judgment, or He returns to establish His Kingdom and they are found in their rebellion against Him and then face Him in judgment. We call mankind to repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus in order to flee from the coming wrath. (Eph 5:6, Col 3:6, 1 Thes 1:10, Rev 6:16-17, 11:18) When Christ returns there will be several tasks at hand that He will accomplish. I have put them into (4) categories here for the sake of brevity. The warning that we give in the Gospel embodies these inevitable and unavoidable events to come upon the entire world.

- **Rescue and Resurrection**
- **Destruction of Evil Authorities**
- **Establishment of Earthly Kingdom**
- **Consummation of the Ages**

Below we will briefly describe these events for the reader's education of general categories of "end time" events of which they are warning people will soon take place.

### 1. Rescue and Resurrection

In the course of this Gospel age, there will come a time of terrible tribulation on the earth unlike any other time before it. Christ will "*cut short*" the time of tribulation on the earth in order to rescue His people from the greatest persecution ever to come upon them by the hands of Antichrist (Dan 7:21-27, 12:1-2, Rev 13:4-10).

Matthew 24:21-23 - 21 for **then there will be a great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 "And **unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.** NASB

When this rescue takes place, the dead in Christ shall be raised first, and the Church will be caught up in the air to meet Christ and to stand with Him in glory as He puts all of His enemies under His feet and establish His reign as King. This is the first resurrection (Rev 20:4-6).

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.** 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and **the dead in Christ shall rise first.** 17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. NASB

Matthew 24:29-31 - 29 "But **immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.** 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His **elect** from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. NASB

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,** 52 **in a moment**, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.** 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. NASB

### 2. Destruction of Evil Authorities

When Christ returns to rescue and resurrect His people, He will then swiftly destroy the Antichrist and arrest every earthly authority (Rev 19:11-21).

Revelation 19:19-21 - 9 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him[Christ] who sat upon the horse, and against His army. 20 And the **beast[antichrist]** was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those

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who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.** 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. NASB  
**Daniel 7:25-27** - 25 'And he[antichrist] will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 'But **the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.** 27 '**Then** the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

Evil will be brought under control on the face of the earth at the hand of Jesus the King, and be brought under the rule of the Kingdom of God.

**Isaiah 2:2-4** - Now it will come about that **In the last days, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains.** And will be raised above the hills; And **all the nations will stream to it.** 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths." **For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** 4 And **He will judge between the nations,** And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. **Nation will not lift up sword against nation,** And never again will they learn war. NASB

Even Satan himself will be bound and have no influence on the earth for 1000 years.

**Revelation 20:1-3** - And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And **he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.** 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. NASB

### 3. Establishment of Earthly Kingdom

At this time Christ will establish His rule upon the earth. His long awaited government will be established, His rule will be Sovereign and will never be destroyed. It will be everlasting!

**Daniel 2:44** - 44 "And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed,** and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; **it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.** NASB

**Daniel 7:13-14** - 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "**And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.** NASB

He and His saints (the church of all time), will rule over the nations, there will be no war, and the world will enjoy a time of great peace (Rev 20:4-6).

**Psalms 22:27-28** - 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, **And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee.** 28 **For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.** NASB

**Zechariah 14:16-20** - 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then *no rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 **This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

**Daniel 7:27** - 27 '**Then** the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

**Revelation 5:10** - 10 "And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they will reign upon the earth.**" NASB

This time period of 1000 years is commonly called the Millennium. There is much controversy concerning the nature and circumstances of this time.

## Consummation of the Ages

Toward the end of the Millennium, there will be a final rebellion against Christ by the nations of mankind, at which time He will destroy them forever, along with Satan. This will be the final doom of Satan and all the wicked, and the reign of sin and death upon the earth will be brought to a close by God's power.

**Revelation 20:7-10** - 7 And when the thousand years are completed, **Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war;** the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and **fire came down from heaven and devoured them.** 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASB

Death will be destroyed, and Satan with it as they are forever cast into the lake of fire. At this time, God will resurrect all the dead from all ages and they will stand before God in judgment. If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, He is forever cast into the lake of fire.

**Revelation 20:11-15** - 11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And **I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.** 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.** NASB

Now after the wicked and Satan and death are destroyed, the Eternal State will be ushered in. In the Eternal State, sin will be banished from the Kingdom of God forever and God will create a **"New Heavens and Earth."** In this renewed creation, sin will never destroy again and the creation will perpetually live in peace and utter fulfillment forever and ever, world without end. According to Scripture, there will **"no longer be any death, ...or mourning, or crying, or pain."**

**Revelation 21:1-6** - 21 And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away,** and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and **there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**" 5 And He who sits on the throne said, **"Behold, I am making all things new."** And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." NASB

In this Eternal State, God's people will lie down in peace, never again to know any curse or pain. God will dwell among His people forever and ever, and they will forever enjoy the happiness and satisfaction they were created for in its fullest capacity.

**Revelation 22:3-5** - 3 And **there shall no longer be any curse;** and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and **they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.** 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and **they shall reign forever and ever.** NASB

The coming ages will hold out one glorious revelation of the kindness of God after another, and all our capacities to appreciate and worship God is all of His Glory will be utterly fulfilled. The Gospel promise of eternal life will be fulfilled in a perpetual state of experiencing the lavish blessings of the Eternal God, forever and ever!

**Ephesians 2:5-9** - 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 **in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## The Lordship of Christ – Jesus is Lord

### The Lordship Controversy

In discussing the Gospel it is important to recognize the recent controversy that has taken place in Evangelical Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Certain so called “*Evangelicals*” sought to uphold the form of the Gospel which emphasizes faith in Christ apart from works, but in so doing redefined the role of works in salvation to a degree which was very unhealthy and led to a corrupted form of the Gospel. This “*watered down*” version of the Gospel has come to be known as “*easy-believism*.” It emphasizes the fact that all one must do to be saved is to “*believe*” upon the person and work of Christ, acknowledging the facts about Him and His Gospel. Although this is a true part of the Gospel, when it is overemphasized to the exclusion of the teaching that true “**saving faith**” is a faith that repents of sin and pursues love for Christ and God by obedience to their commandments, it corrupts the Gospel and turns it into a kind of “*fire insurance*” for people wanting the benefits of eternal life, but who are unwilling to turn from sin and obey God’s commandments. This is a serious error, one that has no doubt led thousands of people astray from the true Gospel and saving faith. The teaching of Jesus and the Apostles is crystal clear on this topic. They taught that when one truly believes upon Christ, they have done this by the power and work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and that the fruit of the Spirit which flows from this true belief produces a life of repentance, faith and ongoing pattern of obedience to Christ for the rest of one’s life. They affirmed that people were deceived if they thought they knew Christ but did not obey Him.

**Matt 7:21 - 21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. NASB

**Titus 1:15-16 - 15** To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. **16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient,** and worthless for any good deed. NASB

**James 1:22 - 22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and **not merely hearers who delude themselves.** NASB

This controversy was really well defended by John MacArthur in his book “**The Gospel According to Jesus.**” In this book He focuses on the Gospel which Jesus proclaimed and evaluated this doctrine in light of clear biblical texts. He was primarily refuting certain Evangelical teachers who were teaching this “*watered down*” version of the Gospel at Dallas Theological Seminary. The primary teachers he was refuting were Lewis Sperry Chafer, Zane Hodges, and Charles Ryrie (although there were others). These teachers were responsible for training many thousands of Evangelical pastors and church leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In his book, MacArthur documents these teachings and refutes them with clear biblical teaching. This corrupting of the true biblical Gospel has indeed led to a serious state of affairs in the modern Evangelical Church and needs to be corrected for each successive generation. The true biblical Gospel needs to be proclaimed and upheld in each generation so that we do not lose sight of the fundamental message of Christianity, that is, the person and work of Jesus Christ and how one is saved by repentance and faith in Him. I mention this controversy in order to bring into focus a very important matter in defining the Gospel. This has come to be known as the “**Lordship of Christ**” and explains the relation of the believer to Jesus as their Master and King. Obedience to Christ is a Gospel mandate and a major theme in the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles.

**Luke 6:46 - 46** "And **why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?** NASB

**John 3:36 - 6** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**" NASB

## Jesus is Lord

As the Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ there is no mistaking the clear portrait of His person. He is Lord! Without apology He is lifted up and proclaimed as the Lord of all. (Matt 28:18, Acts 10:36)

**Romans 14:9** - 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that **He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.** NASB

The word **“Lord”** implies His Deity and authority. Being God very God, Jesus is the supreme authority. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is described as the Creator of everything, the very God of Providence and sustainer of all that is, the reigning King of History, as well as the Judge of the living and the dead. If that were not enough to convince us of His authority to rule us, we are blind at the very least.

**Colossians 1:16-17** - 16 For **by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,** whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — **all things have been created by Him and for Him.** 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.** NASB

**Ephesians 1:19-22** - 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things** to the church, NASB

**Acts 10:42** - 42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that **this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.** NASB

**2 Timothy 4:1-2** - 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, **who is to judge the living and the dead,** and by His appearing and His kingdom: NASB

The fact of the matter is, Jesus is Lord whether one recognizes it or not. Just because one has not submitted their life to Him, does not mean that one is not accountable to Him. For He will come to judge every person for the deeds done in the body, as the Gospel declares. And He alone possesses the authority to determine one's eternal destiny. Ultimately every person that has ever lived will bow their knee before Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as the Lord.

**Philippians 2:9-11** - 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,** of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and **that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,** to the glory of God the Father. NASB

Jesus is not only Lord, but His Gospel calls us to willing submission to His Lordship. More than this, the Bible clearly teaches that obedience to Christ cannot be separated from **“saving faith”** and that love for God and repentance from sin are equated with **“saving faith.”** Jesus is frequently heard *asserting* His right to rule us and calling people to obedience to Himself.

**John 13:13-17** - 13 **"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.** 14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. 16 "Truly, truly, I say to you, **a slave is not greater than his master;** neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. NASB

**Matthew 10:24** - 24 **"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.** 25 "It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master. NASB

**2 Timothy 2:19-21** - 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, **"Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."** 20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 **Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.** NASB

**James 2:14** - 14 What use is it, my brethren, **if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?** NASB

When Jesus asserts Himself as Lord, He makes it clear that those who reject His claim on them, are destined to perish because of it!



**Matthew 7:21-25** - 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. NASB  
**Matthew 24:48-51** - 48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth. NASB

And so Jesus is Lord and in His Gospel He calls us to willing submission and obedience to His commands. The New Testament speaks of this calling in many ways in order to express the nature of a right response to Him. This response is a major theme in the Gospel because people's eternal destiny is at stake in it, as it shows the true nature of our faith, whether or not we have been truly called and chosen of God for salvation.

### **The summons to repentance is a call to obedience**

Jesus is often heard calling people to repentance from sin and warning them of the consequences of sin. At the same time His message called people to *"believe"* or to trust in or rely upon Him in order to be right with God.

**Mark 1:14-15** - 14 And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." NASB

**Luke 13:3-5** - 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." NASB

**John 5:14-15** - 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you." NASB

In this repentance He was calling people to turn away from sin and to obedience to God's commandments. This is what repentance is. It is to stop sinning and start doing what is right. Repentance is not ONLY feeling sorry for sin, but doing what is right from the heart with *positive* and *active* steps as Paul taught us, to *"perform deeds appropriate to repentance."* Repentance is proven real when the deeds show it to be real.

**Acts 26:20-21** - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. NASB

Repentance is not a one time act but life long obedience. The New Testament explains this nature of repentance over and over again.

**Luke 3:8-14** - 8 "Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance, ..... 10 And the multitudes were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?" 11 And he would answer and say to them, "Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise." 12 And some tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to." 14 And some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages." NASB

**Ephesians 4:20-24** - 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. NASB

**Titus 2:11-14** - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14

who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds.** NASB

This lifelong obedience or “**perseverance**” is spoken of by Jesus and the Apostles as a mark of those who will be saved. Perseverance cannot be separated from true repentance because it proves repentance to be real.

**Matthew 24:12-14** - 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.** NASB

**Hebrews 3:13-15** - 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For **we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;** 15 while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me." NASB

## The Nature of Saving Faith

The nature of true “**saving faith**” is a major theme in the teaching of both Jesus and the Apostles. They are frequently laboring to be sure that we are aware of the nature of “**saving faith**” so that we can be sure we possess it and not some *mere profession* or apostate form of faith. This can be seen in many different allegories and *forms* of expression in the New Testament. Here are a few clear examples of these forms of the nature of true faith:

- Jesus calls us to a Master and slave relationship of lifelong perseverance and service
- Jesus calls us to be “**born again**” and to be recreated by God through faith
- Jesus calls us to bear fruit and produce the marks of true faith
- Jesus calls us to humility, brokenness and to deny self reliance
- Jesus calls us to lose our life to follow Him
- Jesus calls us to love Him supremely above all other things and worship Him

When Jesus and the Apostles teach us about the faith, they frequently use the allegory of a **master and slave**. Jesus tells us parables of how true faith is demonstrated by the faithful obedience of a good slave. Paul tells us that we are slaves of righteousness.

**Matthew 20:26-28** - 26 "It is not so among you, **but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;** 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. NASB

**Luke 12:37, 42-43** - 37 "**Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes;** truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them..... 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? 43 "Blessed is that **slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.** NASB

**Romans 6:17-18** - 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, **you became obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** NASB

They teach that true “**saving faith**” is brought about by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and call us to be **born again**.

**John 3:3** - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" NASB

**2 Corinthians 5:17** - 17 Therefore **if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature;** the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB

This regeneration is a fundamental change in the nature of man and is a work that only God can do. Because salvation is the work of God in regeneration, and the believer has been given a new nature and is indwelt with the Holy Spirit, the believer therefore desires to please God and to keep His commandments. It is the chief goal of one who worships and esteems God to live a life which imitates God and conforms to His character. This is reverberated throughout the Scripture with exhortations and commands which continually call us to become like Christ in our character and behavior.

**Ephesians 5:1-2** - 5:1 Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ** also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

**1 Peter 1:15-16** - 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;** 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." NASB

This is also shown in the allegory of a **fruit bearing vine or tree**. This expression of true saving faith is frequently shown by Jesus and the Apostles. When this is shown, there is a contrast given between those **"true believers"** who do bear fruit and by it prove the reality of faith, and those **"mere professors"** who do not and are destroyed. In these examples of fruit bearing, Jesus and the Apostles are laboring to show the **"marks"** or **"evidence"** of true **"saving faith"** so that we can discern the difference between **"saving faith"** and **"mere profession."**

**John 15:5-7** - 5 **"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit;** for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 **"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.** 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. NASB

**Matthew 7:16-21** - 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "Even so, **every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.** 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. NASB

Another analogy employed by Jesus and the Apostles to show true faith is that of **self denial, humility and brokenness**. We are to mourn and weep over our sin and self-reliance, for no one has the power in and of themselves to please God. This is only accomplished by the power of the Spirit through faith, for **"without faith it is impossible to please God"** (Heb 11:6). When we come to Christ by repentance and faith, we denounce ourselves in brokenness over our sin, and we humble ourselves before God confessing our sins and our profound offenses against the God of Heaven and in faith we cast ourselves at His mercy through trusting what Christ has done for us, not in any way how we have merited God's favor. True faith relies solely on the merits of Christ, embracing our own weakness and inability to earn God's favor. Therefore the Gospel calls us to abandon self reliance and trust in Christ ALONE for justification and reconciliation to God.

**Luke 9:23** - 23 And He was saying to them all, **"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,** and follow Me. NASB

**Matthew 18:2-4** - 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, **"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child,** he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. NASB

**James 4:6-10** - 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, **"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves** in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. NASB

In fact, the Gospel call of self-denial is so great, that Christ calls us to **lose our own life to follow Him**. In this He means to say that His Lordship and purpose and plan for our life supersedes our own purposes and plans. He means for our life to take a whole new direction and for our plans to definitively change from our own sinful, self reliant direction of self fulfillment to and life of servant-hood to Him as our Master and King. We no longer live for ourselves but instead for Christ. Our lives no longer belong to us but rather to Christ our Redeemer King who bought and paid our ransom from death and delivered us into eternal life!

**Luke 9:23-25** - 23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 **"For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.** 25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and **loses or forfeits himself?** NASB

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, **that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.** NASB

**Romans 14:7-9** - 7 For **not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord;** therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. NASB

**1 Corinthians 6:17-20** - 17 But **the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.** 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?** 20 For **you have been bought with a price;** therefore glorify God in your body. NASB

This price of losing our life can occasionally cost us everything. Indeed throughout history many saints have given their life at the hands of violent persecutors. The Gospel calls us to this kind of commitment of self abandonment to follow Christ, even unto death!

**Matthew 10:32-33** - 32 "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, **I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.** 33 "But whoever shall deny Me before men, **I will also deny him before My Father** who is in heaven. NASB

**2 Timothy 2:11-13** - 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For **if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;** 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself. NASB

**Revelation 2:10-11** - 10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.** 11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.'** NASB

In fact, the Gospel calls us to give up everything we have in order **to love Christ supremely above all other things and worship** Him first.

**Luke 14:26-27** - 26 "If anyone comes to Me, and **does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.** 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. NASB

**Luke 14:33** - 33 "So therefore, **no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.** NASB

**Philippians 3:7-8** - 7 But **whatever things were gain to me,** those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, **I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,** and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, NASB

Throughout the Bible God makes it clear that He is the most valuable and supremely worthy being of all. We are continually called to hold Him in higher esteem than all other things.

**Matthew 22:36-40** - 36 "Teacher, which is **the great commandment in the Law?**" 37 And He said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'** 38 "**This is the great and foremost commandment.** 39 "The second is like it, **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." NASB

In fact, this is the nature of sin itself, it is to value ourselves and our own will above God and His will. The pride of self exaltation is the very first sin portrayed in Satan's rebellion in the angelic conflict and mankind has followed his devious temptation and because of it plunged all of creation into death and bondage to decay. Therefore the Gospel calls us to willing submission to Christ in order to reverse this great treason against God. In short, the very thing we refused to do in the garden at the fall, the Gospel calls us to do now. That is to deny our own self reliance and self will and to embrace Christ as our all sufficient resource for life and fellowship with God. What man could not do in his own strength in the garden, he can now do with the strength that God provides through the regeneration and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

**Philippians 4:13** -13 **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.** NASB

**2 Corinthians 3:4-5** - 4 And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 **Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God** NASB



Now in the Scripture, true love for God and Christ is seen and made evident by how we behave. In other words, the Bible points out the kind of behavior that shows itself as loving God, and in contrast points out a false kind of love which is not really true love for God, because it lacks obedience. It is clear from scripture that love for God produces obedience to His commandments. This obedience is the result of regeneration in the life of the believer. This obedience is produced by a willing submission to the Lordship of Christ.

**1 John 5:3 - 3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. NASB

**John 14:15,21 - 15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." NASB

**1 John 4:20-21 - 20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for **the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.** 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that **the one who loves God should love his brother also.** NASB

### True Conversion or Mere Professors?

In the New Testament, the writers are continually laboring to show the nature of true faith and also the nature of false faith. The believer is called to self examination again and again to test the reality of their faith. This was a theme in the teaching of Jesus when He would present His parables to teach about the nature of the Kingdom and of saving faith.

**Luke 8:14-15 - 14** "And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, **and bring no fruit to maturity.** 15 "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and **hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.** NASB

**Luke 18:22-26 - 22** And when Jesus heard this, He said to him, **"One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."** 23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich. 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, **"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!** 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." NASB

**Luke 12:16-21 - 16** And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 "And he said, **"This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.** 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 **"So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."** NASB

**Matthew 13:47-50 - 47** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and **gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.** 49 "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. NASB

This theme in the teaching of Jesus, shows that true faith produces good works consistent with that faith. In fact, those who do not submit to Christ as Lord, or reject Him by disobedience, are condemned as not possessing salvation. A man's good deeds are proof of his true repentance and a man's evil deeds prove him to be a child of the devil.

**Matthew 7:21 - 21** **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven;** but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. NASB

**Luke 13:24-27 - 24** "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for **many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** 25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and **He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, all you evildoers.'** NASB



This was also carried on by the Apostles as they explained the Gospel and the kingdom of God.

**Titus 1:16** - 6 They profess to know God, **but by their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed. NASB

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** - 3 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 **For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money**, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 **holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.** NASB

**James 1:22** - 22 But **prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers** who delude themselves. NASB

**2 Corinthians 13:5** - 5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith**; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — **unless indeed you fail the test?** NASB

We are commanded again and again to repent and stop sinning. This is a fundamental part of Christian life, that is, that we submit to the Lordship of Christ and obey His commandments. It is clear from Scripture that those who go on in unrepentant sin will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Romans 6:12-13** - 12 Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts**, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; **but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.** NASB

**Romans 8:12-14** - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation**, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 **for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. NASB

**Ephesians 5:3-5** - 3 But **do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you**, as is proper among saints; 4 and **there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting**, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. NASB

A proper understanding of salvation issues from the book of first John alone, and shines light as clear as a sunbeam on these issues. A true Christian has been *“born of God”*, because God has decided to give Him life, and that life is eternal by nature. When we have been *“born again”*, we have become new creations with an eternal destiny. You cannot turn from genuine faith, because you are kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible never teaches that someone who is genuinely saved, can reject or disengage themselves from Christ. Someone who apostatizes must have had at one time an orthodox and essential *profession*, but not a genuine new birth. But as John explains of the apostates or antichrists;

**1 John 2:18-19** - 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 **They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.** NASB

If one were *“born of God”* he could not continue to sin. The idea here is that true converts do not live in continual patterns of sin (the word for *“sins”* here means “ongoing continual practice of sin”), and that further if one is living in an ongoing continual pattern of sin he/she is only a **mere professor** and not a **true believer**.

**1 John 3:6-10** - 6 **No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** 7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 **No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** NASB

These contrasts are meant to speak to the true believer of how to discern false teaching from true teaching about the faith. When an apostate continues in his sin, he shows the reality of his eternal state and divine calling. When one continues in righteousness and truth, their works are the proof positive of saving faith.

**1 John 2:29** - 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know **that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.** NASB

When an apostate breaks fellowship with Christians, and begins to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

**1 John 3:9-10** - 9 **No one who is born of God practices sin,** because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 **By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God,** nor the one who does not love his brother. NASB

John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is the fruit or product that comes from it. When the product of one's life is a continual pattern of sin, they manifest that the true nature of their faith is only **mere profession** and not the fruit of being **"born of God."**

**1 John 4:7-9** - 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** 8 **The one who does not love does not know God,** for God is love. NASB

Those who have been born of the divine will, (John 1:13), persevere. Not because they persist in their own spiritual fervor, but because Christ the good Shepherd knows His sheep, and He will lose none that the Father has given Him, but will raise them up at the last day (John 6:39).

**1 John 5:18-19** - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; **but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.** NASB

It is obvious then that there is a so called faith, a **mere profession**, which is really no faith at all. If someone claims to have faith, but does not live a life consistent with the teaching of Christ, his/her faith is useless. True saving faith is that which produces the fruit of God's Spirit in the life of a Christian. ***Faith in Christ is not just mental agreement with the gospel message, but it is a life response to the gospel, which produces actions consistent with the children of God.*** The demons believe the Gospel message and know that it is true, but they have not conformed their lives to it. Many people are just like them, they have believed that the message is true, but that have not submitted their life to Christ to obey Him.

**James 2:14-19** - 14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? **Can such faith save him?** 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 **In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.**

Faith is the reality and proof that our hearts have been cleansed and we have been reconciled to God. Faith has substance, and that substance is a transformed life. Remember how Jesus defined of faith.

**Luke 9:23** - 23 And He was saying to them all, **"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.** NASB

You see He is calling for the transformation of one's life. It is a willingness to deny oneself and go where He goes and do what He does. It is not our good behavior that earns favor with God, but our good behavior is the **product** of the kind of faith that saves. If we realize that Christ had to die for our sins, how can we walk in them any longer! Eternal life is the free gift of God given to those who repent and have faith in Christ. It is by grace through faith in Christ alone that we are saved, not by our works. But **this faith produces a life surrendered to the Lordship of Christ** and is a testimony of Christ's power over sin. This is why we are exhorted toward good works.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,** which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. NASB

Therefore **true saving faith is seen in contrast to mere profession** by a submission to the Lordship of Christ which produces a life of good works and obedience to God's commandments.

## What about James chapter 2:14-26?

In this passage James is discussing the fact that not just everyone who gives "mental assent" or agreement with Christ possesses the KIND of faith that SAVES, but only those whose faith is proved genuine by how that faith manifests itself, namely good works. Here he says ***"faith without works is dead"***, meaning that the KIND of faith that has no living proof that it is real, is really not the genuine KIND of faith that SAVES. Therefore if someone says he believes in Christ, but does not live in a consistent manner with Christ's teaching, he is no better off than a demon destined for hell (verse 19).

**James 2:14-26 - 14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?** 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** 18 But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? **21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works,** when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? **22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. **24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.** 25 And in the same way **was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works,** when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, **so also faith without works is dead.** NASB

Here James is laboring to show **the nature of true faith**, much like Jesus and Paul and John. James points out very clearly that the KIND of faith that SAVES, in **contrast** to the KIND of faith that mere professors or demons have, is ***"justified"*** (proved positive) by what it does. This thought is carried on by James from the verses in chapter 1 calling us to be ***"doers of the Word."***

**James 1:22-25 - 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers** who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a **hearer of the word and not a doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, **not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer**, this man shall be blessed in what he does. NASB

Justified in the context of James 2:14-26, is speaking not in legal terms of the judgment bar of God, but rather is the *sense* of proving real, or proving righteous the existence of true faith. Paul spoke in a similar manner in Acts 26 when testifying before King Agrippa.

**Acts 26:20-21 - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.** NASB

Therefore he is NOT saying that the works somehow justify us before God, but that they are proof positive that the KIND of faith we have is the REAL thing. He surely does NOT mean that the works justify us in the sight of God in some kind of meritorious way. This would contradict the clear teaching of Scripture that justification before God is a ***"gift by His grace"*** and is ***"apart from works"*** and received by faith alone in Christ alone.

**Romans 3:22, 24 - 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;** for there is no distinction; .... 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

**Romans 3:28 - 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.** NASB

**Romans 4:5-6 - 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.** NASB

**Galatians 2:16 - 16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since **by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.** NASB

**Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;* 9 **not as a result of works,** that no one should boast. NASB

**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is **through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, NASB

James cannot be teaching that justification before God as a legal declaration, such as Paul discusses in Romans 3:19-28, happens by good works. If this were true it would call into question the sufficiency of the atonement to justify us before God. We saw this very clearly in *pages 68-75* of our lesson, that we are saved by the grace(unmerited favor) of God through faith(apart from works) in Jesus Christ ONLY.

**Titus 3:4-7** - 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, **not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly **through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life. NASB

Good works cannot justify before God because although they could be seen as meritorious before God in the future, they have no value to propitiate the wrath of God for sins already committed in the past, neither can they propitiate sins committed in the future. Further, they cannot absolve of guilt or expiate previous or future sins. Good works have no positive value in atoning for or covering over sins. They merely show the reality of the existence of faith before men. As James clearly points out, the good works “*justify*” our faith or prove positive our faith and show it to be real and genuine. God has no need to see good works to know if faith is genuine because He is the One who foreknows, predestines, calls, justifies and glorifies (Rom 8:29-30). He knows our hearts and minds better than we do! More than this, He is the One who gives faith in the act of regeneration (Eph 2:8-9, Tit 3:4-7) and therefore knows the persons to whom He gives it. Justification is a “*gift by His grace*” which is based on the merits of Christ alone!

**Romans 3:23-24** - 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 **being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**; NASB

In summary, James is simply and clearly teaching that **true believers are not mere professors** but have the positive qualities of good works that prove their faith true and genuine. Albert Barnes comments on this passage... “*The ground of justification in the case is faith, and that only; the evidence of it, the carrying it out, the proof of the existence of the faith, is good works; and thus men are justified and saved not by mere abstract and cold faith, but by a faith necessarily connected with good works, and where good works perform an important part.*” James is pointing out that faith is not just mental assent or agreement with the Gospel but a life response which produces a changed life. Wayne Grudem comments on this passage and makes this point clear.... “*James is concerned to show that mere intellectual agreement with the gospel is a “faith” that is really no faith at all. He is concerned to argue against those who say they have faith but show no change in their lives. He says, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith” (James 2:18). “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:26). James is simply saying here that “faith” that has no results or “works” is not real faith at all; it is “dead” faith..... James is saying that a person is “shown to be righteous by his works, and not by his faith alone.” This is something with which Paul also would certainly agree (2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:19-24).*”

James tells us we cannot be **hypocrites** who say we have faith but have no proof that true faith exists. Rather, he tells us that we must not be hearers only but doers of the word if we have true faith. The KIND of faith that SAVES is a living faith that proves itself positive and genuine because “*faith without works is dead.*”

**James 2:14-26** - **14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?** 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.**

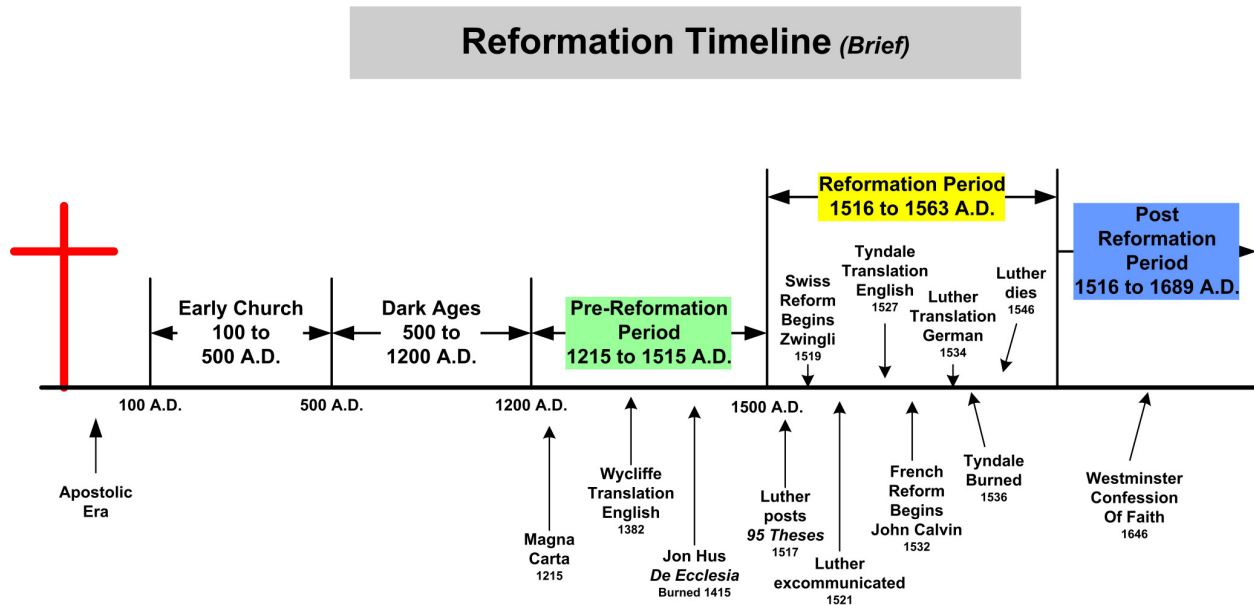


# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## Justification by Faith – The Heart of the Gospel

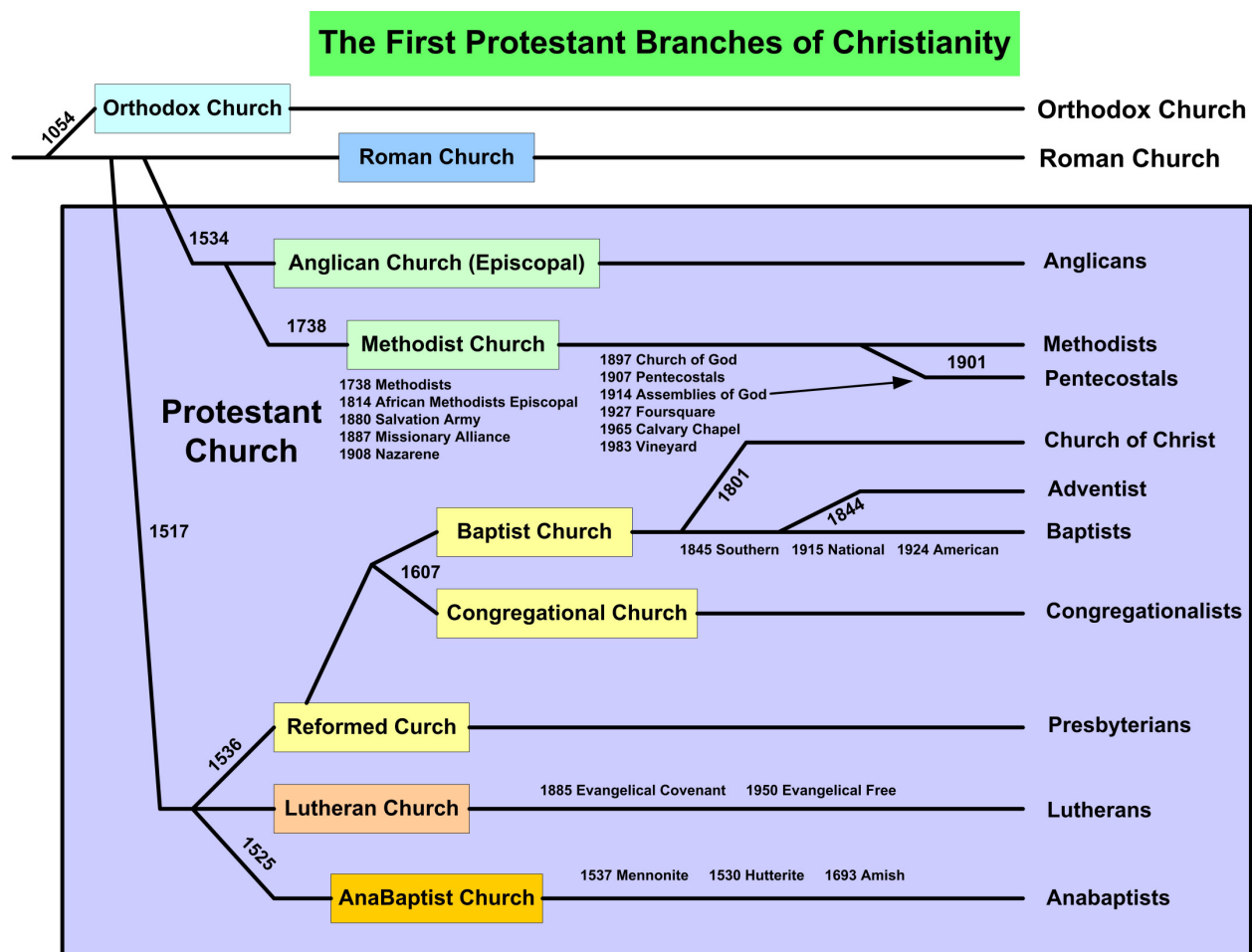
### The Protestant Reformation - What was the protest?

Surely the most profound and tumultuous time in Church History was the period of the Protestant Reformation. After centuries of the rule of the Roman Church over Christianity, the cries of petition against the abuses of the Church broke loose into a full scale rebellion against the Roman Church. During the Pre-reformation period, 1215-1515 A.D., many foundational activities culminated in the actual **Protestant Reformation**. These foundational things that took place were mainly surrounding the efforts of certain men like and John Wycliffe, Jon Hus and others who protested certain activities of the Papacy and Church. John Wycliffe, and later William Tyndale sought to translate the Bible into the language of the common people. During the **Dark Ages**, (the period between the fall of Rome in the 5th century and the Renaissance, 1415 A.D.), a time when the Bible was locked up in Latin by the Roman Church, there were very few literate people among the commons, and the only knowledge of Scripture that the common people held, was that which was learned from the priesthood in the Church. As the protest of these people grew stronger over time, it gave rise to several key events which eventually created a huge schism among Christians and spawned the **Protestant Reformation**, 1516-1563 A.D. Here is a brief timeline;



During this time several key men made public protests against the Pope and the Church which culminated in the spawning of several branches of Christianity such as the Lutheran, Anglican, Anabaptist and Reformed churches. These “branches” of Christianity were very focused on the biblical reform of Christianity and zealous to pattern the church after biblical directives such as a proper ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, Church Government, and the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. In summary, there were several different “branches” of Christianity that happened in several different places, led by several different men. However, these were all identified by the Roman Church as “**Protestantism**.” In the mind of the Roman Church, they were the rebels and protestors united against Papal control and Roman Church tradition. Here is a basic chart of the first “**Protestant**” branches of Christianity.





Because of this protest many of them were persecuted and killed by the influence of the Roman Church and many other governmental powers of the day. Of course after all these profound happenings, the face of Christianity would never be the same. There were now Bibles being printed in the common language and many people coming to a personal knowledge of the Word of God, and the Gospel was being preached in all European languages and being sent out into the remotest regions of the world. The Word of God had broken free from the tight Latin grip of the Roman Church, and a new liberty was unleashed upon the nations of mankind like never before! But in all of this controversy and struggle, what was at the heart of the protest was an error of essential nature to Historic Christian doctrine, and this could no longer be tolerated. The Gospel had been redefined over many years under Roman rule and the Reformers were not going to let it be undermined any longer. At the heart of many of the controversies that were being held out against the Church by the Reformers was a focus on the sufficiency of the atonement and the doctrine of Justification. And of course these are the essentials of the Gospel message.

### The Gospel and the Roman Church

Over many years, even centuries, Roman Christianity had morphed and become something very different that its earlier origins of the Early Church. The institution of several new and unbiblical rituals, traditions and practices almost completely redefined the Church. These church traditions became the focus of the church as she turned eyes away from the simplicity of the person and work of Christ, to the Ivory Tower of the Roman Church. Gradually over time these began to severely undermine the sufficiency of the atonement and the doctrine of Justification by grace

through faith in Christ. When all of these were added together, it made for a completely different form of Christianity than Jesus and the Apostles had taught. The focus had turned from the glorious good news of the person and work of Christ to the veneration of Popes and Saints, and the Church had become the richest institution on the earth off the back of the poor common people who were now to work their way to heaven through their own merit, or worse yet to purchase it through the sale of Indulgences.

### **A Brief Survey of Roman Rites and Traditions**

Here is a brief survey of these rites and traditions, and a few words about how they ultimately deny essential Christian doctrine.

**The Papacy** – Who is the head of Christ’s church? Well that is an easy question if you read the Bible (Col 1:18, 2:19). It is Christ. But in the Roman Church, He has been usurped by an earthly head, the so called “vicar of Christ,” a man demanding to be called the Holy Father (Matt 23:9), dressed in very costly vestments and living in a palace of unimaginable majesty and pomp (Matt 8:20). Will a truly godly man actually accept the title of Holy Father? Much could be said to compare the Pope to the teaching of the Bible, but a simple glance shows him to be far from the model set by Christ and the Apostles. Further, this Papacy is **nowhere found in Scripture**, nor is it even hinted at, much less does it have any didactic passage in Scripture explaining its character and nature. As the Bible clearly teaches a government of local plural elders(as servants to the body), the Popery of Rome is a “Pontification” of the worst sorts. The very history of the Papacy itself is littered with corruption and immorality. How can this be overlooked by any serious student of the Bible?

**The Priesthood and Monastic Societies** – Here we have an entire hierarchy of men who claim to be mediators between people and God. They take vows of celibacy and wear very costly vestments. All the while the Bible says....

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** - 5 For there is one God, and **one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

The Levitical Priesthood of the Old Testament was fulfilled by Christ and destroyed by God in 70 A.D. Jesus is lifted up to the right hand of God having accomplished our redemption once for all time, He is our great High Priest.

**Hebrews 9:11-12** - 11 But **when Christ appeared as a high priest** of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, **but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.** NASB

The New Testament nowhere presents a special priesthood, here is another non-biblical concept of church government which by its very existence and definition **undermines the work that Christ has accomplished** as our “**once for all time - High Priest.**” More than this, believing Christians are robbed of understanding their true role to a lost world as now all Christians are seen as an holy nation of priests in the priesthood of all believers, with the “**priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel of God**” (Rom 15:16).

**1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10** - 4 And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 **you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.....** 9 But **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 **for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God;** you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. NASB

**The Eucharist and Transubstantiation** - In the Roman celebration of the Lord’s Supper, they have a unique teaching which suggests that the bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Jesus. This “Eucharist” is seen as a sacrifice of Christ which happens again and again to

cleansed those who draw near to worship. The issue here is that it is taught by Rome and suggests to the people of the church that sins that they have now committed have not yet been covered by the Blood of Christ until it is reapplied in the "Eucharist." Now this idea **severely undermines the work of Christ as our priest**, and violates the biblical teaching that Christ was offered "*once for all time*" and that in this He did in fact atone for all the sins of all of His people, and that through this "*one sacrifice*" has "*perfected forever*" those who trust Him by faith.

**Hebrews 10:10-15** - 10 By this will we **have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**. 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, **having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**. NASB

But the Roman Church maintains that Christ must be "re-sacrificed" again and again in order for the sins of worshippers to be cleansed. This is why they hold the "Mass" daily. Again this **undermines the sufficiency of the atonement** which Christ has accomplished.

**Hebrews 7:26-27** - 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 **who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself**. NASB

**Hebrews 9:25-26** - 25 **nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year** with blood not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; **but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**. NASB

**Purgatory** – The Roman Catechism states.... "*All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect*".... (from the Roman Catechism [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_P2N.HTM#\\$1BY](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P2N.HTM#$1BY)) Now consider what is being implied in this teaching. It surely says that it is possible for a Christian to die in a state "*imperfectly purified*," and that they need to "*undergo purification in order to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven*." Again we have a doctrine that **severely undermines the sufficiency of the atonement** that Christ has accomplished. The clear denial of the Gospel here is evident to all. Does the believer in Christ need to "achieve the holiness necessary" through the torment of flames, or has it been achieved by Christ already by His death on the Cross? Let us hear God's commentary on this matter....

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet **He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach**. NASB

**Hebrews 10:14** - 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**. NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

**Ephesians 1:7** - 7 **In Him we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, NASB

Consider how this **undermines the love and mercy of God held out in the Gospel**. Shall our loving heavenly Father call us to repentance and faith and then cast us into the flames of purification so that we can be adequately tormented for our sins?

**Romans 5:8-10** - 8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died **for us**. 9 Much more then, having now **been justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him. 10 For if while **we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. NASB

Further, how long is long enough in the fire to atone for sins? I tell you one sin is worthy of eternal fire with no hope of ever escaping, but Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

**Romans 8:1-2** - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

**Indulgences** - The Roman Catechism states... *"An indulgence is the remission before God of temporal punishment for sins whose guilt is already forgiven, which a properly disposed member of the Christian faithful gains under certain and defined conditions by the assistance of the Church which as minister of redemption dispenses and applies authoritatively the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints. Can. 993 An indulgence is partial or plenary insofar as it partially or totally frees from the temporal punishment due to sins"....* Again we see the **sufficiency of the atonement severely undermined** as we still have "temporal punishment due to sins" to be paid. The obvious question here; Did Christ's sacrifice put away sins once for all believers, or not? This is an obvious denial of essential Christian doctrine.

**Hebrews 9:26** - 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now **once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**. NASB

Do we have redemption through blood of Christ? Are our sins really covered or is there a further price to be paid? Shall we now buy the forgiveness of sins with money or suffering? This is exactly what the doctrine of indulgences teaches. More than this, the way in which this teaching was used to garner money from the poor peasants during the time of the Reformation was reprehensible. Consider a brief excerpt from a popular online encyclopedia.... *"The false doctrine and scandalous conduct of the "pardoners" were an immediate occasion of the Protestant Reformation. In 1517, Pope Leo X offered indulgences for those who gave alms to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The aggressive marketing practices of Johann Tetzel in promoting this cause provoked Martin Luther to write his Ninety-Five Theses, protesting against what he saw as the purchase and sale of salvation. In Thesis 28 Luther objected to a saying attributed to Tetzel: "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs"...."* Here we have the church selling forgiveness to common people in order to raise funds to build an earthly temple of astounding cost and grandeur for the great Pontif to inhabit. I will appeal to your conscience, is something wrong with this picture? What does the Scripture say?

**1 Peter 1:18-21** - 18 knowing that **you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold** from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 **but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ**. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, **so that your faith and hope are in God**. NASB

We could go on for some time discussing the many ways in which the Roman Church has and is denying the sufficiency of the person and work of Christ to save us from sins and bring us to God. There are many more **fundamental denials of Christ's work** in such doctrines as....

- Penance
- Veneration of Mary and the Saints and prayers being offered to them
- Confessional
- Relics

These and many more were the occasion of the Protest. This is what the **Protestants** have taken issue with the Roman Church over. It is no small matter. During the time of the **Reformation** all these things had culminated in a very grievous and unbiblical system of religion which sparked a rebellion against the Roman Church from which the Gospel has gone out as clearly and brightly as the noonday sun. This is because the central issues of the Gospel were at stake in the heart of the Reformation controversy. You see, most of these issues center around the issue of **Justification**. What is it that justifies us in the sight of God, and how is that justification applied to our life? In other words, how is a person saved from sins and reconciled to God? These matters are summed up biblically in the understanding of the doctrine of Justification. So what is it that the Reformers were saying in response to these matters? Let us consider this.

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## The Pillars of Reformation teaching - The Five Solas

As the protest took shape in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the issues became more and more clearly defined. When the Reformers sought to clarify the main tenants of the Protest, they developed a few phrases or slogans to point to the main theological issues that were at stake. These became known as the “*five solas*.” The Latin word “*sola*” is translated “*only*” or “*alone*” in English. The “*five solas*” articulated five fundamental beliefs of the Protestant Reformation in **contrast** to those of the Roman Church to which they were protesting. These five summarized what they saw as the fundamental principles of Christian life and faith.

### The Five “*Solas*” of the Protestant Reformation

<b>Sola Scriptura</b> Scripture Alone	Scripture <b><u>ONLY</u></b> is the final rule of Christian life, faith and practice. It is clear, sufficient and self-interpreting.
<b>Sola Christus</b> Christ Alone	Christ is the <b><u>ONLY</u></b> mediator between God and man. Christ’s person and work alone are <b><u>sufficient</u></b> to save.
<b>Sola Gratia</b> Grace Alone	God’s grace <b><u>ONLY</u></b> is the origin of salvation. All elements of salvation are an unmerited gift from God.
<b>Sola Fide</b> Faith Alone	The <b><u>ONLY</u></b> means of Justification is <b><u>faith</u></b> , apart from works of the Law. Faith <b><u>alone</u></b> appropriates salvation.
<b>Soli Deo Gloria</b> God’s Glory Alone	To God <b><u>ONLY</u></b> belongs the glory for salvation. This alone is to be our <b><u>motivation</u></b> for life and worship.

Not only did these five fundamental principles summarize the Reformation protest, but they also clearly define the fundamental principles of salvation and Christian faith. These clearly summarize the Gospel message and point to the heart of the issues at stake in the Gospel. This happened because the Roman Church had over a long period of time moved away from the Gospel and the person and work of Christ was no longer central to the life and practice of the Church. This resulted in the pompous display of man-made religion, with all of its rites and traditions, which religion the Reformers were formally protesting. The result theologically was a clarification of the main tenants of the Christian Faith and a renewed focus on the heart of the Gospel message, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**Sola Scriptura** – The Scripture alone is the final rule of Christian life, faith and practice. It is clear and self-interpreting. The issue here of course was in *contrast* to the Roman teaching that the Church (tradition and the fathers) was the final authority of faith and practice. More than this, they taught that only the Church and the Priesthood could rightly interpret the Scripture because it was inaccessible to the common man. Sola Scriptura clearly meant that not only was the Scripture (not the Church), the final rule of faith and practice, but that it could be understood by the common man (not only a special priesthood) because it was clear (perspicuous) and understandable because the Holy Spirit could interpret the meaning to each believer. Not only this but Sola Scriptura also meant that the Bible was a “***complete***” revelation of God, in its closed “***canon***,” and that it was “***sufficient***” to address all matters in Christian life and to explain to us what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.



**Sola Christus** – Christ is the only mediator between God and man. Christ’s person and work alone are sufficient to save. More than this, Jesus Christ is the only “*incarnate*” self-revelation of God who has come and explained God to us. He is the “*object of faith*” and the focal point of all of human history. This of course was in *contrast* to the special priesthood of the Roman Church and the teaching that only the Church could explain or reveal God to the people. Christ Himself, His person and His work ONLY have sufficient merit to “*justify*” us before God and provide a “*righteousness*” (Rom 3:21-24) for us (not our own, Phil 3:9) that is complete in the sight of God. His life and death are the basis on which the believer is justified (it cannot be merited by good works, Eph 2:8-9), and this is absolutely necessary in the sight of God (John 14:6), being the only sufficient grounds for justification by God. Christ and His teaching are the only way to God, the only true revelation of God in history, and the only Redeemer of mankind.

**Sola Gratia** – God’s grace only is the origin of salvation. All elements of salvation are an unmerited gift from God. God is the One who has reconciled us to Himself, having planned, purchased and applied (Trinity implied) salvation to each individual believer. He is the One who predestines, calls, justifies, sanctifies and glorifies. In short, salvation is wholly the work of God, from first to last, its origin and completion is His work. Therefore, salvation is “not merited” by any work of man nor can it be, in any sense, merited by anything we can do. This of course was in *contrast* to the Roman teaching of Merit, Indulgences, Purgatory and the like. We cannot work for or buy salvation, nor can we suffer long enough in Purgatory in order to purge sin from us. Rather, salvation is the “*free gift*” (Rom 6:23) of God, “*not of works*” (Eph 2:9), and justification is a “*gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*” (Rom 3:24).

**Sola Fide** – The only means of Justification is faith, apart from works of the Law. Faith alone appropriates salvation. This of course was in *contrast* to the Roman teaching that justification is complete only after we have become righteous in our own persons, through faith AND perseverance in good works to the end of life. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation cannot be earned or merited in any way by people (Eph 2:8-9), but that it is a free gift from God’s good pleasure (Rom 5:16-17) to give it. Further that Christ’s righteousness alone is sufficient as merit before God in order to justify a person, being the only Redeemer (Eph 1:7) and full payment for sin and Provider of righteousness having fulfilled the Law in His perfect life (Rom 10:4). Therefore, Justification, indeed reconciliation to God can only be appropriated to us by faith alone (Rom 5:1), which object is Christ alone (Rom 5:9), and this comes as a gift by God’s grace (Rom 3:24) alone to us. There is no other means of justification but faith (Rom 3:28), and this is “*apart from the works of the Law.*”

**Soli Deo Gloria** - To God only belongs the glory for salvation. This alone is to be our motivation for life and worship. Because salvation is wholly the work of God, from first to last, it is to God alone that glory and worship is to be given (Rom 11:36). This is in *contrast* of course to the Roman teaching of Papal exaltation, and the veneration of Mary and the Saints. Salvation is something God gives as a free gift and He is to be acknowledged as the sole provider of it. The exaltation of people, even the best of saints, is a diabolical form of idolatry which is wrongfully robbing God’s glory from Him (Rev 19:10, 22:8-9). Rather, if someone is a great saint, we should rightly be thankful for their good service in the Church, but God alone is to be glorified and venerated for working such grace in that saint. Moreover, the only right motive for worship, service and good works is in fact to glorify God (Matt 5:16) so that in our worship of God people might see Him (Phil 2:15-16) and His glory and virtue would shine through our life as a witness (1 Pet 2:9) to God’s good virtue, which is in us only because of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22).

## The Main Thing

It is no small thing that these “*five solas*” were given in order to **clarify the essentials of Christian teaching**. They show us what is at the heart of the Gospel, the message of the person and work of Jesus Christ. They teach us exactly what is central to the Christian Faith and what is required to have an orthodox or genuine profession of the Historic (what the true Church has always maintained) and Apostolic (what Jesus and the Apostles taught) Christian Faith. In other words, they teach what the “*main thing*” in Christianity really is. How could the Church have gotten so far from the central teaching about Christ and salvation? Well the truth is, we are in a constant struggle to reaffirm the truth of the Gospel to each successive generation because our enemy the Devil is waging war against the truth of the Gospel in every generation. He is always reinventing old lies into new ways to deceive us and obscure the true Gospel. He represents himself as a beacon of light and truth with false prophets and teachers, but their message is only a bit of truth, perverted into a devious lie which robs the Gospel message of its power to save.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** - 13 For **such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ**. 14 And no wonder, **for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**. 15

Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. NASB

As we look around in our world, just as with any period of Church History, we can see perversions of the Gospel by false prophets and false teachers abounding everywhere. This has been true ever since the first century when the Apostles contended for the truth of the Gospel in their own generation. Of this fact, our Lord and the Apostles strictly warned.

**Matthew 24:11** - "And **many false prophets will arise**, and will mislead many. NASB

**2 Peter 2:1-3** - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and **because of them the way of the truth will be maligned**; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. NASB

Therefore it is incumbent upon each new generation to clarify and to preach the Gospel with conviction and with clarity. Lest we think that we will not succumb to the deceitfulness of Satan or his schemes of deception, we must keep the main thing “*THE Main Thing!*” We must continually test ourselves and the things we believe in order to always maintain the purity and simplicity of the Gospel.

**2 Corinthians 11:2-4** - 3 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, **your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ**. 4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, **or a different gospel which you have not accepted**, you bear this beautifully. NASB

**1 John 4:1** – 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world**. NASB

From the Reformers then, we have learned a huge and unmistakable lesson about essential Christian Doctrine. They have clarified and recorded for us the essential message of the Gospel and the doctrine of Salvation. These “*five solas*” then are great way for us to keep the essentials always before us. Let us not enthrone the Reformers or the banners that they carried, but let us instead enthrone the Lord Jesus, the living Word and know and understand the truth and principle about Him that the Reformers clarified so well for us. The heart of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God is the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the center of Christian salvation and the centerpiece of Christian worship. Let us not forget to keep Him as the “*main thing*” and always keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus! Let us say with the Apostle Paul, “*I am determined to nothing but Christ and Him crucified!*”

**1 Corinthians 2:1-2** - 2 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For **I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified**. NASB

## The Elements of Justification

In the beginning of the Puritan era, Christians were seeking to continue to define and purify their doctrine and drew up several *catechisms* and various *confessions* of faith in order to define the parameters of their faith. In 1646 the Church of England, by the minds and hands of the Westminster Assembly, drew up their own confession which was called the **Westminster Confession of Faith**. From this confession, both Baptist and Congregation Churches also drew up confessions which were actually just modified arrangements of the Westminster. Later the Westminster was officially adopted by the Presbyterians and the Church of Scotland and so most Protestant branches of Christianity had roots which sprung from this comprehensive confession of faith. At this time, Christians were also busy writing catechisms to have standards for teaching the faith to future generations. From these efforts many great catechisms were developed including one that the Westminster Assembly drew up which is called the Westminster Larger and Shorter catechisms. These documents were very helpful in defining many of the different aspects of biblical doctrine. Now concerning the doctrine of Justification, the Westminster catechism asks in question number 32....

### Q. What is Justification.

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, (Rom 3:24, Eph 1:7) and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2 Cor 5:21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, (Rom 5:19) and received by faith alone. (Gal 2:16, Phil 3:9)

Now this statement gets right to the heart of what Justification in the biblical sense really is. It is broken down into four parts as follows....

- **Justification is an act of God's free grace** - God's work, given freely (at no cost to the beneficiary, flowing from the gracious character of God)
- **wherein he pardons all our sins** – It is a legal (forensic) term dealing with Law and includes pardon from sin, God is pictured as Judge
- **and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us** – Righteousness is also a legal (forensic) matter which comes by imputation
- **and received by faith alone** – Faith is seen as the means of reception or appropriation

This description of Justification speaks to us clearly about the basic *elements* of Justification. They tell us of the nature of Justification, of what it is like and how it functions in God's plan of Redemption. With these elements in mind, let us look a little closer and understand how these are described in the Bible.

**Justification is an act of God's free grace** – The Scripture clearly ascribes justification as being an act of God.

**Romans 8:33** - 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? **God is the one who justifies**; NASB

**Galatians 3:8** - 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God would justify the Gentiles by faith**, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." NASB

As the Scripture describes this act, it also clearly describes it as flowing from God's gracious character and identifies it as a free gift (at no cost) given to the beneficiary. Justification in the Bible is always free and always associated with God's grace.

**Romans 3:24-26** - 24 **being justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 **whom God displayed** publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that **He might be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus. NASB

**Romans 5:16-17** - 16 And **the gift** is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand **the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification**. 17 For if by the transgression of the one,

death reigned through the one, much more those who receive **the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. NASB

**Titus 3:5-7** - 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, **but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 **that being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NASB

**wherein he pardons all our sins** – Justification consists first in God pardoning our sins. It is a legal (forensic) term dealing with Law and God is pictured as the Judge. One of God's attributes is Justice as He is seen as holy and just, ruling over the world with justice! Throughout the Scripture God is seen as the only Lawgiver and Judge.

**Genesis 18:25** - 25 "Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"** NASB

**Isaiah 33:20** - 2 For **the Lord is our judge, The Lord is our lawgiver**, The Lord is our king; He will save us NASB

**James 4:12** - 12 **There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One** who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? NASB

In this sense, our sins are brought ultimately and finally to the authority of the Judge of all the earth to be dealt with in finality. Justification concerning our sins before God then is a legal or forensic proceeding in God's tribunal. It is here where we receive a **pardon from God** which means a release from the *penalty* of our offenses, a free remission of the penalty or consequences of sin. We are therefore set free from the bondage or power of sin, because the consequences of the Law have been foregone by the Lawgiver and Judge.

**1 Corinthians 15:56-57** - 56 The sting of death is sin, and **the power of sin is the law**; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

**Romans 8:1-2** - 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For **the law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has set you free from **the law of sin and of death**. NASB

This does not mean we are not guilty, but that the consequences of our guilt have been foregone or remitted, paid in full by our Redeemer. This is called **expiation**. Our guilt then can remain no longer, it is removed by way of its penalties and consequences being pardoned by the Judge. This pardon of justification is a *declarative act* on the part of God. It is a *final* pronouncement of the commuting of the sentence of death.

**John 8:36** - 36 "If therefore the Son shall make you free, **you shall be free indeed**. NASB

**and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us** – Apart from the removal of the consequences and subsequently our guilt, we are also credited with a positive righteousness in this Justification. We are said to now possess the righteousness of God. This righteousness means, **right-standing** with God or acceptable in His sight. Because the penalties of sin have been satisfied by Christ's payment at Calvary, we are free from any accusation or blemish of any kind.

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to **present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation** -

Now this righteousness is the righteousness that God both *requires* and *provides* in Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

**Romans 5:19** - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. NASB

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**. NASB

Because of Christ's obedience and fulfillment of the Law, we are now *reckoned* or counted as righteous in God's sight. Our righteousness is **"in Him"** (2 Cor 5:21) and **"through Him"** (Rom 5:19). Christ is counted as our Righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). This righteousness that we possess before God then, is not our own inherent righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ Himself.

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**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found **in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in **Christ, the righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith, NASB

**and received by faith alone** – This righteousness then becomes ours by simply trusting in or looking to Christ for it. This believing or trusting is what the Bible calls faith. It is through this faith that this righteousness is imputed or reckoned to us.

**Romans 4:5** - 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness**, NASB

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

This very simple concept is portrayed very clearly in Scripture and provides for us, through the merits of Christ, both righteousness (right-standing with God) and justification (declared righteous in His sight).

**Romans 10:4** - 4 For Christ is the end of the law **for righteousness to everyone who believes**. NASB

**Romans 3:28** - 28 For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith** apart from works of the Law. NASB

### **Justification in the Confessions**

For a bit more insight, consider the profound wording of some statements of Justification from both the **Westminster** and the **1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith**. Both the Westminster and 1689 Baptist Confession read identically. These confessions provide a rich learning experience and are excellent fodder for family Bible study and discussion;

### **CHAP. XI. Of Justification.**

1. Those whom God Effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing Righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting, and accepting their Persons as Righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, not by imputing faith it self, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their Righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole Law, and passive obedience in his death, for their whole and sole Righteousness, they receiving, and resting on him, and his Righteousness, by Faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ, and his Righteousness, is the alone instrument of Justification: yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving Graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

3. Christ by his obedience, and death, did fully discharge the debt of all; and did by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead, the penalty due unto them: make a proper, real and full satisfaction to Gods justice in their behalf: yet inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his Obedience and Satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them; their Justification is only of Free Grace, that both the exact justice and rich Grace of God, might be glorified in the Justification of sinners.



## The Basis of Justification

But how and on what basis can God pardon freely? How is the justice of God actually met if we do not pay the penalty for our own sins? This is an important question to which the Scripture says much and gives clear answers. As we have discussed, justification is a legal term describing the act whereby God *declares* us righteous based on the merits of Christ. This justification is a complete work of God whereby He fully meets all the requirements of divine justice and then on that basis declares the sinner righteous. In this work God.....

- satisfies and appeases the divine requirements of justice - **Propitiation**
- completely removes the guilt of our sins, - **Expiation**
- credits the righteousness and merit of Christ to the believer – **Imputation**
- restores relationship and rightstanding with God - **Reconciliation**

It is clear from scripture that in the death of Christ upon the cross, that God's wrath because of sin has been satisfied by Christ's payment of death. This is called **"propitiation."** Because Jesus was without sin, His was qualified to pay **the debt for all sin** by His death. He died as a substitute or in place of sinners, and bore the wrath of God Himself, not dying for His own sins but for the sins of all who would trust him. This sacrifice of atonement, that is, the death of Christ, affected a real and fundamental change in our relationship to God by taking our place and bearing the guilt of our sins as an offering to appease the holy wrath of God.

**Hebrews 2:17** - 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** NASB

It is in this **"propitiation"** that God, in His requirement of divine justice is actually propitiated. Because God has instituted the sacrificial system as a means of atonement, he has therefore been pleased to have a sacrifice appease or satisfy His wrath. Propitiation is an **"appeasement" or "satisfaction."** The holy anger and wrath of God toward sin demands a satisfaction of justice, and His vengeance is enraged toward sin and must have a subject to inflict the good and righteous penalty of death.

**Romans 6:23** - 23 **For the wages of sin is death,** but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

Therefore we must have a substitute to satisfy God's wrath or be consumed ourselves. This is what sets Christianity apart from every other world religion. Jesus Christ is the only sufficient substitute who can meet the just requirements of God's law (divine justice) in order to die vicariously (for us) as a substitute (in our place). Jesus becomes then this propitiation *Himself* to appease the wrath of God.

**1 John 4:10** - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** NASB

Notice here, that this propitiation is not only what Christ did (the work of Christ), but that Jesus Christ Himself (the person of Christ) is the propitiation for our sins. The New Testament words normally translated as **"propitiation"** are the Greek [hilasterion 2435] and [hilasmos 2434], and carry with them the idea of **"expiation"** (to remove offense or guilt) or to **"cover over."** In fact, these Greek terms actually hold a more personal meaning to the means of expiation, namely that of **"an atoning victim"** or the actual sacrifice of atonement, an expiator. This idea, that Jesus is the **"atoning victim,"** the propitiatory sacrifice, means that Jesus paid a very real price. He literally bore the penalty for our sins! Our chastisement became His! He carried our griefs....and our sorrows! This was beautifully expressed by Isaiah's prophecy, in chapter 53.

**Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12** - 4 Surely **our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried;** Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He **was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.** 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his

own way; But the **LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him**. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, **My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities**. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet **He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors**. NASB

Therefore, the atonement does in fact *satisfy* God's holy wrath toward sin because it is God's own work, graciously creating the means for us to be justified and His holy wrath to be appeased. All of this was designed in eternity by God and implemented by Him in the course of History because of the great love that He wished to express to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**1 Peter 1:18-20** – 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times **for the sake of you** NASB

But propitiation is not the only thing that justification is. Not only has God's wrath been appeased but, the actual guilt of sinners has been removed by Christ's payment, because He paid the full price of that guilt. This is called **"expiation."** Jesus removed our guilt having paid the full price of redemption for our sins. Christ made a fundamental change in our relationship with God by *expiating* our guilt. In expiation, our guilt has been removed by meeting the demands of holy justice for sin on our behalf. The offense of our sins has been absorbed by the *sacrifice* of the body of Jesus for us, and the requirements of God's justice for sin have been **"cancelled out."**

**Colossians 2:13-14** - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross. NASB

The penalty deserved in our guilt, has been paid in full by the sacrifice of Christ. This is to say then that the atonement is *redemptive*, that it pays the price required by justice. Jesus death on the cross is seen as a ransom price paid to redeem us from the penalties of the law, **"the certificate of debt consisting in decrees against us"** that we owed to God because of sin.

**1 Timothy 2:5-7** - 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 **who gave Himself as a ransom for all**, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

This is why the scripture can say, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Having our guilt cancelled, the corresponding condemnation for our sins has been removed.

**Romans 8:1-2** - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

Jesus death is the full payment price demanded by the law because of our violations of it. He redeemed us from the *curse* of the law.

**Galatians 3:13** - 13 **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law**, having become a curse for us — for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" NASB

All of this was done by God, who justifies, and this has removed our guilt and condemnation.

**Romans 8:33-34** - 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? **It is God who justifies**. 34 **Who is he that condemns?** Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

However there is still yet more to the **basis of justification** than propitiation and expiation. Having our guilt removed and God's wrath because of our sins satisfied, we still lack the positive righteousness required of us by God's Law. You may recall that there are two kinds of sin. There is the transgression of the negative aspects of the Law we call *penal sanctions*. These transgressions or violations have been fully paid for by Christ's sacrifice. But the Law also has *preceptive requirements* whereby God expects us to fulfill certain precepts such as **"love your neighbor as yourself."** We have sinned by failing to do this again and again. Therefore it is necessary for God to provide for us a righteousness of fulfilled *preceptive requirements* because we have failed to fulfill them in order to have this positive righteousness before God. We have

need of a foreign righteousness that is not our own, but is rather being afforded to us by other means because we do not possess it in and of ourselves. In justification, God provides this righteousness to us by **"imputation."** In this imputation God credits the righteousness of Christ to us. Jesus' perfect righteousness has become ours through faith in Him. It is the merits of Christ perfectly fulfilling the preceptive requirements of the Law that becomes ours in justification through imputation. This gives us positive righteousness in the sight of God. We can stand in God's presence therefore, with the imputed righteousness and holiness of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

**Romans 5:18-19** - 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so **through one act of righteousness there resulted justification** of life to all men. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. NASB

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**. NASB

Therefore when we say that the sinner is **"declared righteous"** by God it is because the sinner is not actually righteous in himself but in Christ has received a foreign righteousness which is not his own, but is from God in Christ. Since Jesus' life was one of sinless perfection, this righteousness which is received is also therefore perfect.

**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith, NASB

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

Christ's righteousness is now ours and this has then fully met all the requirements of God's Law for us so that before His seat as our righteous Judge, we can be declared righteous on **this basis of propitiation, expiation and imputation**. And all of this has brought about Justification before God.

**Romans 5:9** - 9 Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him**. NASB

Now because the requirements of divine justice have been fully met and we are now declared righteous in the sight of God, this has restored the relationship with God that was damaged because of sin. In the Bible, this is called **"reconciliation."** We have been reconciled to God through Christ! God took the initiative, and sent His Son Jesus to reconcile us to Himself.

**2 Corinthians 5:18** - 18 Now **all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ**, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, NASB

In this reconciliation we now exult in God. This means we are overwhelmed with joy because the most fundamental problem that mankind faces (estrangement from God because of sin), has been corrected and we can now rejoice that we have been brought back into right-standing with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

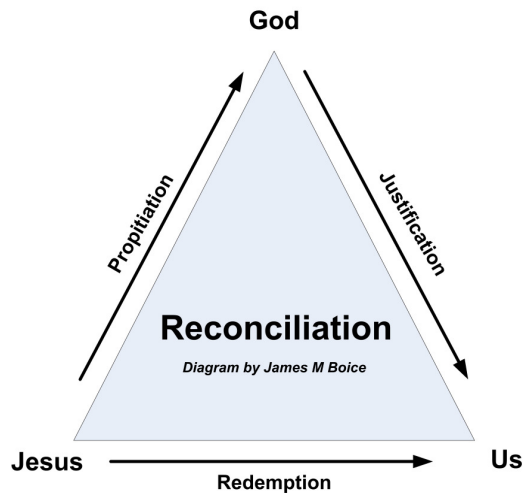
**Romans 5:10-11** - 10 For if while we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son**, much more, **having been reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom we have now received the reconciliation**. NASB

On this basis then we can now fellowship with God once again. We are free to love Him because He has freely loved us, even when we were at enmity with Him.

**1 Peter 1:8-9** - and though you have not seen Him, **you love Him**, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, **you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. NASB

The below diagram by James Boice is helpful in understanding reconciliation.

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### Justification is applied or received by Faith

This is to say that the benefits of Christ's sacrifice become benefits realized for us through Faith or trust in Jesus work. We must believe in and rely upon the justifying work of Christ in order for it to be applied to us. This justification by faith is a gift (not earned) by God's free grace.

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

**Romans 3:28** – 28 For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law**. NASB  
So then, we receive these benefits by faith in what Christ has done and NOT on the basis of any merit in us or by some thing that we could possibly do. **Justification comes to us by grace** (God's unmerited favor), **through faith** (by trusting and believing), **in Christ alone** (Christ is the only object of faith), and NOT on the basis of any good works that we have done.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

**Romans 5:1-2** – 1 Therefore **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our **introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand**; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. NASB

In Galatians chapter 5, Paul clearly summarizes that seeking to be justified by the good works of the law, forfeits the value of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. He clearly states that trying to be justified by the law alienates one from Christ, who alone is the way of salvation.

**Galatians 5:1-5** – 1 **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**. 5 **For we through the Spirit, by faith**, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. NASB

### Summary

By the merit of Jesus Christ only, can we be justified (**declared righteous**) before God, NOT on the *basis* of our own good works. It is on the *basis* of His perfect life and sacrificial death that we are justified. He fully met the requirements of the law and made a full payment (**propitiation**) for the penalties of sin, removed our guilt (**expiation**) and by His perfect life merited the righteousness of God for us which is credited (**imputation**) to us **by faith**.

**Philippians 3:9-10** - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is **through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**, NASB

# **The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ**

## **Gospel Promises – A Hope and a Future**

### **The Gospel promises amazing benefits to those who obey it**

God is the source of life and blessing. Mankind has willfully broken fellowship with God and in his sin is estranged from God and cut off from His life and blessing. In his sin, mankind is dying and separated from God. So often we find in Scripture the free offer to come and receive the blessing of God. God calls all estranged sinners to turn from their sin and to seek Him for life and blessing. God is seen in Scripture as inviting poor sinners to come to Him in repentance and receive once again the blessing and benefit of a right relationship with Him.

**Isaiah 55:1-3** - 55 "Ho! **Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;** And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk **Without money and without cost.** 2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, **And delight yourself in abundance.** 3 "**Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live;** And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David. NASB

This invitation from God is tied to repentance from sin. The picture is one of mankind turning from the evil of his sin which brings death, and returning to God who will have compassion on him and give him life. God freely offers forgiveness and restoration for those who will come to Him in repentance, and we are told to seek Him and to call upon Him.

**Isaiah 55:6-7** - Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. 7 **Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him;** And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. NASB

And so the Gospel announces reconciliation to God and offers to us the astounding benefits of a restored relationship and fellowship with Him. Indeed through our Lord Jesus Christ all the promises which God has made become ours!

**2 Corinthians 1:20** - 20 For **as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes;** wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. NASB

All the good promises of God in the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments are said to be ours in Christ Jesus the Lord. These benefits are many and diverse, so much so that they are hard to categorize. The Scripture is filled with metaphors of life and blessing which are said to be the possession of those who have been reconciled to God through Christ. But chief among all these blessings is the fact that we have been restored in our relationship to God and we have received Him as our exceeding great reward. So complete is the cleansing from sin that we receive in salvation that we are now said to be the very temple of God and that He has come to live and reside inside of our being.

**Romans 8:9** - 9 However, you are not in the flesh **but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. NASB

**2 Corinthians 6:16** - 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? **For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."** NASB

What glorious words.....we shall be His people! Imagine this, a people belonging to God, for God's own possession. Now it is one thing for us to make a commitment to God, for Him to be our God. But it is entirely another thing for God to make a commitment to us, that we should be His people. God keeps his promises! More than that He is the greatest power and authority in the universe, and He has the ability to make good on every promise He has made. So profound is this presence of God dwelling with us and making us His people, that He makes promises to us that are astounding in their scope such as Romans 8:28.

**Romans 8:28** - 28 And we know **that God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NASB



Now here is an amazing promise from God. Nothing in the life of a Christian believer will ever turn out ultimately for harm, but every single thing that happens in our life, both good things and bad things, God causes them to work ultimately for our good. God only has good designs for His people. The 17<sup>th</sup> century puritan pastor Thomas Watson writes of this verse; *“He who loves God and is called according to His purpose, may rest assured that everything in the world shall be for his good. Why should a Christian destroy himself? Why should he kill himself with care, when all things shall sweetly concur, yea, conspire for his good? The result of the text is this. All the various dealings of God with His children do by a special providence turn to their good! Psalm 25:10 – “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant.”* It is an astounding promise indeed. Surely the Lord is with us to care for us and help us in our struggles. In fact, the Lord has promised to deliver us out of all of the afflictions that we face.

**Psalm 34:19 - 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all.** NASB

Again Watson writes, *“Are we in great trouble? There is a promise that works for our good, “I will be with Him in time of trouble.” (Psalm 91:15) God does not bring His people into troubles and leave them there. He will stand by them. He will hold their heads and hearts when they are fainting. And there is another promise, “He is their strength in time of trouble” (Psalm 37:9) OH! Says the soul, I shall faint in the day of trial.” But God will be the strength of our hearts; He will join forces with us. Either He will make His hand lighter, or our faith stronger.”*

Moreover, consider that all of the promises of who God is for His people in Scripture mean that He is for us the very same thing. He is said to be Himself, our strength, our refuge, our hiding place and the stronghold and defense of our lives.

**Psalm 27:1 - 7 The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life;** Whom shall I dread? NASB

**Psalm 18:2-3 - 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.** 3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. NASB

**Psalm 28:7-8 - 7 The Lord is my strength and my shield;** My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him. 8 **The Lord is their strength, And He is a saving defense** to His anointed. NASB

**Philippians 4:9 - 13 I can do all things through Him** who strengthens me. NASB

It is no small thing that God Himself is our God and that He has promised to be for us the very strength of our lives. In fact, the Scripture goes so far as to say that He has promised to meet all of our needs so that we will not be lacking anything we need.

**Philippians 4:19 - And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches** in glory in Christ Jesus. NASB

**Psalm 34:8-10 - O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!**

9 O fear the Lord, you His saints; **For to those who fear Him, there is no want.** 10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But **they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing.** NASB

**Romans 8:31-32 - 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** NASB

But the blessings do not stop here. God does not leave us in our helpless state of sin and death but He heals us and transforms us so that we begin to take on His very nature in ourselves. He has given us everything we need to become like Him. We are said to *“become partakers of the divine nature”* and to be *“transformed into His image”* more and more as we grow in His grace and knowledge.

**2 Peter 1:2-4 - 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,** through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these **He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature,** having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. NASB

**2 Corinthians 3:18** - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

As we follow Christ and walk in the Spirit we are being changed and taking on His very nature. We are being renewed day by day as we focus on Jesus and **“put on the new self”** which is in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:23-24** - 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, **which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth**. NASB

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** - 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, **yet our inner man is being renewed day by day**. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while **we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. NASB

Wow! We are God’s New Creation being fashioned in His very likeness! This is a profound Gospel promise. Jesus promised this wonderful blessing of the Spirit’s indwelling power to all who believe in Him.

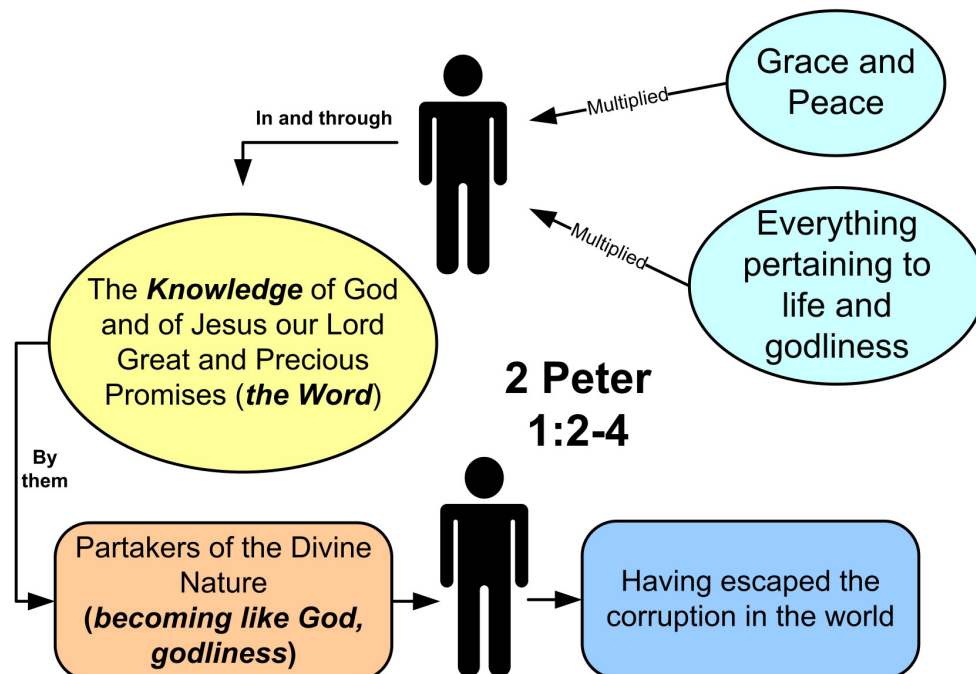
**John 7:37-39** - 37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, **“If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive**; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. NASB

As this Gospel promise of sanctification is taking place we are literally taking on and enjoying the very nature of God. The Holy Spirit is now producing in us the very life and character of God so that we are said to bear the **“fruit of the Spirit.”**

**Galatians 5:22-25** - 22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. NASB

In these we are partaking in and enjoying the good fruits of God’s character. This is a *revelatory* process whereby God is revealing Himself in us and through us. This happens BY the ministry of the Holy Spirit THROUGH the revelation of the Word. Consider this chart on 2 Peter 2:1-4.

## **Sanctification** through the knowledge of God



Now of course this entire blessing comes to us through the life and death of Christ for us. The Gospel has purchased for those who believe these great and precious promises! But the Gospel promises do not stop with the sanctification process that is taking place here and now in the life of the believer. In fact this is just a temporal benefit which will **“well up to eternal life”** and become an eternal blessing that will never fade away! This will be accomplished finally for us at the resurrection when we will be glorified and eternally transformed, receiving immortal and imperishable bodies capable of experiencing the glory of God forever and ever.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54** - 50 Now I say this, **brethren**, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed**, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed**. 53 **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality**. 54 **But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality**, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. NASB

In fact, one of the very purposes for which God has created man is to become immortal and experience the richness of the glory of His being forever and to be His eternal dwelling place.

**2 Corinthians 5:1-5** - 5 For we know that **if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens**. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, **in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life**. 5 **Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God**, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. NASB

Christian believers have the promise of this eternal blessing because through repentance and faith in Christ we have become **“children of God.”** This *adoption* into the family of God has given to us the benefits of eternal life, immortality, and an eternal inheritance of blessings beyond our greatest imagination. Through the Gospel we become adopted into the family of God to be loved by Him as His very own children.

**1 John 3:1-2** - 3 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, **that we should be called children of God; and such we are**. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 **Beloved, now we are children of God**, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, **we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is**. NASB

**Romans 8:14-17** - 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, **these are sons of God**. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but **you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"** 16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God**, 17 **and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. NASB

Imagine the splendor of this glorious Gospel promise.... **“if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ!”** This is referred to in Scripture as our *inheritance*.

**Ephesians 1:10-13** - **In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

**Ephesians 1:18** - 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**. NASB

**1 Peter 1:3-6** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you**, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

What human words can describe the splendor and glory of these promises from God to those who believe in Jesus the Christ? None indeed! Learn then, that the Gospel holds out amazing blessings for those who believe which are beyond comprehension. Christ is an eternal fountain of life benefits, both temporal and eternal for all who trust Him for salvation from sin and death!

## **The Gospel is a message of comfort, healing and hope**

The Gospel is a message that brings healing and comfort to the poor sinner whose conscience is weighed down with the guilt and pain of sin. It is a promise of forgiveness from God that frees the conscience from this heavy weight. Jesus invites all people to humbly come to Him and receive this healing from the wounds of sin.

**Matthew 11:28-30** - 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and **I will give you rest.** 29

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and **you shall find rest for your souls.** 30 "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light." NASB

Jesus freely invites people to come to Him, and in coming to Him He offers **"rest."** He offers **"rest"** to those who are **"heavy laden."** This presupposes that we realize that we are **"heavy laden"** under the burden of guilt and sin. You see Christ is inviting those who are under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, who mourn their sins against God, who realize they have ruined their life by many sins and have separated themselves from God, the very source of life by continual sin. The analogy so many times employed in Scripture shows the guilty sinner bruised and broken by the fall into sin, heavy laden and toiling under the burden of sin which only leads to death, seeking to fill the unquenchable hunger and thirst of their souls created by being cutoff from relationship with God, who alone is the fountain of life. But Jesus promises to fill the longing of the soul, and comforts us by filling the void in our hearts.

**John 6:34-35** - 34 They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; **he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**" NASB

The Gospel then is an invitation to come and receive the blessing and benefits afforded by forgiveness from sin, and healing from the hand of God who also comforts our wounded conscience by the Holy Spirit. Indeed God promises to restore to us the benefit of His blessing which is pictured in Scripture as a well-watered **"garden"** or a **"river of delights."**

**Psalms 36:7-9** - 7 How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And **the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings.** 8 They drink their fill of the abundance of Thy house; And Thou dost give them **to drink of the river of Thy delights.** 9 **For with Thee is the fountain of life;** In Thy light we see light. NASB

In Christ we find a **"refuge"** from the scorching desert heat of sin under the **"shadow of thy wings"** and this is the **"precious lovingkindness of God"** where we **"drink the fill of the abundance of Thy house."** God comforts His people and restores the **"waste places"** of their broken lives and the **"wilderness"** of their wanderings in sin so that their lives are now like the **"garden of the Lord."**

**Isaiah 51:3** - 3 Indeed, the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And **her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.** NASB

But notice the fruits of this garden are not tomatoes and cucumbers, they are **"joy"** and **"gladness"** added to **"thanksgiving."** These analogies in Scripture are vivid pictures of the healing of our souls as we are reconciled to God because in the dry arid climate of the Bible writers these **"rivers and gardens"** were analogies of fruitful and refreshing delights to those who thirsted and hungered. This is the comfort that God, who is said to be **"the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,"** gives to His Church as they abide in His peace.

**Acts 9:31** - 31 So **the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace,** being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and **in the comfort of the Holy Spirit,** it continued to increase. NASB

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4** - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; 4 who comforts us in all our affliction** so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. NASB

But the comfort that God gives is not temporary but is an eternal comfort that never ends. And this is the Gospel promise for all those who come to Christ. It is a promise of eternal healing,



comfort, and rest from the weight and burden of sin. Christ is an everlasting fountain of life and blessing for those who come to Him as He fills the longing of our hearts to be healed from a sin-sick world and His promise is the fulfilling of our hope for a place of delight and eternal abundance where we will no longer, mourn or cry or die.

**2 Thessalonians 2:16-17** - 16 Now may our **Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts** in every good work and word. NASB

These amazing promises give us **“good hope”** of a heart and a world healed from the deadly disease of sin, and we long to see the world restored to that place of abundance and life like it was when God created it, when He called it a garden and blessed it with His presence everyday. This **“eternal comfort and good hope”** is available to all who simply come to Christ in repentance and faith to receive His healing and promise! To those who **“hope in God”** and trust Him to save them from sin and death and to provide for them eternal life, He promises His **“lovingkindness”** and His eternal blessing. This promise comes from the Almighty God who alone holds the power of life and immortality, and who alone is the faithful and true God who can offer such exceedingly great promises as these. Therefore the believer has **“good hope”** of the life and blessing of God who will show them lovingkindness and heal them from sin and death and give them rest for their souls.

**Psalms 33:18-22** - 18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, **On those who hope for His lovingkindness,** 19 To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. 20 Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. 21 For our heart rejoices in Him, Because we trust in His holy name. 22 **Let Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, According as we have hoped in Thee.** NASB

To those who put their hope in the Lord and call upon Him to save them, He will surely answer and hear the cry of those who call Him.

**Psalms 145:18-19** - 18 **The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.**

19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. NASB

The Gospel is an invitation to come and be healed and restored. It is an invitation to come and receive life and blessing beyond our comprehension. Further this invitation goes out to all who will **“seek the Lord”** and who will **“call upon Him”** to save from sin. For all who **“seek”** Him and **“call upon”** Him, God promises to have compassion and to pardon their sins.

**Isaiah 55:6-7** - 6 **Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him** while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And **He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.** NASB

God is seen in Scripture as the great Savior who saves all who call upon Him because He is gracious and compassionate. He will abundantly pardon those who repent of their sin and turn to Him for healing and forgiveness. His ear is seen to be turned to the one who calls, and His heart ready to forgive and heal.

**Psalms 116:1-8** - 116 I love the Lord, because He hears My voice and my supplications. 2 **Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.** 3 The cords of death encompassed me, And the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow. 4 **Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, save my life!" 5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.** 6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. 8 For Thou hast rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling. NASB

The promise held out in the Gospel is indeed the greatest of all, beyond any ever made!

**Revelation 21:3-7** - 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and **they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,** 4 **and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain;** the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. **I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.**" NASB



# The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

## The Gospel and Evangelism

### Evangelism is our Duty and Privilege

As we have learned in some detail, the Gospel is the message of Jesus Christ and what He has done to reconcile us to God and save us from sin and death. The fact that it is a message begs the question, “Who shall tell it?” And of course the obvious answer is, “Christians, those who have experienced the power and blessedness of His salvation.” The reason for this is twofold. First, that is our duty and second, that it is our privilege and delight. Let us first examine the fact that evangelism is the duty of Christians. It is a clear commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, of whom all Christians are, to preach the Gospel and to make disciples.

**Matthew 28:19-20** - 19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. ” NASB

One might assume that maybe Jesus was speaking only to His disciples who were to be His Apostles, being that this command was given directly to them. However, it is obvious here that the command extends beyond the eleven to all those who would come after them. This is because the command he gave them was for them to teach their disciples to “**observe everything that I commanded you.**” Therefore the command to make disciples (which obviously includes evangelism), extends to everyone who becomes a disciple of Christ through the ministry of the Apostles, which includes every Christian in every age thereafter. This is also affirmed by Jesus statement, “**I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” Obviously Jesus knew that this command would extend beyond the time of the disciples even until our time. In fact, one of the reasons we were given the indwelling power of the Spirit was to be a witness of Christ and to testify of the goodness of His salvation so that others may be saved.

**Acts 1:8** - 8 but **you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. NASB

Not only is it clear that the Church is the witness of Christ to each successive generation until He comes, but the ministry of evangelism is exactly how the Church carried out Jesus commands as we see in the narrative of Acts.

**Acts 8:1-4** - 8 And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. - And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and **they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.** 2 And some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. 4 **Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.** NASB

Here we see the Church being scattered because of persecution in Jerusalem, and being scattered to the surrounding regions. The Apostles however, remained in Jerusalem. So here we see the members of the body of Christ individually going about and preaching the word wherever they went. This is consistent with the idea of the priesthood of all believers, where we have been called to “**proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us.**”

**1 Peter 2:9** - 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you** out of darkness into His marvelous light; NASB

Later in the same context, Peter tells us to be ready to “**make a defense**” (give an answer) for the hope that you have.

**1 Peter 3:15** - 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you,** yet with gentleness and reverence; NASB

It is rather clear that unless we are acting as Christ's "*witnesses*" (Acts 1:8), and "*proclaiming His excellencies*" (1 Peter 2:9) that we will have no need to "*make a defense*" to anyone because no one will be asking about our hope because it will not be evident. But if we are in fact living as "*lights in the world*," and His praise is "*continually in our mouth (Psalm 34:1)*," people will be rather curious how we can always be so joyful and encouraged in a world that is falling apart around us. Not only are these things true, but Paul clearly describes our evangelistic ministry to us in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. There he explains that "*knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.*" And this is because "*the love of Christ controls us*" and so therefore we Christians "*no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again.*"

2 Corinthians 5:11,14-15 - 11 Therefore **knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men**, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences..... 14 **For the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that **they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf**. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

This persuading of men Paul tells us is because we have become "*new creatures in Christ*" and we have received the "*ministry of reconciliation*" from God and now because of this "*we are ambassadors of Christ*" who entreat others to "*be reconciled to God.*" This is what we are "*persuading men*" to do (2 Cor 5:11).

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 - 17 **Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, **and gave us the ministry of reconciliation**, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **He has committed to us the word of reconciliation**. 20 **Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God**. 21 He made Him who

knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. NASB

And this brings us to our second point, that it is our great delight and privilege to share the good news of the Gospel with others. Is it not the great desire of our hearts now that we have received the mercy of God in Christ to see others come to faith and repentance and be saved? Isn't this what Paul meant when he said, "*knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.*" In fact, one must wonder if so called Christians have no desire to see others saved, if they really be Christians at all. But in fact we do want to see people be saved as this is one of our chief desires in life now. It gives us meaning and purpose as Christians as we have a sincere love for our fellow man and wish for them to be "*reconciled to God*" and find the hope and peace that we have received in Christ. More than this, it is because we have a great love for God that we would not keep silent about the glory of His grace to us in Christ and that we shall tell it to the ends of the earth. This is something that glorifies God in a very distinct and direct way. When we speak of the excellent greatness of the salvation of God through Christ Jesus, we are telling forth the high praises of God for the greatest thing He has done in all of History. This magnifies the greatness of the mercy of God in Christ and causes people to see the whole purpose of God in creation. In short, sharing the Gospel in evangelism glorifies God in a way that speaks directly to God's plan of redemption like no other things we can say. Consider this quote from **J.I. Packer in his book, "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God"**..... "*May I stress again, if we ourselves have known anything of the love of Christ for us, and if our hearts have felt any measure of gratitude for the grace that has saved us from death and hell, then this attitude of compassion and care for our spiritually needy fellow men ought to come naturally and spontaneously to us. It was in connection that aggressive evangelism that Paul declared that "the love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor5:14). It is a tragic and ugly thing when Christians lack desire, and are actually reluctant, to share the precious knowledge that they have with others whose need of it is just as great as their own. It was natural for Andrew, when he found the*

*Messiah, to go off and tell his brother Simon, and for Phillip to hurry to break the good news to his friend Nathaniel (John 1:40). They did not need to be told to do this; they did it naturally and spontaneously, just as one would naturally and spontaneously share with one's family and friends any other piece of news that vitally affected them. There is something very wrong with us if we do not ourselves find it natural to act in this way, let us be quite clear about that. It is a great privilege to evangelize; it is a wonderful thing to be able to tell others of the love of Christ, knowing that there is nothing that they need more urgently to know, and no knowledge in the world that can do them so much good. Dear friends, let us consider the great need of the lost people around us. How important and serious is the issue of salvation? We should consider it a great privilege to have the knowledge of Christ and on this basis, a great privilege to share it. Is it not the most important thing in the life of anyone we know? Will it not do them more good than anything else you can say or do for them? Is it not the highest act of love to tell them how to be saved and reconciled to God? It is indeed and therefore let us open up our mouths and tell of His wondrous grace! Furthermore, let us consider what a shame it is to withhold the Gospel from those who so desperately need it.....**J.I. Packer** goes on..... “We should not, therefore, be reluctant and backward on the personal and individual level. We should be glad and happy to do it. We should not look for excuses for wriggling out of our obligation when occasion offers to talk to others about the Lord Jesus Christ. If we find ourselves shrinking from this responsibility and trying to evade it, we need to face ourselves with the fact that in this we are yielding to sin and Satan. If (as is usual) it is the fear of being thought odd and ridiculous, or of losing popularity in certain circles, that holds us back, we need to ask ourselves in the presence of God: Ought these things to stop us from loving our neighbor? If it is a false shame, which is not shame at all but pride in disguise, that keeps our tongue from Christian witness when we are with other people. We need to press on our conscience this question: Which matters more – our reputation or their salvation? We cannot be complacent about this gangrene of conceit and cowardice when we weigh up our lives in the presence of God. What we need to do is to ask for grace to be truly ashamed of ourselves, and to pray that we may so overflow in love for God that we will overflow in love for our fellow men, and so find it an easy and natural and joyful thing to share with them the good news of Christ.” Dear friends, let us find the courage needed to rise above our fear of man and to share the good news of our Lord's precious sacrifice. Let's face it. Jesus was a Gospel preacher and we are all followers of Him. I am not quite sure how you read this, but in my mind, that makes us all Gospel preachers to some extent or degree. Dear Christian, are you glad to have been saved by Christ? Good heavens man, tell somebody!*

### **God is Sovereign in Salvation**

This brings us to the question then, how does evangelism work? Is it really our job to “save people?” Is the Gospel a tool in our hands that we use to save people and cause them to come to faith? Is it really our job to convince people somehow of their need to be saved and of Christ's provision for them to do so? Well, the very clear answer to these questions is NO of course not and YES of course! As paradoxical as this may seem let us not be confused by this but rather clearly understand the doctrine of salvation as the Bible teaches it. In short, God is the One who saves people through the life and death of Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, but He uses the Church as a means of telling the message of Christ so that His elect people can be saved from every tribe and language, people and nation. Therefore, God is sovereign in who will be saved, but we are the means of bringing them to faith, by our obedience in sharing the Gospel with them which is “*the power of God unto salvation for all those who believe,*” regardless of race, class, or gender.

**Romans 1:16** - 16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,** to the Jew first and also to the Greek. NASB

In fact, right in the middle of Paul's definitive teaching about the doctrine of God's sovereignty in salvation (Romans 8-11), he clearly tells us of our great responsibility to be the means that God uses by preaching the Gospel.

**Romans 10:12-15** - 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; 13 for **"Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."** 14 **How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?** Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" NASB

In fact, it is because God has elected people from every tribe and language that we are guaranteed some level of success in evangelism. Consider these words from John Stott from his commentary on Ephesians pg 48 in regard to this matter..... *"Let no one say . . . that the doctrine of election by the sovereign will and mercy of God, mysterious as it is, makes either evangelism or faith unnecessary. The opposite is the case. It is only because of God's gracious will to save that evangelism has any hope of success and faith becomes possible. The preaching of the gospel is the very means that God has appointed by which he delivers from blindness and bondage those whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, sets them free to believe in Jesus, and so causes his will to be done."* Therefore it is important for us to grasp the concept that it is God working in the hearts of those He is calling to salvation who will eventually respond to our preaching and be saved. We cannot convince anyone to be saved apart from God's work in regeneration. This is because the natural man does not receive and CANNOT understand the things of God apart from regeneration. Only the Christian has received the Spirit of God and with Him the supernatural ability to **"know the things freely given to us by God."**

**1 Corinthians 2:12-15** - 12 Now **we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,** 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But **a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,** because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. NASB

This is why it is often so difficult for us to persuade and convince people of their need to be saved. It is also what we pray for when we ask God to save people. We are asking for God to regenerate them and give them the gift of faith by the power of the Spirit so that they can believe and be saved. This what Jesus meant when He said to Nicodemus, **"unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of God."**

**John 3:3**- 3 Jesus answered and said to him, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** NASB

Furthermore, this is why we receive so much resistance when telling people the Gospel. To people who God is not calling to faith, they have no ability in their natural selves to receive or understand the things of God and the Scripture says that **"the word of the cross is foolishness to them."** Therefore God must enable them by regeneration in order to have this supernatural ability. This is how God works out salvation in people's lives by the effectual calling of the Spirit. For more on this topic see the following....

- **Natural Inability** - [http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Natural\\_Inability.pdf](http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Natural_Inability.pdf)
- **Regeneration** – [http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Regeneration\\_2007.pdf](http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Regeneration_2007.pdf)
- **Effectual Calling** - [http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Effectual\\_Calling.pdf](http://www.heavenslight.org/salvation/Effectual_Calling.pdf)

Consider how clearly this matter is stated in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 where Paul gives us some definitive statements about God's Sovereignty in Salvation.

**1 Corinthians 1:18-31** - 18 For the word of the cross is **to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,



And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 **For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.** 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 **but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 **For consider your calling, brethren,** that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God. 30 **But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus,** who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Consider what is meant by the phrase in verse 18 .... ***"the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*** Paul is here making a distinction between two kinds of people, those who are ***"perishing"*** and those who are ***"being saved."*** But consider how he describes the distinction between them. The person who is perishing thinks ***"the word of the cross (that is, the Gospel) is foolishness,"*** and to the one who is ***"being saved"*** it is the ***"power of God."*** He continues to draw this out in the following verses stating that ***"the world through its wisdom did not come to know God."*** This is to say that it is not a matter of intellectual assent to some common facts about knowing God, for if it were, the world could come to know God simply by reasoning about the facts. He points out that the message indeed does seem like ***"foolishness"*** to the world and it is through this ***"foolish message"*** that God is ***"well pleased to save those who believe."*** Then in verse 24, he makes the key distinction between those who ***"perish"*** and those who are ***"being saved."*** He describes those who are ***"being saved"*** as ***"the called"*** and explains that to them ***"Christ is both the power and the wisdom of God."*** He then goes on to describe that the ***"calling"*** of the ***"brethren"*** is not because they were ***"wise, mighty, noble, or strong"*** but instead that ***"God has chosen"*** the ***"foolish, weak, base and despised"*** things of the world in order to ***"nullify"*** the wisdom of men so that ***"no man should boast before God."*** In summary, God has chosen those whom He saves and does affect that salvation in their life by a ***"calling"*** to salvation that causes them to see Christ as wisdom and power, granting them an ability that worldly people who are ***"wise, mighty, noble and strong"*** do not have. His point is that God saves the ***"foolish, weak, base and despised"*** in order to show that it is ***"by His doing"*** that people are ***"in Christ Jesus."*** This is his summary point of this passage in verse 30, ***"but by His doing you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God."*** By God's sovereign grace has He called those who are being saved, and He has done this in such a way as to nullify the world's wisdom with the foolish word of the cross in order to close the mouth of boasting men, so that no one can boast about salvation but rather only give praise to God for what He has done to save. Therefore he reasons, ***"let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."*** verse 30. People do not come to Christ by wise intellectual assent but rather by God's divine calling to salvation which opens eyes to see Christ as His wisdom and power to save. In fact, in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians chapter 2 Paul is explaining this point, making it clear that the only way we come to know and accept the depths and things of God, namely Christ and Him crucified, is by the power of the indwelling Spirit who gives us a supernatural ability to understand and know the things freely given to us by God. This truth about God's sovereignty in salvation is a common theme in the entire Bible and a key to understanding how evangelism and the Gospel work in order to save those who God is calling to salvation. We cannot discern who they are, we only know as they respond with supernatural power and understanding of Christ as Savior. Therefore it is this understanding that we seek to



give them by the message of the ***“word of the cross,”*** that is, the Gospel. And to this understanding we all pray. Consider what it is that you pray for when you pray for someone to be saved? And if it be by the power of intellectual assent that people are saved, why do you beseech God for this? For if it be true that it is just a matter of intellectual assent verses divine enablement, then it is simply a matter of your persuasive words in order to bring them to faith by the ***“wisdom of the world.”*** Of this fact Paul speaks explaining that he did not use ***“superiority of speech or of wisdom,”*** that his ***“preaching and his message were not with persuasive words of wisdom”*** but rather he simply presented ***“Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”***

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** - And when I came to you, brethren, **I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom**, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined to know nothing among **you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified**. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. **4** And **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. NASB

This is because people come to believe by the power of divine enablement (effectual calling) not by being persuaded to some intellectual assent unto the glory of the cross by superior speech. But even as we consider this, we all know the folly of it, because it is only by divine enablement that anyone comes to know God and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ with saving faith, because saving faith is the gift of God and no one can employ it until it be given to them by God. Of this fact of divine enablement (regeneration & effectual calling) the Bible speaks clearly.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - **8** For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God**; NASB

**Matthew 13:11** - **11** And He answered and said to them, **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.** NASB

**John 6:44** - **44** "No one can come to Me, **unless the Father who sent Me draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day. NASB

**John 6:65** - **65** And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**" NASB

**Acts 16:14** - **14** And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; **and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.** NASB

**Romans 8:28-30** - **28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those **who are called according to His purpose.** **29** **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; **30** and **whom He predestined, these He also called**; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. NASB

**1 Peter 1:3** - **3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, NASB

**James 1:18** - **18** **In the exercise of His will He brought us forth** by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. NASB

Therefore as we consider the Gospel and evangelism it is important to understand that it is God that saves those whom He has called by the power of His Spirit at work within them. And it is our privilege to participate in this supernatural work by simply presenting Christ Jesus and Him crucified to people and helping them by explaining the simple facts of the Gospel to them. It is God then, that ***“causes them to be born again”*** by ***“the exercise of His will”*** as He ***“opens their heart to respond”*** to the things that we tell them. We then can rest even in the face of resistance and opposition to the Gospel because we are simply the means of bringing the message and they do not come by our superior speech or fancy words of worldly wisdom but rather by power of God’s Spirit in regeneration. This confidence then in God’s purpose and will should help us to be both bold and patient with those to whom we witness of God’s saving work in Christ. It is our responsibility to be a witness, but it is not our responsibility to save anyone because that is God’s work. Therefore let us simply present Christ and Him crucified and leave the results to God.

## Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

To be sure, this is not to say that people don't make a conscious choice to believe in Christ and that we don't try to persuade them to believe, of course we do. People must make a conscious choice to be saved and respond to the Gospel in repentance and faith. Of course they must and this is the response we seek from them when preaching the Gospel to them. It is important to recognize however (not for the hearer but for the Christian witness), that if and when they do respond with true repentance and saving faith, they have done so by the power of God through regeneration and primarily because of His choice for their salvation. The outworking of His election then does have a moment in time and space when it comes to fruition and someone believes and is saved. This *conversion* is what we seek when sharing the Gospel even though we realize it is a supernatural work that God must perform in the hearts. So we seek to sow the Gospel seed, and expect others to water somewhere down the road, but it is God that causes the growth and brings to life. We may see one come to faith and repentance, and we may not.

**1 Corinthians 3:5-7** - 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even **as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.** 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. NASB

Further, in sowing this Gospel seed we should seek to accurately and vividly portray the Gospel in the most serious yet amiable way that we can. After all, a right response to Christ's Gospel call is the most important decision that anyone will ever make. It will either be the "*fragrance of life*" to them or the smell of death, but they *must* either repent and believe, or perish. There is no middle ground with Christ. Either He is Savior and Lord, or we are at enmity with Him. In His words, either we will repent, or we will perish.

**Luke 13:5** - 5 "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**" NASB

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16** - 14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and **manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.** 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 **to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.** And who is adequate for these things? NASB

But as a Gospel witness, even though we seek a human response to our fervent efforts to persuade men of their lost condition and need to repent and believe, we also realize that this ability only comes from God through regeneration and effectual calling, so we are able to be both *bold and patient* with our hearers knowing that God will work His own will in His own good time. We can be bold because we carry the very words of life and we have direct orders from the Sovereign of the universe to do it. We carry the message of the triumphant King coming in to conquer what is rightfully His, and we are ambassadors sent to warn and encourage our subjects to surrender and be blessed or to resist and be destroyed. However, surrender or resistance is not in our power to grant, but we only come as a messenger of the good news of free forgiveness for rebellion and gracious lovingkindness and blessing to all who will surrender. Our job is to be faithful to the message of the King and a good ambassador of His Kingdom. A godly Christian example and clear presentation of the Gospel are the most effective tools we have to point people to Christ, but only He can give them a "*new heart and a new spirit.*"

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** - 26 "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful** to observe My ordinances. NASB

Another important thing to remember is that God does all good things in His own good time. Therefore we must be patient in seeing others come to Christ. Many times God uses several people and different means to bring people to Himself and we are just one of these tools in the hands of God to help get them there. Therefore it is important to be patient and loving as we

witness, hope and pray for the salvation of those to whom we preach. Consider these words again from J.I. Packer..... *“if on the other hand, you meet a person who is not thus prepared, a person who as yet has no conviction of the truth of the Gospel and perhaps no idea, or even a false idea, of what the Gospel actually is, it is worse than useless to try and stampede him into a “snap” decision. You may be able to bully him into a psychological crisis of some sort, but that will not be saving faith and will do him no good. What you have to do is take time with him, to make friends with him, to get alongside him, to find out where he is in terms of spiritual understanding, and to start dealing with him at that point. You have to explain the Gospel to him, and be sure that he understands it and is convinced of its truth, before you start pressing him to an active response. You have to be ready to help him, if need be, through a spell of seeking to repent and believe before he knows within himself that he has received Christ, and Christ has received him. At each stage you have to be willing to go along with him at God’s speed, which may seem to you a strangely slow speed. But that is God’s business, not yours. Your business is simply to keep pace with what God is doing in his life. Your willingness to be patient with him in this way is the proof of your love of him no less than of your faith in God. If you are not willing thus to be patient, you need not expect that God will favor you by enabling you to win souls.”* With this knowledge then of the Sovereignty of God and of the inevitable human response that is necessary for anyone to be saved, let us draw several **conclusions** from what we have learned.

**God is Sovereign** – People come to faith by the *effectual calling* of the Spirit of God because they have been elected by God. God is Sovereign in who the elect are, and He in His own time and in His own divine method saves those whom He has chosen.

**Universal Call** - We have no ability to discern who the elect are and are not, therefore we are diligent to preach the *free offer* of the Gospel to **all people** in hopes that they are elect and will respond, regardless of race, class, gender or any other distinction. Their salvation remains in God’s effectual call, not our ability to wrangle them with fine sounding words or skillful apologetic arguments. These may help, but in the final analysis it is the effectual calling of God that brings people to conversion.

**Prayer - Prayer** is a vital part of evangelism as salvation requires the hand of God to move upon an individual and regenerate their soul and give them the ability to grasp the Gospel. God in His sovereignty then, has been pleased to allow us to participate in people’s salvation through prayer and preaching. Praying for the salvation of those to whom we witness is important and necessary.

**Gospel content** - Our methodology is not the primary issue in evangelism but rather the content of the message of the Gospel itself is primary because it alone is *“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”* The **content** of the Gospel message is a matter of grave importance so that we clearly articulate the Apostolic (of Jesus and the Apostles) message of the Gospel.

**Human Response** – It is of utmost importance that we stress upon people their responsibility to *repent of their sins* and make a conscious choice to **trust in Christ** as their righteousness before God. There must be a public conscious response to Christ of which **baptism** is the crowning event of one’s public confession and identification with Christ as both Savior from death and Lord of our life.

**Christian Duty** – It is our responsibility to be a **witness** of the Christ and His Gospel, but it is not our responsibility to somehow change people’s hearts. That is God’s work. Therefore let us simply present Christ and Him crucified, and do this to the best of our frail ability and leave the results to God. This should allow us to be bold, patient and faithful in our proclamation of the Gospel as we confidently rest in the fact that God’s Word will accomplish that which He sent it for.

## Important things in sharing the Gospel

There are no magic bullets when it comes to sharing the Gospel. It is simply a matter of us being a faithful ambassador of the message of Christ. However there are many guiding principles that can help us to be as effective as possible.

### 1) Simple Message – Communicate the simple truths of the Gospel clearly.

**God** – It is a message about the One true and living God and His claim on our lives as our Sovereign Creator and Righteous Judge.

**Man** – Man was created by God, in God's image, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But man sinned against God by disobeying His holy law. Man therefore separated himself from God's holy and satisfying presence, and incurred His wrathful displeasure. This is why there is death and suffering in the world.

**Christ** – Christ's death was the substitute payment for the penalty that we deserved for our sin. His death is God's only provision for the forgiveness of man's sin and the appeasement of God's wrath against him. His life provides a perfect righteousness for us in the sight of God.

**Response** - We are called to respond to this good news in repentance and belief - turning away from our sin and self-sufficiency toward God, and trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the substitute penalty that we deserved for our sin.

In one sentence, ***“Man has been separated from God (the Creator and sustainer of life) because of sin, and sin is why there is death in the world, and Christ is God’s provision to atone for man’s sins, and man can simply receive God’s provision through repentance and faith.”***

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 **for all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**; NASB

### 2) Gentleness and Respect – It is important to be a witness with Christian character and integrity. You carry the words of eternal life to dying sinners and you represent the King of virtue. As a witness of Christ therefore, we are to be a witness of Christ’s character to others as well as a witness of His message.

**1 Peter 3:15** - 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you**, yet with gentleness and reverence; NASB

**Matthew 5:16** - 16 **"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** NASB

### 3) Old, Old Story – The Gospel never changes according to the shifting winds of culture or modernity or fads of any kind. It is a message about the historical facts of Jesus Christ and what He HAS accomplished through His life, death and resurrection. Redemption has been accomplished by Christ. It is therefore the fulfillment of the exact requirements of God to meet the demands of His own justice, and Christ performed that perfectly. It ever remains therefore, the unchanging power of God for all who receive it with authentic, persevering faith.

**Romans 1:16-17** - 16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith." NASB

### 4) Personal Savior and Lord – Jesus is a personal Savior and Lord for every individual who believes. This means that each person must come to Him personally and be saved by Him for their own personal sins. Each person must submit to Jesus as Lord, in repentance from sin and personal trust in Him alone as their righteousness before God to be saved.



**John 3:36** - 6 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**" NASB

- 5) **A Right Response, Faith and Repentance** – It is of utmost importance that we stress upon people their responsibility to **repent of their sins** and make a conscious choice to **trust in Christ** as their righteousness before God. Their must be a public conscious response to Christ of which **baptism** is the crowning event of ones public confession and identification with Christ as both Savior from death and Lord of our life.

- 6) **A Message about God** – Many people in our era and culture have no fundamental understanding about God, or at best, a flawed view of God which is defined by much error. To make this matter worse, many in our **"postmodern, pluralistic"** culture, people have re-defined God to fit there own criteria of what they want God to be like, rather than who He really is according to reality. Therefore it is important to give people, to some degree, a fundamental and corrected view of God in order to lay a foundation for the Gospel message.

**Acts 17:24-25, 30-31** - 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since **He is Lord of heaven and earth**, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things**; 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man** whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NASB

It is important then to stress that people are estranged from God personally and need to be reconciled to Him personally.

- 7) **Nothing More Important** – The Gospel is good news of great joy, but it is also a **serious matter of utmost importance**. Undoubtedly we will meet with much resistance if we are faithful to the true Gospel. But we should not let this discourage us. We will need much courage to proclaim the Gospel regularly and accurately. We must ask the question to ourselves, *Which matters more – our reputation or their salvation?* It is a serious matter of utmost importance and a supreme act of love for neighbor to tell people the Gospel.

**Luke 13:5** - 5 "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**" NASB

- 8) **Keep Learning** – A brand new Christian can tell someone the Gospel, but a seasoned and experienced Christian can do it with much **more accuracy and clarity**. More than this, many will meet us with a variety of questions which need sincere and truthful answers. These answers can give much aid to people who are coming the Christ. Therefore it is important for us to be able to meet these questions with Scripture and explanations from the Bible that address people's most troubling doubts, fears and objections. This usually accompanies people in the early days of embracing the Gospel message.

**Colossians 4:4-6** - 5 **Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders**, making the most of the opportunity. 6 **Let your speech always be with grace**, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that **you may know how you should respond to each person.** NASB

- 9) **God is Sovereign** – It is our responsibility to be a **witness** of the Christ and His Gospel, but it is not our responsibility to somehow change people's hearts. That is God's work. Their salvation remains in **God's effectual call**, not our ability to wrangle them with fine sounding words or skillful apologetic arguments. These may help, but in the final analysis it is the effectual calling of God that brings people to conversion.

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** - And when I came to you, brethren, **I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom**, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among **you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified**. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 And **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. NASB

Let us therefore be kind, straightforward and gentle in our witness to others. We can be both bold and patient as we depend on God to change their hearts.



## Evangelism and Postmodern Culture

Don't forget....its an old story....

### Gospel Ministers – Sharing the Gospel in a Postmodern World

**Tim Keller - CD\*\*\***

Gospel Theologizing

Gospel realizing

Gospel Urbanizing

Gospel Communication

Gospel Formulation

Gospel Incarnation

"Jesus is the Truth. We believe in Him, —not merely in His words. He Himself is Doctor and Doctrine, Revealer and Revelation, the Illuminator and the Light of Men. He is exalted in every word of truth, because He is its sum and substance. He sits above the gospel, like a prince on His own throne. Doctrine is most precious when we see it distilling from His lips and embodied in His person. Sermons [and songs] are valuable in proportion as they speak of Him and point to Him. **A Christ-less gospel is no gospel** and a Christ-less discourse is the cause of merriment to devils." -C.H. Spurgeon

#### 10) Jesus is the Gospel –

He goes on to tell us that Jesus has become for us....wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. Not that Jesus gives us these things, but that He, His person, is those things for us. Now dear friends, here is true freedom....Jesus IS my wisdom....Jesus IS my rightstanding with God....Jesus IS my holiness before God....and Jesus IS my redemption, my personal payment for my personal horrendous sins! Christ IS these things for me, because I am unable to be these things on my own! Oh what a Savior! Jesus' very name means "The Lord saves!" Jesus is the Gospel! This reminds me of a word from the man of God John Newton.....*"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior."*

- **Universal** – A message to be preached to the entire world.
- **Eschatological** – A message which reveals the purpose and fulfillment of all things and the ultimate ends of the world.