



# Redemption

Planned  
Needed  
Provided

**Edward C. Wharton**



**R**empdemtion  
**Is**





# Redemption Is

PLANNED  
NEEDED  
PROVIDED

by Edward C. Wharton



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## **Redemption Is . . . Planned, Needed, Provided**

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# **DEDICATED TO:**

My brethren on the faculty who share with me the conviction that redemption's gospel must be preached to all men everywhere in our generation.



# FOREWORD

If you have never heard the “good news” of Redemption you’ll stand in awe of the message found in this book. On the other hand, if you think you’ve heard it all before, you’ll still be thrilled at the fresh, logical, systematic way the author presents it.

Attacks on and assumptions about the Bible have slowly eroded the foundations of modern thinking. After hearing the soft sell about the Bible being a “myth,” it is comforting to have a presentation which strongly links God’s message to literal history. The author does a masterful job of reminding us that the Bible story is whole cloth, and that nothing can be selectively pulled from it without tearing the fabric of God’s message.

Ours is an age in which some theologies are built shakily upon a few verses, without regard to the Bible’s broad context. Increasingly, we hear remarks such as, “This is how I feel about,” instead of “Thus saith the Lord.” In such a fragmented atmosphere, it is reassuring to read a holistic view of Redemption taken from the pages of Scripture. This book is the antidote to a piece-meal viewing of great subjects like Redemption. It will help a new generation of Bible readers who sorely need to see the “big picture” of God’s will.

We commend the revised edition of this book to you. Read it. Study it. Teach and preach it. Never was it more needed than now.

Robert K. Oglesby, Sir.  
Pulpit Minister  
Waterview Church of Christ  
Richardson, Texas





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Part One

# REDEMPTION PLANNED





# 1

## **GENESIS: HISTORICAL OR MYTHOLOGICAL**

### **The Relation of Genesis as History to Redemptive Christianity**

The opening chapters of the Bible speak of origins: the origin of the universe as a cosmos, the creation of man in the image of God, the home and God's intention for its permanence, and the origin of human sin and the consequent death of man. They speak of an earth that no longer exists—its geomorphic face changed by raging flood waters and its relics buried beneath tons and tons of old-world silt.

How are Christians to understand these chapters, particularly chapters one through eleven? Are they to be read as history or as Hebrew mythology? A related question asks if it really makes any difference how they are understood as long as we believe Jesus is Lord.

This chapter seeks to answer these questions by pointing out the effect that our view of Genesis will have

upon our view of the Bible's redemptive message and man's need for Christ as Savior.

## **I. THE MODERN VIEW OF GENESIS**

In recent times, some very sophisticated efforts have been made to cast the Bible into a framework of mythology. The message built in at every level of formal education is that the Bible contrasts with the cosmogony that is confirmed by our modern technology. This is effectively augmented by the film and television media. These efforts have centered mainly in the origin of the universe and the early history of man. In these areas, great storms of evolution are blowing against the book of Genesis as a reliable record of history.

If the historical view of Genesis is jettisoned in favor of the evolutionary view, it will depreciate confidence in the entire biblical account. It will reflect upon the Bible's historical unity (where does myth end and history begin?); its representation of the real meaning of history; and, consequently, upon sin as a reality and man's real need for salvation.

## **II. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF GENESIS**

The Bible tells us that history has meaning, that from the outset of man's sin, God has been working in history to save us. The Christian view of history is couched in a redemptive framework. The Christian views history neither cyclically nor as the outcome of forces confined in a closed system.

He sees it from the linear vantage point as being meaningfully worked out by God who began it, directs it, and will consummate it according to his own eternal

purpose. This is essentially a restatement of what Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:9-11 and Romans 8:28-30. The Bible gives us a redemptive understanding of our origin, purpose, and destiny and, therefore, gives meaning to history. Genesis initiates this viewpoint.

### **A. The Historical Unity of the Bible**

Genesis links the origin and sin of man to his corresponding need for the redemption God has lovingly provided in Jesus Christ. The rest of the Bible is God's account of the historical development of his saving work, which culminated in the cross. If Genesis is not literally true, then Jesus as savior is simply not needed and his cross is but a meaningless sentiment. The Genesis account of man's origin and sin is so interrelated with what follows in Scripture that it cannot be impugned as historically unreliable without affecting the view one has of the integrity of the rest of the Bible.

### **B. Tracing the Messianic Seed-line from Adam to Christ**

Redemption is the central thrust of the Bible's message. Genesis presents God intruding into the affairs of men from the beginning to direct redemption's plan through history to Christ the promised seed of woman (Genesis 3:9-15). The Bible, from that point in time, traces the messianic seed line from Adam to Christ.

#### **1. Preserving the seed from extinction.**

Genesis 3:15 reveals the mortal enmity



between Christ and Satan from the beginning. God said to the serpent:

*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Satan from that point tried to destroy the seed. But God worked to preserve it. Thus, the seed was preserved in the loins of Shem when in the ark they rode out the flood. God promised Abraham that in his seed would come worldwide redemption (Genesis 12:3 and Galatians 3:8). That required the preservation of males descending directly from Abraham to Christ through every succeeding generation for two thousand years! God promised that the seed would come through the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). That required the preservation of the nation of Judah from extinction while in Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 5:10,18; 30:7-11; 46:28; Ezekiel 37:1-10). And the preservation of the life of Jesus himself from Herod and Archelaus (Matthew 2) required of God another historical intrusion.

Only a literal view of Genesis can give a reasonable and redemptive meaning to the seed promise and to the biblical tracing of its descent from Adam to Christ, as it can be traced in unbroken succession throughout Scripture. It is carefully marked out from Adam to Seth (Genesis 4:25), from Seth to Noah (Genesis

4:25-5:32), and from Noah to his son Shem, who lived through the flood (Genesis 6-9). After the flood, the seed is traced from Shem to Abraham (Genesis 11:10-26), to whom the promise of worldwide redemptive blessing was made (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). Paul claims the fulfillment of this promise was in Christ (Galatians 3:8, 16).

2. The redemptive meaning of the genealogies.

Tracing the seed from Adam to Christ gives meaning to history when it is viewed redemptively. What Moses did for us in the genealogical tables of Genesis chapters five and eleven, and what was traced from Abraham through David to Christ (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Matthew 1:1) is essentially what Luke did in his genealogy. In reverse order, Luke's genealogy spanned the entire course of history from Jesus back to Adam. If Moses' account of Adam's sin is discounted as historical, these genealogies cannot have any practical meaning. And if Genesis is not viewed historically, especially the first eleven chapters, at what point shall it be decided that Luke ceased to record actual historical persons and began to write in fictitious persons? What would be the point for modern man?

What then is the divine purpose for the agonizingly slow development of the seed line throughout centuries of history? A practical purpose that emerges, especially for modern man, is the absolute trustworthiness of God to save us according to his word, regardless of the

turbulence of history, and the uncertainty of its course as men see it. The history of the acts of God which are presented in the Bible are recorded as a guarantee to all future generations, whether Christian or not, that the God of the Bible continually has sovereign control, of the historical present to serve his redemptive purpose in Christ, to his own eternal glory. This was Peter's answer to those who offered the time lapse between the promise of his coming and the fact that he had not yet come as a proof that, if there is a God, he does not care enough about us to interfere (2 Peter 3:1ff). Peter equates that time lapse with the longsuffering of God, who patiently waits for us to respond to his loving offer of saving grace.

### **C. Genesis and the New Testament**

Both Christ and the apostles based Christian teaching on the historical accounts in Genesis. Back of such a view of Genesis lies the trustworthiness of Jesus and the inspiration of the New Testament writers. The question at this point is: Can we trust Christ and the apostles to have drawn correct conclusions from that base, especially since they are for the duration of the Christian age? This is answered in the resurrection, which is the supreme endorsement of all Christ claimed for himself and his apostles. For the Christian, there is a unity between his view of Christ and the apostles and his view of Genesis. To

trust Christ as Lord is to view things as he viewed them.

### 1. Jesus and Genesis

Jesus included Genesis in his general endorsement of the Old Testament in such references as Luke 24:44-47, John 5:39, and John 10:35. He stated that they were prophetic of the salvation he came to accomplish in his death and resurrection.

His specific references to Genesis includes the account of Noah and the flood:

*And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.*  
(Matthew 24:37-39)

At this point, Jesus referred to Noah as a real historical person, to the ark as an actual sea-going vessel, and to the flood as a worldwide event that reached such proportions that it “*took them all away.*”

A subtle liberalism suggests that Jesus accommodated himself to the mythology in Genesis to illustrate a spiritual teaching. There are two observations that need to be made in answer to this. First, this assumes that Jesus actually viewed Genesis as mythical. But that idea cannot be derived from either the language

of Jesus or of Moses. Jesus' words are clearly references to what he considered to be historical facts. The idea of an appeal to myth is a baseless assumption. Second, Moses does not suspend the flood account in an historical vacuum. He connects it to the judgment of God because of the sinful conduct of humanity prior to that time (Genesis 6:1-17). Then, hundreds of years later, Moses reckons the flood to be common knowledge from which he dates yet other events (Genesis 10:32; 11:10). Genesis links the flood to historical connecting points that lead up to it and that, in consequence of it, follow after.

However, the major consideration for Christians is that the charge of mythology against Genesis removes the factual ground upon which Jesus based his reasoning and thus undermines his moral conclusions regarding marriage. In answer to a Pharisee's question about divorce, Jesus answers,

*Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? (Matthew 19:4-5)*

Here, Jesus refers first to Genesis 1:27, to the creation of Adam and Eve. Then he refers to Genesis 2:24 where he equates what Moses wrote with what God actually "said" about the

“one flesh” relationship which belongs to marriage. Jesus obviously lends these statements historical integrity, for he draws two conclusions from them regarding the nature and permanence of marriage: (1) “*So that they are no more two, but one flesh,*” and (2) “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Matthew 19:6). These “so” and “therefore” statements introduce what Jesus concluded from Genesis about marriage: when God joins a man and woman in marriage, they become one; and what God unites, man is not to separate. The strength of Christ’s answer lies in the historical integrity of Genesis from which he reasoned.

Jesus continues to reason from a literal interpretation of Genesis when the Pharisees remind him that Moses commanded to give a bill of divorcement and to put away their wives (Matthew 19:8). Jesus answered that Moses suffered them to do so because of their hardness of heart, but that “*from the beginning it hath not been so.*” This expresses a real change that man brought about in the marriage relationship that had not been so from the beginning, as related in Genesis. This endorsement of Genesis as history can hardly be missed.

Finally, on the ground of a literal view of Genesis—that when God joins a man and woman in marriage, they are not to put that marriage asunder—the Lord introduced a prohibition against putting away, except for fornication (Matthew 19:9). Jesus then stated that a

remarriage after a divorce for a reason other than fornication would be adultery. That restricting and morally implicating statement could hardly receive an endorsement by modern man if the ground from which Jesus argued for the permanence of marriage were regarded as fiction.

John records an incident that expresses Jesus' literal view of Genesis. During one of Jesus' debates in Jerusalem, he exposed the intention of the Jews to kill him. He said,

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (John 8:44)*

Jesus believed that the devil originated lying and murder "from the beginning." He believed that God actually told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that death would be their penalty for disobedience (Genesis 2:17-18). But the devil lied to them saying, "*Ye shalt not surely die*" (Genesis 3:4), and by that means he murdered them. Jesus said this actually happened "from the beginning," which is the same term Jesus used twice in Matthew 19:4 and 8, when he spoke of the origin of marriage.

It is conclusive that either Genesis records

history, or Jesus was wrong-wrong about what happened, when it happened, and the conclusions he deducted from those accounts. The real issue is the trustworthiness of Christ. If we cannot trust him regarding Genesis, can we trust him regarding his divine nature and redemptive mission? It is a matter of serious consequence whether we view Genesis as historical or mythological.

## 2. The apostles and Genesis.

Moses' account of the origin and nature of man and woman and the marriage relationship cannot be relegated to the realm of mere myth without reflecting against the truth and inspiration of the apostolic writings. Paul, Peter, and John, as will be seen in their letters, clearly reflect their respect for Genesis as a record of real, historic truth.

### a. *Paul and Genesis.*

Paul opens the Roman letter with a graphic description of the degeneracy of man, which resulted in the rejection of God's true revelation. Three times Paul says that "*for this cause God gave them up*" to the sins that were the result of their degeneracy (1:24, 26, 28). In 1:26-27 he says of homosexuality:

*For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the*



*woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.*

The apostle writes against the practice of homosexuality as a perversion of the natural order as God created it. It is an error because it is against nature. The point here is that Genesis cannot be rejected as historic truth without a corresponding rejection of Paul's truth, which is grounded in Moses' statement of origins.

To receive Paul as a Spirit-guided apostle and his letters as the word of God, we must acknowledge the authority of Genesis as he did. Consider the following two illustrations:

- 1) Paul's teaching of universal condemnation and the consequent need of universal salvation is based on the historical truth of Genesis.

*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned . . . Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.*  
(Romans 5:12,14)

Paul reasons that Adam's sin brought both sin and death into the world and that, therefore, our consequent need for Christ is universal. He bases this reasoning on the literal truth that is recorded in the third chapter of Genesis.

In 1 Corinthians 15:22, he reasons again for the universal need for Christ on the historic truth of Adam's sin: "*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*" In 2 Corinthians 5:14 he argues that, "*one died for all, therefore all died.*" These statements reach all the way back to Genesis and the real historic truth that is written there.

Again, in 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul expresses his fear for the church that, "*as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ.*" When this is coupled with the Lord's statement that the devil was a liar and a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), we can appreciate the apostle's apprehension. The devil would corrupt our minds by lying to us about the word of God, even as he lied to Eve. Genesis records that historic incident. God had carefully instructed Adam and Eve in regard to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and clearly warned that, "*in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely*

*die*” (Genesis 2:17). But the devil blatantly lied to Eve, saying, “*Ye shall not surely die*” (Genesis 3:4), and he killed her. The devil has lied from the beginning about the divine nature of Christ, about the inspiration of Scripture, and about what sinful men must do to be saved. Why would he not lie to us about the origin of the universe, mankind, and, sin and the universal need for redemption that is a consequence of that sin? To reject Genesis as historical is to reject salvation as needful.

- 2) Paul’s teaching of the ministries of men and women in the church is based on the historical truth of Genesis.

*I desire therefore that the men pray in every place . . . let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression. (1 Timothy 2:8, 11-14)*

Paul’s word for “men” is not *anthropo*, which refers to all mankind, women as well as men (from which comes, “anthropology,” the study of mankind). His word is *aner*, meaning the

man as distinct from the woman, as this context makes clear. There is a distinct assignment of ministry to the men and a distinct prohibition to the women. Paul reasons from chapters two and three of Genesis to these conclusions. First, he appeals to the order of creation, “*For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*” This is from Genesis 2:18-23. Then he appeals to the fact that Eve was beguiled: “*Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression.*” This is recorded in Genesis 3:1-6. These events in Genesis are Paul’s authority for his instruction. Thus Paul brings Genesis into historical focus.

A final reference from Paul is in 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9 where he corrects the impropriety of some Christian women, reminding them that “*the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*” Here is a clear reference to Genesis as historical truth.

If Genesis is not to be viewed as historical, Paul cannot be taken seriously.

*b. Peter and Genesis.*

In 2 Peter 3:1-6, we are reminded of God’s prophetic word as a defense against

those who would mock the reliability of God's promises. Peter specifies the flood account, in Genesis chapters six through nine, as an example of the trustworthiness of the Lord's promise to come in judgment against ungodly men:

*For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.*

(2 Peter 3:5, 6)

He points out that "the same word," which by fiat brought the world into existence, also prophesied the flood. The fact of the flood, he explains, confirms the reliability of God's prophetic word. Then he warns,

*But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7)*

Peter reasons from Genesis that God's word, which prophesied the flood, is the same word that has prophesied a yet future judgment. He grounds the reliability of God's word on the reality of the flood

events recorded in Genesis. Since Peter's reasoning is based on the reality of Genesis, his teaching of future judgment stands or falls on the reality of Genesis.

Finally, Peter makes a practical application for Christian living:

*"Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness?" (2 Peter 3:11).*

How does Peter expect us to *see* that all these things are to be dissolved in a coming judgment? By the Genesis account of the flood! In its fulfillment is the confirmation of the reliability of the same word that foretold both events. On that ground we *see* the reality of the future judgment. By this means, Peter exhorts Christians to live a righteous life in preparation for that event. This was Peter's way of putting teeth into his warning to look out for false teachers and to motivate Christians to *"give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight"* (2 Peter 3:14).

If the Genesis account of the flood is not historical fact, then Peter's entire argument to live a godly life is groundless and ineffective.

c. *John and Genesis.*

The apostle John points out how we can

identify the children of God and the children of the devil. He writes:

*My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. (1 John 3:7, 8)*

The identification mark of the children of the devil is clear: he that practices sin is a child of the devil. The reason John gives that as a mark of identity is that the devil himself sinned from *the beginning*. Once again, an apostle roots his teaching in the historical truth of Genesis. This is not a mere accommodation of the language of Genesis to illustrate a spiritual point; it is literalized when John locates the devil's sin as being "from the beginning," and then illustrates that sin in Cain's murder of his brother Abel: "*Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous*" (1 John 3:12). John refers to the account in Genesis 4:1-8. It is obvious that John's view of Genesis is that of Christ and the other apostles, who appealed to it for its historical content of facts as that which actually happened "from the beginning."

*In conclusion*, we have seen that Jesus and the apostles Paul, Peter, and John made doctrinal and moral arguments for the church which are based on their historical view of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. A denial of the reality of those chapters would render their reasoning ineffective and their conclusions null and void. It is evident that such a denial has the most serious implications upon the divine nature of Jesus and the inspiration of the New Testament.



### **Questions**

1. Did Jesus view Genesis as historical or mythological?
2. Do you believe that Genesis is historically reliable?
3. From the vantage point of redemption, what has the Old Testament been designed to do? The New Testament?
4. Point out the importance of the ark in God's plan of salvation.
5. What would have happened to salvation's plan if Noah had not prepared the ark? What would have happened to the messianic seed-line? What would be the fate of the human race from Adam to Noah?

### **Discussion Points**

1. Why is the historical view of Genesis essential to an acceptance of Christ's work of redemption? You might begin the discussion with the sin of Adam and the penalty of sin.
2. Discuss what must happen to the arguments of Christ and the apostles in such discourses as Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 1:26, 27; and 2 Peter 3:1-14 if the first eleven chapters of Genesis are regarded as myth.
3. What are the implications upon Jesus' infallibility and the inspiration of the apostles if Genesis is not viewed as historical?
4. Discuss whether it would make any real difference in our faith in Christ if Genesis were viewed as mythological.



# 2

## REDEMPTION PURPOSED AND PROMISED

Christ's purpose for coming into the world was to save ruined humanity from sin.

*And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)*

*For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)*

*Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15)*

Christ's purpose was not to save the world from war, poverty, or famine. The church must not lose sight of her central purpose under the great commission. The fringe benefits of world evangelism will naturally result in less war, less poverty, less famine, less heartache and heartbreak as the hearts of men are changed by the gospel.

But the fringe benefits must not be confused with the central thrust of Christianity, which is redemptive.

| Christ’s Purpose   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><u>Was</u></p> <p>To save men<br/>from sin<br/>Matthew 1:21<br/>Luke 19:10<br/>1 Timothy 1:15</p> |  | <p><u>Was Not</u></p> <p>To save men from:<br/>War<br/>Famine<br/>Poverty<br/>Injustice</p> |

The gospels graphically present Jesus as our redeemer and redemption as the great purpose for which he came into the earth. The very name Jesus, meaning saviour, says Matthew, is significant of his redemptive mission: “*Call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus himself stated that his purpose for coming was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). In Luke’s gospel, the attention that Martha gave to “much serving,” while Jesus was her house guest, was contrasted to the interests that consumed Mary to the point of neglecting to assist Martha. Jesus pointed out to Martha that Mary’s interest in his teaching was the better choice. On another occasion, Jesus said to a palsied man, who was brought by friends for healing, “*Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven*” (Matthew 9:2-8).

In addition to proving that Jesus could forgive sins by miraculously healing the man, it was also demonstrated that redemption from sin is much more to be preferred

than being healed even of a debilitating disease. Each of the gospel accounts closes out the story of Christ with the record of his commission to preach the gospel of salvation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-47; John 20:21-23). According to Luke's closing statement, Jesus interpreted the law, the prophets, and the psalms as foreseeing that repentance and remission of sins was to be preached in his name to all nations. Redemption is indeed our Lord's magnificent obsession.

It is the aim of this chapter to establish that Christ, the church, and remission of sins is (1) the theme of the entire Bible narrative, and (2) is the complete fulfillment of both God's eternal purpose and the promise to Abraham.

## **I. REDEMPTION WAS PURPOSED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN**

The New Testament does not teach that God planned for man to sin so that he could save him. Rather, Paul clearly tells us that God knew man would sin and purposed a redemptive plan which included Christ as the one to carry it out. Consider that redemption was:

### **A. To Be Summed up in Christ**

Paul writes that God through Christ was -

*...making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in*

*him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will. (Ephesians 1:9-11)*

Christ did not fail to provide redemption. He accomplished God's pre-planned purpose for him, as plainly stated in another epistle: "*who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal*" (2 Timothy 1:9).

## **B. An Eternal Purpose**

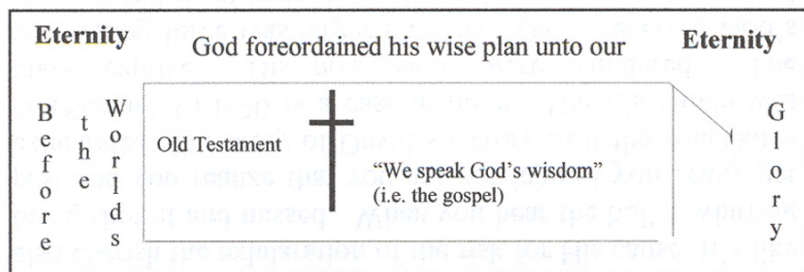
God's intent for the church was "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11). His reference to the plan of salvation, as we generally speak of it, is to God's eternal purpose. God's plan to save us was purposed in his great mind in eternity before time began, and, spanning the poles of time, extends into eternity after the consummation of the ages. Paul reveals this to us in the following:

1. God purposed redemption before time began.

*We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory. (1 Corinthians 2:7)*

Paul was preaching the gospel of Christ but he says that he was speaking "God's wisdom." The gospel then is God's wisdom to save man.

He goes on to say that what he was speaking was once a mystery because it was hidden from man, and that it was the very thing “*which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory.*” The view of this from eternity to eternity is presented in the diagram.



Peter shakes hands in agreement with Paul that before the world began, Christ was foreordained unto our redemption.

*Knowing that ye were redeemed . . . with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world. (1 Peter 1:18-20)*

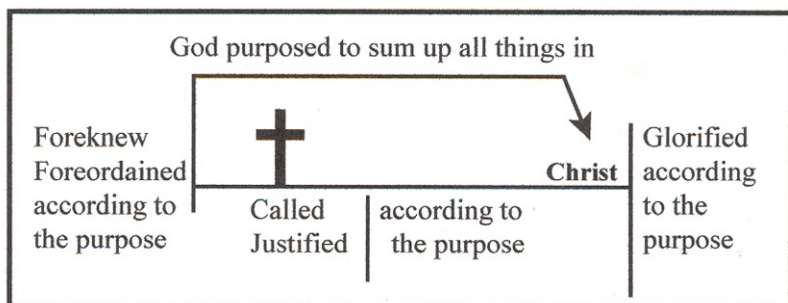
God’s foreknowledge that man would fall through sin is not to be equated with God foreordaining man to sin. God foreknew that man would sin and so foreordained (predetermined) a plan to save him. This was to the glory of God and the glorification of the saved. Ephesians 1:3-14 details this purpose in Christ which God himself is working to

consummate through his Son.

2. God's purpose to be consummated in the eternal glorification of his saints.

*And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained ... and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)*

The scope of God's great eternal purpose to redeem us from sin extends from eternity before



the worlds began to the eternity after the consummation of the ages when the saints will be glorified according to that purpose.

Paul's revelation of God's intent to save the ruined race of mankind sets the stage for a correct view of the study of the Bible. The Bible is the record of the fulfillment of that purpose as it is consummated in Christ. It

reveals how God interfered in the course of history, from the very beginning, in order to fulfill his redemptive plan. Also, this sets the stage for a correct view of the course of history itself. The events of history have not been left entirely to man's efforts. God himself has been responsible for much of history. And he is as involved in the affairs of men today as in ancient days, and for the same redemptive purpose.

Jesus gave us his word on that to motivate us to get on with the task of world evangelism when he said,

*All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations ... and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* (Matthew 28:18-20)

In this manner, we cooperate with God in fulfilling his purpose in redemption.

## **II. REDEMPTION PROMISED**

Early in our history, God's purpose to save us was promised to be fulfilled through Abraham's seed. The rest of the Bible is the record of the fulfillment of that promise as God worked it out in history.

### **A. The Promise Made to Abraham**

*In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* (Genesis 12:3)

*And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* (Genesis 22:18)



These promises, which were given to Abraham at different times, are the same. The promise includes all families and all nations to be blessed through Abraham's offspring.

## **B. Abraham's Promise Fulfilled in Christ, the Remission of Sins, and the Church**

Paul's inspired interpretation of the meaning of the Abrahamic promise is set forth in Acts 26:6, 7.

*And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king!*

Paul points out that he is being "accused by the Jews" for "the hope of the promise" made to Abraham. But, of course, he was being accused for preaching the gospel. Therefore, the gospel was the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. The hope which Israel had for the fulfillment of that promise was more physical and nationalistic than spiritual. The Jews did not understand it to be fulfilled in Christ and the gospel, though the apostles explained it that way. Hence, those who disbelieved the apostolic interpretation of the promise as being redemption in Christ Jesus would persecute the apostles.

There was a world of difference separating the Jew's *desired* interpretation of the promise to Abraham and Paul's *inspired* interpretation of that

promise. The following shows that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ and in the remission of sins.

1. Christ the seed.

*Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)*

In this passage Paul quotes the original promise made to Abraham and interprets the seed of Abraham as Christ. Thus worldwide blessing was to come through Christ Jesus.

2. Justification of sins, the promised blessing.

*. . .and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. (Galatians 3:8)*

Once again the original promise is quoted from Genesis 22:18. This time, Paul interprets the blessing as justification or redemption from sin. Peter also quotes the original Abrahamic promise and says that it means that Jews could have their sins blotted out.

*Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with*

*your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. (Acts 3:25, 26)*

Paul's statement that the promise was fulfilled in the justification of the Gentiles by faith and Peter's statement that the promise was fulfilled in Jews who turned away from their iniquities clearly shows that the promise is fulfilled in redemption for all mankind. Thus the "all nations" to whom the promise was to come are the Jews and Gentiles who receive Christ as redeemer.

### 3. The Church of Christ.

Jesus announced his purpose to build his church (Matthew 16:18). Also, his purpose was to save men from sin. But when he saves men from sin, he adds them to the church (Acts 2:47), which is the body of the reconciled (Ephesians 2:16). Consequently he builds his church by saving men. Inasmuch as those who receive the promised blessing of forgiveness are added to the church, the church is therefore seen to be a part of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.

***In conclusion:*** God's great redemptive plan for mankind, which he purposed before time began, was promised to

come through Abraham's seed. The Bible reveals that that redemption was fulfilled in Christ and the church. Here we find the centrality of Christianity, the meaning of history, and the purpose of man. Paul majestically expressed it:

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Ephesians 3:20,21)

### **Questions**

1. What is the New Testament's stated purpose for the coming of Christ?
2. When, according to the New Testament, did God plan human redemption?
3. What is the "blessing" that God promised to Abraham? How do you know?
4. Do you believe in predestination? Did Paul?
5. What does the New Testament teach is the fulfillment of all Old Testament messianic prophecy?
6. How is the church a part of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham?

### **Discussion Points**

1. There is a great difference between foreordination, or predestination, and foreknowledge. Discuss each and make a distinction between God's foreknowledge of man's sin and his foreordination of the redemptive system.
2. Christ's purpose was not to rectify every injustice perpetrated against humanity. Discuss how men will be less likely to deny a just God when this is understood.
3. Discuss the advantages of serving a God who knows everything that will happen in the future.
4. Explain how this foreknowledge on the part of God in no way effects man's free will.



# 3

## REDEMPTION PROPHESED

(Part 1)

### **Old Testament Messianic Prophecy Fulfilled in Christ and The Remission of Sins**

Clearly the redemptive theme of the Bible dominates every phase and facet of its narrative. God's redemptive scheme was purposed in the mind of God, then promised to proceed through Abraham's offspring, and foretold by all the prophets. In this way, the Bible reveals how God ever maintained control of the affairs of the human race in order to lead us to the dispensation of redemption.

Chapter two has detailed how God both purposed to save humanity and promised his salvation to come through Abraham's seed. This chapter will show that God foretold redemption through the prophets and that all Old Testament messianic prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ and in the remission of sins.

*Definition of messianic prophecy:* It is generally acknowledged that the Old Testament records the

prophecies of the coming of a great Messiah. Literally this means an anointed one, as in the case of a king or a priest. These prophecies produced within the Jewish people a hope for deliverance by that Messiah. This hope is commonly referred to as the Messianic Hope.

## **I. THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PROPHECY – NATIONALISTIC**

This view is established in the New Testament by revealing the Jew's concept of the nature of the kingdom of God. They knew the Scriptures prophesied the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom (e.g., 2 Samuel 7:11-16; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Daniel 2:44). Both John and Jesus announced that the kingdom (of Old Testament prophecy) was "at hand." The following reveals the Jewish nationalistic conception of that kingdom and consequently their nationalistic conception of the prophecies of that kingdom.

### **A. The Jewish Militants**

*And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 3:1, 2)*

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. (Matthew 11:12)*

The people believed John was a prophet, and

thus from the day he announced that the kingdom was at hand, they were willing to take up arms and violently overthrow their Roman rulers. Their purely physical and material view of the kingdom turned their zeal for God and country into violence. They thought they could put down Rome and establish the prophesied kingdom through force. This seems to be what Jesus meant by “*men of violence take it by force.*” They could not, of course. But because of their concept of the nature of the kingdom, they thought they could.

The Jews’ misunderstanding of the spiritual nature of the kingdom caused them to lose both their national existence in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and their precious seat in the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

#### **B. The Jewish Multitudes at Large (John 6:1-15 – Especially verses 14, 15)**

After the people saw Jesus distribute enough food to feed over 5,000 from only two fish and five loaves, they were more than willing to receive him as their prophet and king. But their concept of the king and his kingdom was nationalistic. When they contemplated what his wonderful powers could mean to their military prowess, they attempted to take Jesus “*by force to make him king.*” However, he rejected their overtures outright—the kingdom he came to establish was spiritual in nature.

To say that Jesus came to set up the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy but failed to do so because the Jews rejected him is completely inaccurate. The



plain statement of this passage is that the reverse is true: Jesus turned them down!

### **C. The Jewish Rulers (John 11:47-50)**

The Jewish leaders' nationalistic view of the kingdom of God coupled with Jesus' claim to be the prophetic king and his miraculous powers made them think that Jesus wanted Caesar's throne. They knew that if Rome ever believed that Jesus wanted the throne and then saw Jesus' great following ("*if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him*") the Jewish nation would be summarily destroyed by Roman military might. Thus the Jews sought to kill Jesus (11:53).

### **D. Peter and the Apostles (Matthew 16:13-20, 21-23)**

When Jesus asked Peter who he was, Peter eagerly replied, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" But even after evoking such a confidence, Jesus nevertheless charged them "*that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.*" Immediately following, he began to announce his death by crucifixion. Once again, Peter answered with loyalty, "*Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee.*" Jesus' response to Peter must have been perplexing: "*Get thee behind me, Satan . . . thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.*"

No passage more clearly reveals what the disciples actually believed about the Messiah, his work, and his kingdom. Jesus called Peter Satan, that is, adversary, and said that he was minding the things of men, not of God. Peter was probably

stunned. Yet that was the truth of the matter. Peter's concept of the Messiah revolted at the idea of his crucifixion.

But without the cross, there could be no redemption. In truth, Peter actually opposed God's redemptive purpose. Of course he did not understand the matter yet. That is why Jesus charged them not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Their concept would but further confuse the issue.

#### **E. The Sons of Zebedee and Their Mother (Matthew 20:20-22; Mark 10:35-45)**

*Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping him, and asking a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. (Matthew 20:20-22)*

When the mother of the sons of Zebedee (and likewise her sons) requested that her sons sit on Jesus' right and left hand in his kingdom, they revealed their nationalistic conception of the kingdom. Thus Jesus answered quite accurately: "*Ye know not what ye ask.*"

#### **F. The Disciples Concept after the Cross**

##### **1. Luke 24:13-21**

The disciples' hope for Israel's redemption

was blasted at the cross. Their concept of Israel's redemption was not in the remission of sins, so they despaired that their redemptive hope was lost (see especially verse 21).

2. Acts 1:6

Even to the day of Jesus' ascension, the disciples maintained a high Jewish nationalism as the true interpretation of Old Testament messianic prophecy. *"Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

This view of the messianic hope reveals very clearly how the Jews of Jesus' day interpreted Old Testament messianic prophecy. They placed on those prophecies a materialistic and physical meaning, one of high Jewish nationalism. This is the reason that Israel misunderstood Jesus' work, teaching, and death. It is also a reason why many who did not trust him contrived to kill him. Many today yet hold this same view of the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy.

## **II. THE INSPIRED INTERPRETATION OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY BY JESUS, PETER, AND PAUL**

These all agree that Old Testament messianic prophecy is fulfilled in New Testament Christianity.

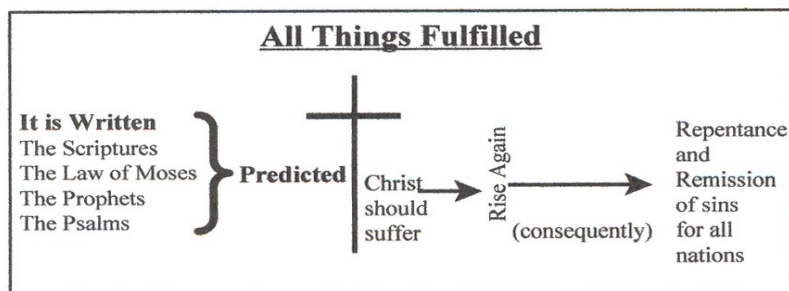
### **A. Jesus' Infallible Interpretation**

Jesus' interpretation of the messianic and predictive elements of the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms was that his crucifixion (suffering) and resurrection fulfilled these

Scriptures by consequently providing remission of sins (redemption) for all nations.

*And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47)*

(Also see Luke 24:25-27 where Jesus insists that his suffering fulfilled the prophecies of the Scriptures.)



Jesus' suffering at the cross was not a failure to set up the kingdom. It was in fact the glorious triumph of God's eternal purpose for humanity's redemption as foretold by the prophets. It was the

means of establishing his kingdom and ushering into it all who are saved by his blood (Revelation 1:5, 6).

## **B. Peter's Inspired Interpretation**

Peter's interpretation of "*the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets*" is that Christ's suffering (at Calvary) provided salvation from sin.

*But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.*  
(Acts 3:18, 19)

Peter declares twice, once in these verses and again in verse 24, that "all the prophets" predicted salvation from sin through his death at the cross.

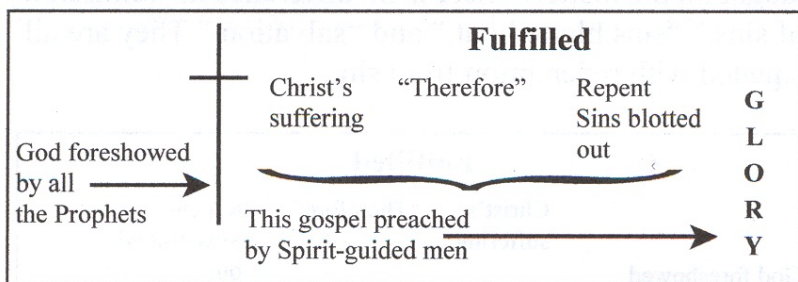
Notice carefully that after the apostle relates how God foreshadowed Christ's suffering through "all the prophets," he then says, "*Repent ye therefore ... that your sins may be blotted out.*" This "therefore" comes out of what was stated before: it is a conclusion. As a result of prophecy fulfilled at Calvary, sins can be blotted out. In other words, Peter teaches that without Christ's suffering at the cross, prophecy would have remained unfulfilled and redemption from sin could not be a reality.

Also in 1 Peter 1:10-12 Peter restates the same doctrine.

*Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven. (1 Peter 1:10-12)*

He says in essence that men in his day who preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit announced what Old Testament prophets had testified before hand: that Christ should suffer to provide salvation and glories to follow.

As can be seen in the following diagram, Peter's statements are in complete agreement with what Jesus taught on the matter. There is no difference in "remission of sins," "sins blotted out," and "salvation." They are all equated with redemption from sin.

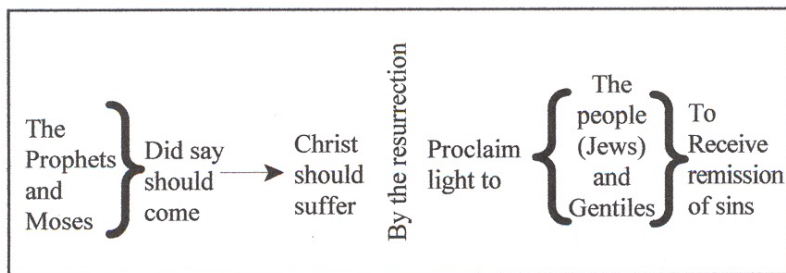


### C. Paul's Inspired Interpretation

Paul's interpretation of what the prophets and Moses "did say should come" was that Christ should suffer and rise and, by that means, illuminate Israel and the rest of the world.

*Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. (Acts 26:22, 23)*

Paul insisted that he said nothing but what the prophets and Moses foretold. But what Paul preached was the gospel, the good news that Christ died on the cross to save us from sin. Therefore Paul teaches that the gospel fulfills what the prophets and Moses foretold.



The proclamation of light is interpreted for us earlier in the same chapter (Acts 26:16-18) where Paul related Jesus' charge to him to preach to the

Gentiles *“to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins.”*

Jesus tells us that to turn from darkness to light enables men to receive remission of sins.

***In conclusion***, it is the clear statement of the Lord himself and the inspired apostles that Christ’s suffering at Calvary to provide remission of sins is the true meaning of Old Testament messianic prophecy. Jesus himself said in Luke 21:20-22 that with the destruction of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70) *“that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”* Therefore, there are no Old Testament prophecies unfulfilled today. All doctrines of the kingdom of God built on future fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies are in error and are to be rejected as baseless. In Christ we find our present salvation, our hope for eternity, and our purpose and fulfillment in life.

There is no truth to the idea that Christ came to set up the kingdom of prophecy but failed because the Jews rejected him, and that one day he will return to establish the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy for a thousand years on earth. This doctrine is in error because:

1. *It denies the plain statements of Jesus and the apostles that all messianic prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ’s death and resurrection to provide remission of sins and to establish his blood-bought spiritual kingdom.*
2. *It denies that Jesus actually intended to come to die for us.* If he came intending to be accepted by the Jews and thus establish the kingdom, then he did not come thinking he would be rejected by the Jews and at last be crucified by them. This makes Jesus ignorant of the



meaning of prophecy.

3. *It denies that we can now be saved from sin.* Jesus and the apostles taught that Old Testament prophecies foretold that our salvation would come as a result of Jesus' death at the cross. But if those prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, then our salvation which they predict is yet to come.

### Questions

1. What was the Jews' concept of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom? Was it correct?
2. What kind of prophecy was fulfilled in redemptive Christianity? Was it all fulfilled? How do you know?
3. If any Old Testament prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, what are they? What do they actually mean? How do you know?
4. How much of Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70? What did Jesus say?

### Discussion Points

1. Jesus and the apostles taught that all messianic prophecy was fulfilled in the redemption which Christ provided at Calvary. Discuss the consequence of believing that Christ did not fulfill those prophecies in relation to:
  - a. Remission of sins
  - b. The purpose of Jesus' coming
  - c. Jesus and the apostles' claim that those prophecies were fulfilled

# 4

## REDEMPTION PROPHESED (Part 2)

### The Peace of Prophecy

We have studied that redemption through Christ for all nations was foretold by all of the Old Testament prophets. But prophetic language was not always literal. Often, it was couched in idealistic terms. That is, salvation for all men was predicted in descriptive physical, material, and nationalistic terminology, which to the Jew was gloriously ideal. But a literal interpretation was not at all intended. This study will seek to spotlight a favorite theme of the prophets which is couched in this idealistic language and which is getting so much attention—the peace of prophecy.

The aim of this lesson is to examine such "peace" prophecies in light of the New Testament in a redemptive context. Such a study will help the church understand the redemptive theme of the Bible.

#### **I. THE PROPHECIES PREDICTING PEACE ARE ALL FULFILLED IN REDEMPTIVE CHRISTIANITY**

**Christ's Purpose on Earth Fulfilled All Prophecies  
of Peace**

In other words, the predictions of peace in the Old Testament are actually fulfilled in Christ, the church, and the remission of sins.

### **A. Jesus' Purpose**

Jesus' purpose is clearly stated in a number of passages as redemptive (cf. Matthew 1:21, 20:28; 1 Timothy 1:15). He also declared his purpose to build his church (Matthew 16:18). The New Testament reveals that the church is the body of the saved, the body of the reconciled (cf. Acts 2:47; Ephesians 2:16). Obviously, Christ builds his church by saving men from their sins, thus fulfilling his stated purpose.

### **B. That Purpose Fulfills the Prophecies of Peace**

Christ's work of salvation answers the peace predictions of the old prophets.

#### **1. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.**

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.*  
(Isaiah 9:6, 7)

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting ... And this man shall be our peace. (Micah 5:2, 5)*

Both of these prophecies speak of the royal attributes of the Messiah—"prince of peace" and "ruler in Israel." That this is speaking of Jesus there can be no doubt. At his birth, angels hymned his peace mission (Luke 2:14). Paul wrote that "he is our peace," and that he "preached peace" and made peace between God and man (Ephesians 2:14-17).

2. Jesus did not come to give world peace.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. (John 14:27)*

Though he claimed to offer peace to all, he carefully qualified that gift of peace as "*not as the world giveth.*" The peace of Christ is not world peace.

3. That peace is fulfilled in remission of sins.

When men are justified, they obtain "*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans 5:1). Christ makes "*peace through the blood of his cross*" when he reconciles sinners to God (Colossians 1:20-22). This salvation

from sin which Christ gives fulfills his stated purpose and interprets the meaning of the peace of prophecy which he insists is “not as the world giveth.”

4. That peace is located in the church.

*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. (Colossians 3:15)*

Notice carefully it is “the peace of Christ” to which we are “called in one body” (the church, 1:18). Inasmuch as the church is composed of all who have been saved and who thus have peace with God, the peace of prophecy, which is the peace Jesus gives, is to be obtained only by those who are in his body, the church.

***In conclusion***, through the New Testament’s own interpretation we have established that peace is given by Christ, fulfilled in the remission of sins, and located in the church.

## **II. MAJOR MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OF PEACE**

**Prophecies Couched in Physical Terms of the Peaceful Reign of Messiah Contain Glowing Terms of Material Abundance and National Judaic Glory**

These prophecies, which point to a time when Israel would rule the world, possess the nations of the Gentiles, and tend their flocks and grow their crops in peace, are redemptive in their meaning, and not physical.

**A. Amos 9:11,12 (cf. Acts 15:7-18)**

The following passages present both a messianic prophecy and James' inspired interpretation of the meaning of that prophecy.

*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. (Amos 9:11, 12)*

*And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us, and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*

*But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.... James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to*

*this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,*

*After these things I will return,  
And I will build again the tabernacle of  
David, which is fallen;  
And I will build again the ruins thereof, And  
I will set it up:  
That the residue of men may seek after the  
Lord,  
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is  
called,  
Saith the Lord, who maketh these things  
known from of old. (Acts 15:7-18)*

1. The idealistic language of Amos 9:11, 12.

To the people of Amos' day, this prophecy would be idealistic. The nation of Israel was threatened by the nations around them and particularly by the great Assyrian power. Bit by bit Israel lost her national power, lost her land possessions, and was finally destroyed and carried away captive. The Jews thereafter looked to this prophecy and others like it as a hope that one day Messiah would restore their national sovereignty to the extent that Israel would "possess all the nations" of the earth.

2. The redemptive meaning which James placed on the prophecy (Acts 15:7-18).

Peter had earlier stated that Gentiles and Jews alike were saved from sin by grace through faith (Acts 15:7-11). Then James declared that "*to this agree the words of the prophets*" and quoted Amos 9:11, 12 as an

example of such prophecies. No clearer statement as to the meaning of prophecy could be given: the prophets agree with Peter's gospel of salvation. Amos 9:11, 12 is an example of such prophecies. No one reading Amos' prophecy could get the idea that he was predicting redemption from sin. But that is the meaning of the prophecy as revealed by the New Testament.

### **B. Isaiah 11:1-10**

In a day when unrighteous rulers had brought Israel to the brink of destruction, the prophet Isaiah confidently predicts a brighter messianic future. In contrast to their present situation, he foresees the ideal king ruling the earth with righteousness, bringing a peaceful condition to the children of God, and even attracting the nations of the Gentiles to seek peace at the hand of Messiah.

*And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the*



*rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.*

*And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.*

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:1-10)*

The imagery which the prophet employs to depict this glorious future is of an ideal sort, obviously not to be taken literally. He speaks of Messiah as a “branch,” of his ancestor as “the stock” of an old tree, of smiting “*the earth with the rod of his mouth,*” of babes playing unharmed with wild beasts and venomous serpents. Out of this imagery emerges a picture of peace and tranquility brought on through Messiah’s reign. A careful

investigation of the passage will reveal the who, what, where, why, and when of the prophecy.

1. Historical background.

The historical circumstances of the day help us understand Isaiah's symbolic language. Since Israel had become a "profane nation," Jehovah would use Assyria as the instrument of his judgment against her (Isaiah 10:5-11). Isaiah then paints a picture of Assyria descending upon Israel as a woodsman upon a forest (10:15, 28-34). The picture is one of terror as the woodsman, Jehovah, uses his saw and his axe (Assyria) to cut down the forest of Lebanon (Israel). At last there is no more forest; only stocks of once proud trees remain. Israel has fallen as a great forest. Can she live again? The imagery continues. A "branch" shoots forth from the root system of one of those stumps, "the stock of Jesse" (the father of David, ancestor of Jesus). Upon this branch (a messianic term, Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12) rests the Spirit of Jehovah by which a righteous and just reign ensues. Israel shall live again!

2. The king and his kingdom of peace.

Although the language is symbolic, a description of the character of the king and his kingdom is evident.

a. *The who – Messiah (Jesus)* (vs. 1-5)

All conservative commentators agree that this is a description of Jesus. The divine attributes of the Lord are easily discerned from the symbolic imagery. Upon him rests "the Spirit of Jehovah" (cf. Matthew 3:16;

John 1:32). He makes just judgments and decisions without the use of his eyes and ears, showing his divine perception. He is clothed with righteousness and faithfulness, the garments of a good king.

*b. The what – Peace (vs. 6-9a)*

This picture of children playing with wild beasts as with pets is no more literal than Jehovah's Spirit resting upon a literal branch of a literal stock named Jesse! This is a description of a peaceful situation, "*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.*" The picture represents a condition of peace, the peace which the king gives. But Jesus is that king and the peace he gives is "*not as the world giveth*" (John 14:27). It is justification from sin (Romans 5:1).

*c. The where – In the church (v 9b).*

This peace is located "*in all my holy mountain,*" i.e. God's mount, the mount Zion (Psalm 2:6, 132:13-14; Isaiah 2:2-3). But according to Hebrews 12:22, 23, this is the church of New Testament Christianity. And "*the peace of Christ*" is located in the church, His body (Colossians 3:15).

*d. The why – The gospel is taught throughout the world (v. 9c).*

The reason for this peaceful condition is clearly stated: "*for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.*" The only single thing which corresponds to this is the great commission

(Matthew 28:19-20) which Paul said was “*preached in all creation under heaven*” (Colossians 1:23). From the first century to now the church has continually spread the gospel of the prince of peace over all the world and brought to all nations “peace with God” in the remission of their sins.

- e. *The when – The Christian dispensation* (vs. 10).

This is the real key to the prophecy. It leaves no doubt as to the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy and, therefore, the meaning which must be placed upon the preceding nine verses. Isaiah predicts that “*It shall come to pass in that day*” that the people of the nations (a common Old Testament term for the Gentiles as opposed to the nation of Israel) shall see the root of Jesus. There are two things specified in this verse:

- 1) The time of the fulfillment of the prophecy. “*It shall come to pass in that day.*” The “that day” of the context could only refer to the preceding verses.

Any other day than the day when the branch judges and the wolf dwells with the lamb has no point of reference. Therefore, when the thing prophesied in verse 10 comes to pass, it will be “in that day” when the preceding verses are fulfilled. In other words, whenever verses 1-9 are fulfilled, that is “in that [same] day,” verse 10 must be fulfilled.

- 2) The thing prophesied. What did Isaiah mean that the nations shall seek the root of Jesse? Once again, a New Testament writer places his inspired interpretation on an Old Testament prophecy. In Romans 15:8-12 Paul teaches that through Jesus *“the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”* He then further explains that this is just what was written in prophecy and quotes four Old Testament passages which he says predicted this mercy. The fourth passage is Isaiah 11:10. The meaning is clear: the *“Gentiles can glorify God for his mercy”* as a result of Christ. And we glorify God for saving us by his mercy (cf. Titus 3:5). And therefore the prophecy was fulfilled *“in that day”* when Gentiles were saved from sin.

Inasmuch as verse 10 is interpreted by the inspired apostle as fulfilled in Christ's salvation of the Gentiles, and inasmuch as that salvation was to take place *“in that day”* of the preceding verses, we necessarily conclude that the peace prophesied in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah is fulfilled in salvation from sin. This is the clear meaning of the passage as interpreted by the New Testament. Any interpretation which sees this prophecy fulfilled literally at some future date necessarily denies God's mercy to the nations of the Gentiles today!

***In conclusion,*** the New Testament shows that messianic prophecy is all fulfilled in Christ, the church, and in the remission of sins. There is nothing left to be fulfilled of all God foretold by his Old Testament prophets. There is no reason to be fearful that God has yet dealings with Jewish people in Palestine according to prophecy. No international events, such as war, are to be interpreted as the fulfillment of prophecy. There is no reason to be alarmed by the voice of hysteria that a great conflict will begin in Palestine and embrace the whole world according to prophecy. All such doctrines are in conflict with the plain teaching of the New Testament. What God now has for the Jew is just what he has for the Gentile—salvation by faith in Christ and a lifetime of work in his kingdom, the church. To this, we are to give our all until he comes again. In this, we will find both peace with God and peace of mind. Peace be unto you.

### **Questions**

1. In what kind of language did God often couch his prophecies of redemption?
2. Are all Old Testament prophecies of peace to be interpreted literally?
3. How are the peace prophecies (messianic) of the Old Testament to be interpreted? How do you know?
4. Does God have anything special for the Jewish people that he does not have for the Gentiles? If so, what? How do you know?

### **Discussion Points**

1. Use Amos 9:11, 12 and Acts 15:13-18 to illustrate that Old Testament messianic prophecy was not to be interpreted literally.
2. Isaiah predicted that his prophecy in 11:1-10 would be fulfilled “in that day.” How do we know that “that day” is the Christian dispensation? How do we know that the prophecy foretold redemption from sin?



**Part Two**

# **REDEMPTION NEEDED**







# 5

## UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION

Men must realize they are lost before they will feel the need of redemptive Christianity. This lesson aims at establishing the fact of that lost condition and consequently of that redemptive need. Contrary to our own nature and logic, all men are lost even though they have never had a chance to hear the gospel.

This study on the justice of God will answer the question: Can God be just and at the same time pass condemnation on those who have never had a chance to hear the gospel?

### **I. UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION (Romans 1:18-3:2)**

Paul's argument in this section of Romans is that all men stand condemned before God and without excuse for their sins. Paul reasoned to convince men universally of their need for a Savior.

#### **A. Truth—the Basis of God's Righteous Judgment**

There must be a standard to which men are responsible and against which responsible men are measured if pronouncements of right and wrong are to be justly made. That standard is "the truth of

God” (Romans 1:18, 25, 3:7). Notice that unrighteousness and lying are measured by the truth of God. All his judgments are “according to [this standard of] truth” (Romans 2:2).

1. A universal standard of truth.

Because this standard is applied without “respect of persons” (Romans 2:8-11), it applies to all men without exception.

2. A universal knowledge of truth.

Paul takes it for granted that all men recognize this truth, whether they obey it or not. Sandwiched in between his catalogue of sins in Romans 1:28-32 is his statement that all men who practiced these sins “*refused to have God in their knowledge*” though they knew “*the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death.*” He then declares to them “*we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things*” (Romans 2:2). The existence of penal institutions among all societies enforces the idea of a universally recognized standard of truth.

## **B. The Truth of God Revealed to All Men**

No man can plead ignorance of a universally recognized standard of human conduct on the basis that he has no Bible or knowledge of God. God has carefully revealed himself and his will to the extent that no man shall be excused from irreverence or unbelief. That revelation has occurred as follows:

1. To the Gentiles.
  - a. *Through natural law*

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity, that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. (Romans 1:18-21)*

Paul reasons that the truth of God has been sufficiently revealed “since the creation of the world” and that “*the things of God*” (his everlasting power and divinity) “*are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made.*” He insists that God’s truth was revealed to all men to the extent that they are “without excuse” for unbelief and for all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

All our experience teaches us that back of design lies intelligence and power. Thus, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork*” (Psalm 19:1). All creation shouts out loud that God is. And furthermore, “*he left not*

*himself without witness in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). The question of God’s existence and man’s relation to him is inevitable.*

*b. Through moral law*

*For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them. (Romans 2:14-15)*

All men recognize a standard of right and wrong even without a Bible. This is manifested on a national scale by legislation, through the passing and enforcing of laws. It is also seen on an individual basis as men, both primitive and civilized, accuse or excuse one another on some commonly recognized moral ground. Men without a Bible show that the work of the Bible (honoring God) is “written in their hearts,” that is, on their consciences. Thus man is morally responsible for his actions. He knows the difference between right and wrong and so stands without excuse for his law breaking.

## 2. To the Jews through Moses' law.

*But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written. (Romans 2:17-24)*

The apostle indicts the Jews of knowingly breaking the written law of Moses. That law had “the form of knowledge and of the truth” clearly spelled out (v 20). But while the Jews knew that law and approved its instructions (v 18), they knowingly disobeyed. Consequently “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you*” (v 24), said Paul to these inconsistent Jews. “*Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that*

*judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things*" (Romans 2:1).

Therefore God's judgments against "*them that are factious and obey not the truth*" is seen to be righteous. He has revealed his will, his truth, to all men from the beginning. Yet all have continually practiced lawbreaking. Hence Paul concludes his argument for God's just condemnation of all men. In Romans 3:9-20 he plainly states that men "*are all under sin,*" all have "*turned aside,*" and all the world has therefore been "*brought under the judgement of God.*" All men, whether Gentiles or Jews, are without excuse for their lawbreaking and cannot be made righteous by law whether moral or Mosaic.

Is it surprising that Jesus said "*no one cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6)? And Paul's "*he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent*" (Acts 17:30) has no exceptions! God is not unjust in passing condemnation on the souls of those who have never heard the gospel.

Men are not going to be lost because they have never heard the truth of the gospel. They are lost because of sin (Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:56). Sin condemns and kills (Romans 8:2). Since all have sinned, all have fallen short of God's eternal glory (Romans 3:23).

*In conclusion*, all men from the beginning know their moral responsibility before God but refuse it to their own undoing, so we must necessarily conclude that every man stands condemned before God and in need of Christ's redemption (Romans 3:23, 24).



### **Questions**

1. When will men realize their need for salvation?
2. Why are all men everywhere under condemnation?
3. How has God revealed himself to Gentiles? to Jews? to us?
4. What is moral law?
5. Do all men know right from wrong, morally speaking? How do they receive this knowledge?
6. What is sin?
7. Have all morally responsible men committed sin?

### **Discussion Points**

1. Explain how God justly passes condemnation upon men who have not heard the gospel?
2. Explain why all men everywhere must hear the gospel.



# 6

## LAW AND JUSTIFICATION

Man's condemnation has been established. As a lawbreaker, man stands justly condemned before a righteous God. If he is to be saved from the wrath to come, God must step in and rescue him. But what shall be the means of that redemption? Law has been man's undoing inasmuch as it condemns all transgressors (Romans 7:8-11).

The multi purposed aim of this lesson and the next is to further establish the need for redemption and how that redemption proceeds. The particular aim of this lesson is to contrast the nature of law as expressed in the Mosaic system with the nature of the Christian law of liberty.

### **I. THE NATURE OF LAW AND THE NEED FOR JUSTIFICATION**

The very nature of law in regard to the sinner renders the "bootstrap" method of salvation totally ineffective. Only an act of God can possibly save lawbreakers from their guilt and punishment. The following definitions seek to make this clear.

## A. Law

Usually the word “law” without the definite article “the” refers to a legislated system of regulation. First Timothy 1:9 illustrates, “*law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly.*” If all men were morally upright according to the moral nature within them, there would be no need for restraining laws with penalties in a system of regulation. But inasmuch as men are not morally upright, legal systems are necessary to regulate societies and maintain order. Legal laws penalize and condemn lawbreakers; legal systems do not justify lawbreakers or let them go free. Law enforcement officers do not stop speeding motorists to let them go free!

1. The Law of Moses was a legal law.

This law was also a perfect law (Psalm 19:7), legislated into existence by God himself. Both truth and righteousness were perfectly expressed in that system (Psalm 119:151, 172), which requires strict obedience (Galatians 3:12).

2. The Law of Moses condemned the sinner.

Inasmuch as the Law of Moses condemned the sinner, it was a legal system. This is Paul’s argument in Galatians 3:10 (where the definite article “the” is absent in the original language):

*For as many as are of works of law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Here, Paul reasons from the principle to the specific: from the principle of legal law (Galatians 3:10a), which by its nature condemns violators, to the specific Law of Moses (Galatians 3:10b). Since Moses' law is a legal system, it therefore condemns violators. Legal law penalizes the lawbreaker for a single violation. This is the reason Paul referred to Moses' law as "the ministration of death" and "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Corinthians 3:7, 9). Keep it ever in mind that legal systems condemn violators.

3. The Law of Moses could not justify the violator.

It is not in the nature of legal systems to justify. Peter teaches us the three-fold nature of law in Galatians 3:10-12. He states that a legal law demands perfect obedience (Galatians 3:12, paraphrasing Leviticus 18:5); that it condemns the violator at the first infraction (Galatians 3:10, quoting Deuteronomy 27:26); and that by its nature, it cannot justify the sinner (Galatians 3:11, quoting Habakkuk 2:4). Reasoning from the principle of law to the specific Law of Moses, Paul teaches that the Mosaic Law was a legal system, which by its very nature cursed the violator and could not justify. (The Pharisees' fatal doctrinal error was believing that the law could justify the sinner [Acts 15:1]. They simply did not understand the nature of a legal system [1 Timothy 1:7].)

The purpose of the Law of Moses was, and is, to bring men to a realization that we cannot

by the bootstrap method of self-effort, in keeping God's commandments, atone for our own sins. The law makes us realize we have to have a Saviour to rescue us.

## **B. Justification**

This term expresses an act of God of declaring or accounting one as righteous (Romans 4:2-5). As a result of the act of justification, the sinner's transgressions are not reckoned to him but rather are forgiven (Romans 4:6-8; Psalm 32:1, 2). In other words, the sinner when justified is not righteous through his own effort but is regarded as righteous.

The act of justification cannot be accomplished by law (Acts 13:39). For the sinner to be justified, he must appeal elsewhere, not to a legal system of law. And because all are lawbreakers, all need justification.

## **C. Legalism**

Though legalism is not a Bible word, it is a Bible subject. Paul wrote Galatians for the express purpose of crushing legalism.

1. Legalism is "a code of deeds and observances as a means of justification."

The above is Webster's theological definition. Legalism was the problem at Antioch and Jerusalem (Acts 15) and at Galatia (Galatians 5:4), where Jews, who did not understand the condemnation of the Mosaic law, attempted to bind the Law of Moses on saved Gentiles.

- a. *Legalism is not to be equated with keeping commandments.*

Rather, legalism is trusting in one's ability to make himself righteous by keeping commandments. Christ condemned the legalistic attitude of the Pharisees in Luke 18:9. If righteousness could come through keeping legal law, there would have been no need for a new law (Galatians 3:21, 22) and no need for a Savior (Galatians 2:21).

- b. *Legalism is distinct from obedience of faith* (cf. Romans 16:25, 26).

Legalism trusts in one's own self to be righteous, which is impossible. Faith in Jesus trusts God to justify the ungodly (Romans 4:5).

2. Paul denounces justification by works of law.

*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* (Galatians 2:16)

In the original language the article "the" is absent. Hence, Paul did not specify the Law of Moses, but rather stated that no man is justified by works of a legal law. Paul argued to Peter that Moses' legal law could not justify.

***In conclusion***, since legalism is justification by works of law, and since Paul says justification cannot come by works of law, legalism is, therefore, a lie.

Legalists do not understand that law condemns. They think it offers pardon on a legal basis, but it cannot because it is not the nature of a legal system to provide pardon. Many Christians, frustrated while sincerely trying to serve the Lord, view the law of liberty as a legal law and think they are condemned by a single transgression. Some will even cite James 2:10 as a proof of this, which is actually a reference to the Law of Moses—not to the law of liberty. This view of Christianity makes living for Christ appear too hard. In our inability to be perfect, this legalistic view of the New Covenant makes us uncertain of our eternal destiny. Or eventually, we may think that we cannot live under such a system, and we give up and abandon the faith. Such is the fruit of legalism.

## **II. REDEMPTIVE CHRISTIANITY – A LAW OF LIBERTY**

The very phrase “law of liberty” (James 1:25; 2:12) appears contradictory since we know that law cannot free sinners but condemns them. It appears, also, a great contradiction for Paul to speak of “the law of faith” (Romans 3:27), “the law of the Spirit” (Romans 8:2), and at the same time in the same epistle state to Christians that “ye are not under law” (Romans 6:14). (Here, again, the definite article “the” is absent in the original and correctly translated in most versions. Cf. ASV, RSV, NEB, etc.) *Christianity is not a legal system of law.*

### **A. Paul's Contrast Between a Legal Law and a Law of Faith (Romans 3:27)**

Bragging or boasting about our justification as if we had accomplished it by our own human ability is excluded! "*By what manner of law?*" asks Paul. He declares, "*by a law of faith.*" One's works under a legal system of law can never make him right with God.

What manner of law is the new law of Christ, asks Paul?

### **B. Christianity Is a Law of Faith**

After presenting the condemnation of all men under law (Romans 1:18-3:10; see chapter five of this book), Paul then announces "*the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*" which is "*through faith, in his blood*" (Romans 3:24, 25). The apostle teaches that we are redeemed through faith in Jesus' blood. Faith in Christ as a continual blood sacrifice (Hebrews 9:14) continues to cleanse us though we sin (1 John 1:7). This is thus a law of faith which brings justification even though we are not sinlessly perfect. It is not a law which condemns at the next transgression, but it is a law which asks us to believe and trust in Christ to justify us from our sins while we struggle against sin and make every effort to keep his commandments. It is a law of obedience of faith in Christ which brings justification to the faithful.

This justification by obedience of faith is illustrated by the example of Abraham. James teaches that Abraham's faith in God was perfected



by his obedience, and it was that faith, a perfect faith, which was reckoned for righteousness (James 2:21-23). Abraham would *not* have worked, would not have obeyed God to offer up Isaac, if he had not believed that God would have raised Isaac from the dead (cf. Hebrews 11:17-19). But Scripture says that his

*faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.* (James 2:22, 23; cf. Genesis 15:6)

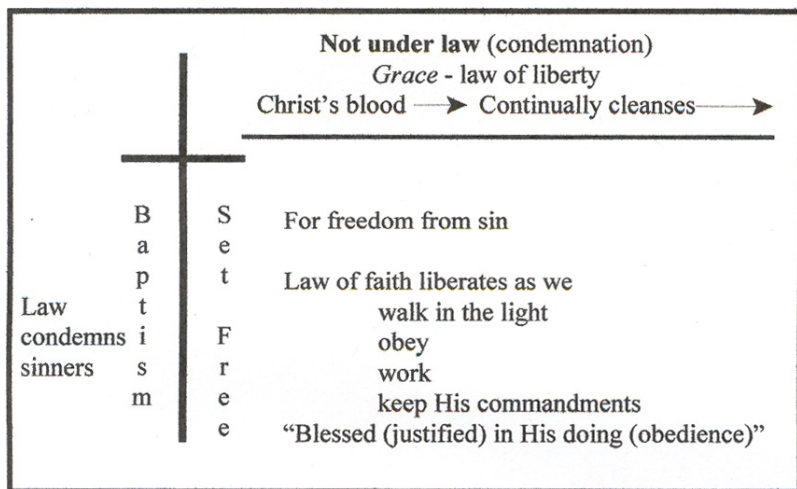
What was reckoned for righteousness? Not Abraham's works, but Abraham's faith. When was that faith reckoned for righteousness? When Abraham worked as God commanded, as in the case when he offered up Isaac. What kind of faith was reckoned for righteousness?—a perfect faith, a faith which worked.

|       |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|
| Faith |   | } | (Justified)<br>Reckoned for Righteousness |
| +     | = |   |   |
| Works |   |   |   |

### C. Christianity Is a Law of Liberty (James 1:25)

As long as we “looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth,” we will “be

blessed,” or liberated from the condemnation of our sins. See Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:8; Psalm 32:1, 2; and Romans 4:5-8 to see that when one is “blessed,” as in these passages, he is justified. This does not suggest at all that the Christian is to continue in the law of liberty perfectly and then he will be justified, for if one were perfect there would be no sins to forgive! The Law of Moses, which was perfect (Psalm 19:7) but condemned sinners, is in contrast to the law of liberty, which is perfect but blesses sinners with justification from their transgressions while they are “doing” his will. As Paul wrote, *“For freedom did Christ set us free”* (Galatians 5:1).



***In conclusion,*** man must recognize his inability to make himself righteous by keeping legal systems of law inasmuch as he cannot be sinless. However, the very nature of the law of liberty is to show mercy (James 2:12, 13). If one accepts the cleansing blood of Christ according

to the terms of the law of faith, first to become a Christian and then to live a Christian, Jesus will justify him and continue to keep him justified throughout his imperfect life. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin."

### **Questions**

1. What is in the nature of law to do to a lawbreaker?
2. What is not in the nature of law to do to lawbreakers?
3. What kind of law was the law of Moses?
4. What kind of law is the law of liberty?
5. What is legalism?
6. What is justification?
7. Is legalism true or false?
8. Is the law of liberty a legal law? How do you know?

### **Discussion Points**

1. Explain the contrast of the law of faith and the law of works referred to in Romans 3:27. Be sure to discuss the meaning of the passage, not simply what it does not mean.
2. Explain the reason why the law of Moses condemned men while men are free from condemnation under the law of liberty.
3. Discuss the necessity of obedience in order to perfect one's faith.



# 7

## THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

Man's need for redemption has been established. But how shall that redemption proceed? This lesson presents a contrast between the systems of legal righteousness and righteousness by faith. Man needs redemption because of his inability to be righteous under a legal system of law; and he needs redemption through the gospel.

### **I THE CONTRAST OF THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith. (Romans 1:16,17)*

In this propositional statement, the apostle sets in contrast the two great systems of righteousness revealed in the Bible—the law and the gospel.

### **A. The Gospel**

This is contrasted with the law of Moses. The meaning of the word “gospel” is good news or glad tidings. If one asks, What is the good news all about? the answer comes in two parts. First, all men under law are condemned and powerless through their own human efforts to make themselves right with God (see chapter five, Universal Condemnation). That is bad news. But secondly, God, because of his love for us, graciously provided salvation through Christ (Ephesians 2:4, 5). That provision by grace is good news to men who believe God and realize their sinful state and puny power.

### **B. Salvation**

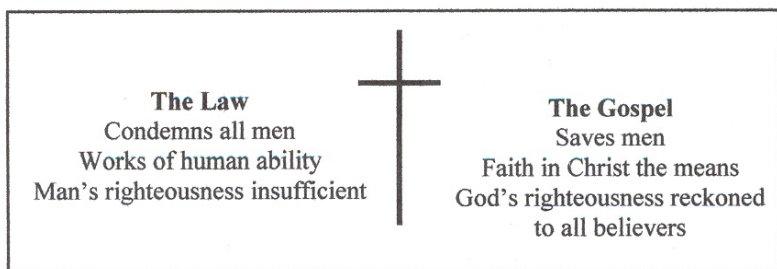
This is contrasted with the condemnation of all Christ-less men. This is not speaking of a temporary salvation, as though one is saved from his past sins but can never know about his present state or future destiny. We are not saved almost, but we are saved “to the uttermost” through Christ (Hebrews 7:25). That is good news to sinful men.

### **C. Belief**

Belief is contrasted to the works of the Law of Moses. Actually, it is the means of attaining righteousness under both systems which is here contrasted. We are saved from condemnation by means of faith in Christ while we are unable by the means of works of merit to attain to the righteousness which the law required.

### D. Righteousness of God

God's righteousness is contrasted to the righteousness of man. Gospel righteousness is reckoned on the basis of faith. The other was to be achieved by human effort, which, of course, was unattainable.



In order to understand how sinful man can be saved by gospel righteousness but cannot be saved through law (legal) righteousness, we must learn (1) the requirements of both law and grace, and (2) the power source to which man must appeal for righteousness under both systems.

## II. THE LAW OF MOSES

This righteousness system demanded of man that he meet the law's requirement with a perfect score. Is man's power equal to the task? Consider the following:

### A. The Law's Requirement

According to the Scriptures, both old and new, the legal requirement of the Mosaic system equaled absolute righteousness.

1. Sinless perfection was the requirement of the law.

*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am Jehovah.* (Leviticus 18:5)

*For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.* (Romans 10:5)

Paul's inspired commentary on Moses' words are that a man had to do the righteousness of the law to live. In Galatians 3:12 Paul's equation of Leviticus 18:5 is *Do and Live*. But what was the righteousness of that law? It is written in Psalms 119:172, "*All thy commandments are righteousness.*" (This is referring only to the law of Moses, not to the commands of the Christian law of liberty). Now, since all the law's commandments are righteousness and since man was required to do that righteousness, then anyone under that law had to do all those commands all his life if he would be righteous. That equals sinless perfection for a lifetime if a man would gain eternal life.

2. A single violation of the Law condemned (cf. Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10).

Both Paul and James, by referring to Deuteronomy 27:26, shake hands in agreement that if one would "*keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.*" This is not speaking of the law of liberty,

but it is a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 27:26. Paul's Galatians reference, "*For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them*" is a direct quotation of the same Scripture.

Thus we see that the legal requirement of the Law of Moses was sinless perfection as long as a man lived, and a single violation of that system brought condemnation.

## **B. Man Unable to Meet That Requirement of Righteousness**

Both Peter and Paul point to two outstanding examples of man's total inability to meet the law's demands. Their purpose is to smash man's proud trust in himself to be righteous (as in Luke 18:9) and to show his need for a savior to redeem him.

### **1. The nation of Israel.**

The Jews did not attain to the righteousness of their own law. Read carefully Romans 9:30-10:3. Their works of obedience by their own natural strength was simply not sinless, as their law required. Try as they might, their efforts to keep the law were vain by their eventual sinning.

It was a pitiful thing to Paul that his national brothers were ignorant of God's righteousness by faith in Christ, and at the same time actually were "*going about to establish their own righteousness*" by attempting to keep the very law which had already condemned them all as sinners!



Peter's inspired statement at Jerusalem, where "Pharisaical Christians" were attempting to bind the Law of Moses upon saved Gentiles as necessary to salvation (Acts 15:1, 5), declared that law to be an unbearable yoke (Acts 15:10). Its requirement was more than human flesh could bear. While that law was "holy, and righteous, and good" (Romans 7:12), man was not sinless.

2. Saul of Tarsus.

After Paul was converted, he reflected back upon his life as a Christ-less Jew when he had trusted in his own ability to keep the law sufficiently to gain him a right standing with God. He learned, however, that to be righteous, he had to be found in Christ "*not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law*" (Philippians. 3:9). He discovered that his own righteousness, that is, the righteousness he attempted to gain under the law by his own power, fell short of the law's requirement. As he writes to the Romans, "*The commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death*" (Romans 7:10). Though he attempted to keep the law's commands, he found by experience that he had not.

***In conclusion***, man's power is no match for sin. Human flesh is not able to make oneself righteous before God. Paul declared it, and Peter insisted on it. The law of Moses required perfection of imperfect men. Out of the entire nation of the Jews, not one kept the law's strict demand of sinless perfection. Therefore, if man is to be saved, God

must save him. Without help from God, man is helpless and hopeless. He stands in need of redeeming grace, in need of a power greater than his own.

### **III. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AS EXPRESSED IN ROMANS 1:16-17**

When man finally accepts the futility of his own sincere efforts to make himself righteous, he will then realize his need for a power greater than his own to save him. The gospel will then become good news.

#### **A. The Gospel Is Good News**

Impotent man needs the gospel because it reveals God's saving power and righteousness.

##### **1. God's power to save.**

The emphasis should be on God's power in contrast to man's weakness (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23, 24). Man must understand (through gospel teaching and preaching) that Jesus' cross was the exertion of the divine power to do for man what he could not do for himself. As a result Paul insists, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ,*" and goes on to tell why:

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8:2-3)*

God now does for us what we cannot do, he condemns sin in the flesh. This is in contrast to the law which condemned sinners in the flesh.

2. God's righteousness as opposed to man's insufficient righteousness. (cf. Romans 5:18-21; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9)

Christ at Calvary attained righteousness for us and now, before the throne of God, maintains a righteous standing for his faithful followers.

## **B. The Gospel of Faith Is the Condition Necessary to Receive the Saving Power of God**

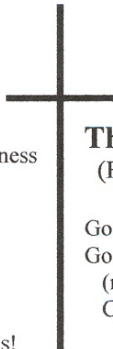
1. Faith defined embraces intellectual belief, trust, and obedience. (1 Thessalonians 2:13; James 2:14-26)

Mere intellectual belief in Christ, apart from obedience to his will as expressed in the New Testament, is useless, says James.

2. Faith's object is Christ Jesus.

Perhaps this is best expressed in the term trust. We trust Jesus to save us at the point of our obedience to his will (cf. Romans 6:17, 18). Then we continue to trust him to keep us saved as we continue to serve him faithfully (Romans 6:22; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15). Serving Jesus faithfully is not to be equated with serving perfectly. His cleansing blood continues to save us as we continue to walk in the light of his word (1 John 1:7). Though we continue to walk in the light, we must not practice sin but, rather, struggle against it. Our trust is in him to keep us

cleansed while we serve him with an imperfect life. Hence, Mark 16:15, 16.

| <b>The Law</b> (an unbearable yoke) |  |  | <b>The Gospel</b><br>(Reveals)                    |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Man Power</b>                    |  |   |   |
| Lev. 18:5                           | Do and live                              |   |   |
| Rom. 10:5                           | Do the righteousness of the law and live |   |   |
| Psa. 119:172                        | All commands = righteousness             |   |   |
| Deut. 27:26                         |  |   |   |
| Gal. 3:10                           | Keep the whole law                       |   |   |
| James. 2:10                         | one violation condemns                   |   |   |
| The Jews, Rom. 9:30 - 10:3          | Mine own righteousness                   |   | God's power (to save)                             |
| Saul of Tarsus, Phil. 3:9           | None righteous!                          |   | God's righteousness (reckoned) by faith in Christ |
| Yet: Rom. 3:9, 10                   | All have sinned!                         |   |   |
| Rom. 3:23                           |  |   |   |

***In conclusion***, the inability of ruined humanity to save itself from sin is conclusively revealed in man's failing attempt to make himself righteous by law systems. God's merciful act at Calvary and the resulting glad tidings of justification by faith in Christ should convince all men of their need for God's new redemptive system. Between heaven and hell stands every man in need of obedience to the gospel.

*How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things. (Romans 10:15)*

## **Questions**

1. Why is the gospel of Christ good news?
2. What was the legal requirement of the Law of Moses?
3. Could (can) any man attain to the righteousness of that law? See Romans 9:30-32.
4. What would a single violation of that law produce?
5. How were the Jews who rejected Christ “seeking to establish their own righteousness”? See Romans 10:1-3.
6. Define Bible faith.

## **Discussion Points**

1. Is the righteousness which comes by faith in Christ a righteousness which we ourselves gain by our obedience?
2. What is the relation of obedience to faith? See James 2:14-26.
3. Explain how Zacharias and Elizabeth were righteous (Luke 1:5) when Paul said “there is none righteous” (Romans 3:10).
4. In this same way Paul said that he was “found blameless” (Philippians 3:6). How is that possible when he said “all have sinned”? (Romans 3:23).
5. Identify the power source of righteousness under law and under grace.



# 8

## **HUMAN WISDOM VERSUS DIVINE REVELATION**

### **Man's Need for a Revelation From God**

Man's need for redemption has been conclusively established. But how shall he know the way of redemption? Is the wisdom of man sufficient? Can he trust his own intellect to lead him back to God?

It is the aim of this lesson to show man's need for a revelation from God by which he may know the path of salvation.

#### **I. MANKIND IN NEED OF A REVELATION FROM GOD**

Though man is endowed with a moral nature to discern right and wrong (as studied in chapter five) he does not have an ability to determine by human reason the divine scheme of redemption.

##### **A. Man Needs a Revelation from God**

1. This is God's own testimony to us from the Scriptures.

*The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*  
(Deuteronomy 29:29)

2. Moses declares that a revelation from Jehovah was necessary for Israel to be able to obey the divine will.

Until that will is revealed, said Moses, it remains a secret in the mind of God.

*For who among men knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God.* (1 Corinthians 2:11)

None can know the things of God until the Holy Spirit reveals them.

## **B. Man Unable to Know God Through Human Wisdom**

Scripture declares that worldly wisdom knows not God (Jeremiah 10:23; John 3:31; Romans 11:33).

1. God intended it this way.

*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it*

*was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching (lit., the things preached) to save them that believe.*  
(1 Corinthians 1:20, 21)

It was “*in the wisdom of God*” when he created man to so limit him that “*the world through its wisdom*” could not know God. Through this limitation, God exposes worldly wisdom for what it is unable to provide redemption from sin and death. By this means, he also drives man back to God for the knowledge of his salvation.

2. God warns against the delusions of human wisdom to make us wise unto salvation (Colossians 2:2-4,8).

Therefore, “take heed.” No branch of worldly wisdom can solve the human problem. Neither philosophy, nor science, nor human experience can discover God’s plan for man’s redemption.

Man’s inability to know God’s means of salvation without a divine revelation cuts at the taproot of all religions based on man’s feelings and speculations. We must not attempt to arrive at what God will or will not accept by what man feels or thinks. All such attempts are futile.

## **II. REDEMPTIVE CHRISTIANITY—THE REVELATION FROM GOD**

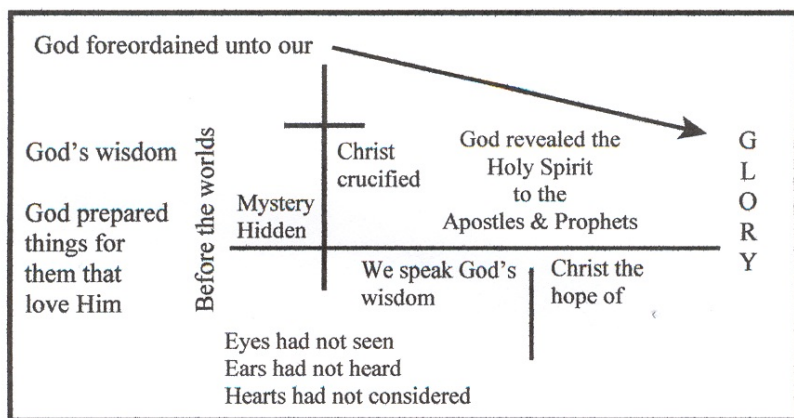
Christianity must not be viewed as a philosophy or a mere ethical system. Rather it is the historical revelation of God’s plan for man’s redemption.



It is not a partial revelation, but is complete. Jesus promised that the Spirit would provide a full revelation of “all truth” concerning the matter (cf. John 14:26, 16:13). The New Testament writers claim that the Spirit came and that a full revelation was made known.

### A. The Mystery Has Been Revealed (1 Corinthians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:25-27)

Paul explained that God’s redemptive plan was hidden from humanity until executed by Christ at Calvary and revealed by the Holy Spirit. Christ himself is revealed as “the hope of glory.” Man’s redemption thus lies not in himself but in Christ the redeemer. Neither does the knowledge of that



redemption lie in man, but only God who had to reveal it by the Spirit in order for us to know it.

### B. The Faith Has Been Delivered (Jude 3)

The faith is the entire system of salvation, the whole body of truth, the thing believed. The faith has been “delivered” by apostles and prophets. It is

the faith which must be “heard” (Acts 24:24) and “obeyed” (Acts 6:7). As Christians, we must “strive” (Philippians 1:27) for it and “contend earnestly” for it (Jude 3), inasmuch as there is only “one faith” (Ephesians 4:5). That faith is the Christian faith.

### **C. The Apostles Made Sufficient Ministers of a New Covenant** (2 Corinthians 3:2-6, 5:18-19)

Paul’s epistle instructs that the Holy Spirit made the apostles sufficient to minister the New Covenant in words which would reconcile men to God.

### **D. Revealed in the Gospel** (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Peter affirmed that the salvation foretold by inspired prophets was announced by inspired preachers of the gospel.

*In conclusion*, God’s revelation of his wise plan to save man is complete. There is no more to reveal. No attempt by human wisdom can add any truth to the Spirit’s work. It is to be defended and preserved against any attempt to mitigate it or add to it.

## **III. BACK TO THE BIBLE**

Jesus makes it clear that we shall be judged by his word (John 12:48). Since we are going to be judged by it, it should be safe to conclude we should live by it.

### **A. The Written Word Is Sufficient**

Paul said that the very words he was writing were selected by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians

2:12, 13). Peter stated that Paul's writings were to be equated with Scripture (2 Peter 3:15, 16). And it is affirmed that the Scriptures are sufficient to make the man of God complete unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter further affirms that the "divine power" (the Holy Spirit) has *"granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us"* (2 Peter 1:3) and that he too was writing about those things (1 Peter 5:12). And finally, we have Christ's own pledge that he will providentially preserve the word for us (Matthew 24:35). What more is needed?

All claims to modern revelations are but the inventions of men. Let one so-called prophet or revelationist speak one word which man must know in order to be saved from sin which cannot be found in the New Testament! That will be the test of his inspiration.

### **B. The Word Can Be Understood** (Ephesians 3:3-5)

Paul teaches that by reading the Scriptures of the apostles and prophets, we can understand as

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Not made known<br>Mystery | <div data-bbox="440 1239 497 1379" style="text-align: center;">+</div> <div data-bbox="637 1230 880 1329" style="text-align: center;">Holy Spirit<br/>now revealed to the<br/>Apostles &amp; Prophets</div> |
|                           | <div data-bbox="663 1346 880 1445" style="text-align: center;">Wrote it (you can)<br/>read it and<br/>understand it</div>   |

much of the plan of salvation as they to whom it was revealed. We need no modern revelations from

the Spirit to help us understand the written word.

The challenge is to read and learn what God has already revealed to us.

***In conclusion***, man's inability to know God and to come to the knowledge of his salvation through his own wisdom shows his need for a revelation from God. That revelation has been made known to apostles and prophets of the New Testament and recorded for us in understandable terms. It is sufficient to save and guide all men.

### **Questions**

1. Can man know the difference between right and wrong, morally speaking, without the Scriptures?
2. Can a man know the plan of salvation without the Scriptures?
3. Why did God determine that through human wisdom mankind could learn nothing of his plan of salvation? (1 Corinthians 1:21)
4. When God revealed his wise plan to save man, which had been hidden from eternity, how much of that plan was revealed? How do you know?
5. Is there any difference in “the faith” and “the mystery”? Why are they so called?
6. Why do we not now need any further revelations from God?
7. The Bible cannot be understood without divine guidance today. Do you agree? See Ephesians 3:3-5.

### **Discussion Points**

1. Discuss the difference between Christianity and philosophy. Then determine why philosophy can offer man no hope for redemption from his present situation of sin and death. See Colossians 2:8.
2. On the basis of Paul’s declaration that when we read what he wrote we can understand the mystery of God, comment on the following:
  - a. We need an infallible interpreter to interpret the infallible word.
  - b. We need miraculous guidance from God to know what he wants of us today.



Part Three

# **REDEMPTION PROVIDED**





# 9

## **VICTORIOUS CONQUEST THROUGH – OUR SIN OFFERING**

We have studied that redemption through the bootstrap method is impossible; sinful flesh simply does not have enough power to be righteous through self-effort. If God does not provide to save man, he will remain without hope and without God in the world.

It is the aim of the following three lessons to study the person and work of Christ as the ground of our justification which God has provided. First, we must see Christ's work at Calvary as sufficient to provide that justification and then see that Christ Jesus is himself the object of our faith.

### **I. THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH**

God told the man and the woman in the paradise garden that sin would bring their death (Genesis 2:17). Their transgression ushered in the law of sin and death which is yet operative in the earth. In effect that law



says: if you sin, you must die. In relation to this subject, consider:

### **A. What Death Is**

Isaiah said that “*your iniquities have separated between you and your God*” (Isaiah 59:2). Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “*And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1). Sin brings death to the lawbreaker by separating him from the life of God. Inasmuch as we are alive physically prior to the time of our salvation, being made alive must necessarily speak of another quality of life. That quality of life which God gives to the sinner is eternal life (1 John 1:1-4). This is what is lost through sin and what is regained at the point of justification (1 John 5:13). Consequently, the death which sin brings is separation from the eternal life which every man possesses at birth.

### **B. Satan's Power**

The writer of Hebrews speaks of “*him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Hebrews 2:14). The word for power means dominion. Thus, when one sins, he is held in the dominion of Satan. Satan's power to dominate men, to reign over their destiny, is sin (cf. Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:56). Since men are themselves powerless to break free from that dominance and gain their life back, that death hold must be broken by one stronger than the devil.

## II. CHRIST, OUR SIN OFFERING

At the cross, Christ paid the price for sin and broke the power of the adversary. In this great act lies the very heart of Christianity. For the death of Jesus not only gave us a new and better covenant, but made for us a provision unto salvation without which the new covenant would be worthless. That provision was Christ's own sacrifice of himself to God.

### A. Christ's Death Substituted for Ours

Jesus' death was substitutionary. He died the death we should have died and paid the penalty for our lawbreaking. God's love for us caused him to substitute Jesus at Calvary for the death we sinners should die. Isaiah said, *"he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due"* (Isaiah 53:8). Humanity committed the crime, but Jesus took the rap.

The word "for" in each of the following passages is *huper*, which is a word of substitution. It means "in behalf of." Thus, Paul taught that *"while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8); *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all"* (Romans 8:32); *"Christ died for our sins"* (1 Corinthians 15:3); *"one died for all, therefore all died"* (2 Corinthians 5:14); *"our Lord Jesus Christ ... gave himself for our sins"* (Galatians 1:3- 4); *"the Son of God ... gave himself up for me"* (Galatians 2:20); *"Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God"* (Ephesians 5:2). The real meaning of Christ and him crucified

clearly emerges from these passages when we understand that Christ's death took the place of our death. Therefore, we who are in Christ do not have to pay the price of our sins. He died in our stead *for* us. He is (stress present tense) our substitutionary sacrifice.

## **B. Christ Himself Became Sin for Us**

At the cross, Jesus died the death which unsaved sinners must experience. Notice carefully what happened:

1. He was separated from God for our sakes. Isaiah prophesies,

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:5, 6)*

Isaiah continues to teach that God would make "*his soul an offering for sin*" (v 10); that "*he shall bear their iniquities*" (v 11); and that he "*bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*" (v. 12). The language is unmistakable that Christ is our sin offering.

This is just what the apostle Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "*Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf.*" Christ at the

cross died the death of a sinner. God viewed him as he views a sinner in his sin-separated from God! This explains quite easily the otherwise difficult statement from the cross, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46). Jesus said this because God had forsaken him—for our sakes thus fulfilling Isaiah’s *“Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

Notice carefully that the agony of the cross was not merely physical. The physical agony of Christ on the cross was surely the same as the physical suffering of ten thousands of crucifixions by the Romans. His suffering is best described by Isaiah when he says of God, *“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied”* (Isaiah 53:11). There is the agony of Calvary—agony of soul—actually separated from his God! He travailed in his separation from God so that we would not have to be separated. The price of our indebtedness has been paid by another at Calvary. Thank God for his unspeakable gift.

2. He erased the record of our sins by his own death.

*Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.* (Colossians 2:14)

The word “bond” in this passage is equivalent to our IOU which is a debt one

cannot pay. Also, the ink used in Bible days did not have acid in it so as to “bite” into the writing material as ours does. The ink would simply dry on top of the material. Often the same writing material would be used over and over. The old ink would simply be wiped off with a rag or sponge. In this way a bond or IOU could be “blotted out” and the record of the debt would be no more. It is this figure Paul uses in Colossians 2:14 when he says that Christ “*blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us.*” Our sin-debt was wiped away by Jesus’ blood.

It is as if one incurred a large hospital debt which he could not pay. But a friend, because he loved him, paid the debt for him. The debt is paid. There is no debt against him.

3. He became our continual sin offering.

Jesus continues to bear our sins, that is, of those who are in Christ. For he became our sin bearer. So Isaiah, “*he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12). And in Hebrews, “*now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many*” (Hebrews 9:26, 28). By that sacrifice for sin, he continues to benefit the faithful. Peter states that “*Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God*” (1 Peter 3:18). We can continually stand in God’s presence

justified because Jesus' sacrifice continues to satisfy God for all our sins.

Some think that at baptism all our past sins are forgiven, but that the rest is up to us. They do not understand the nature of Christ's sacrifice. Jesus' present position before God is as a sin offering which God continues to accept on our behalf. In other words, Christ actually became something at the cross, a sacrifice for sin which God continues to accept as full payment for all our sins—past, present, and future. Any perversion of this in an attempt to turn this matter into a license to commit sin is blasted by Scripture (cf. Romans 3:8, 6:1, 15). God forbid! If we practice *“sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins”* (Hebrews 10:26). Christ is that sacrifice and will not tolerate the intentional practice of any sin.

***In conclusion***, since Christ's death was an offering to God to pay to him the debt we owed for sin, we conclude:

1. *That in Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin* God showed himself to be just in passing over the sins of men like Abraham and Moses and David (Romans 3:25, 26). God's foreknowledge of Christ's coming to pay that debt and their own obedient trust in God wrought for their justification.
2. *That Christ broke the power of Satan at Calvary.* Satan no longer has dominion over sinful man (Hebrews 2:14, 15). Satan's power to accuse sinners who are in Christ is no more (Revelation 12:10). There is no sin

the devil can accuse us of that God will not justify if we are in Christ.

*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:33, 34)*

The adversary is powerless to demand that God condemn Christians for their lawlessness because Jesus died to “condemn sin in the flesh.” Thus Paul triumphantly states, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1-3).

3. *That, therefore, Christ Jesus is the object of our faith.* He is the one we trust will save us in spite of our imperfections. It is *that* faith, faith in *that* sacrifice and in *that person*, which assures the Christian that he can live for the Lord the life of obedience. For though Christians are not sinless (cf. James 3:2; 1 John 1:8, 10), we can know that Christ's sacrifice will continually satisfy God for the mistakes we commit while we struggle against sin to do his will (1 John 5:18). It is faith in Christ and his work at the cross which empowers the Christian to conquer the world by saying yes to God and no to Satan (1 John 5:4).

## Questions

1. What does sin do to the lawbreakers?
2. What is Satan's power?
3. Can sinful man break Satan's hold on him? Why?
4. What did Christ become at Calvary?
5. What did Jesus mean when he said "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"
6. What is the idea of "the bond" in Colossians 2:14?
7. What was "blotted out" at Calvary?
8. What is the object of saving faith?

## Discussion Points

1. Discuss what death is in Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1.
2. Explain how Jesus died the death of a sinner. See Isaiah 53:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 5:21.
3. Explain the idea that Christ's death was substitutionary.
4. Explain how Satan's accusations against us when we sin do not bring us into condemnation. See Romans 8:33, 34.





# 10

## VICTORIOUS CONQUEST THROUGH – OUR HIGH PRIEST, PROPITIATION, AND ADVOCATE

We do not need a Solomon to tell us that if a man does not believe he is going to be paid, he will not work. And it is just that way in religion. Men will not, as a condition of salvation, deny themselves the pleasures of sin in this life until they are assured they can attain to the next life. Without assurance of salvation, there will not be that continual effort required unto faithfulness. If there is no real expectation of eternal life, if there is no guarantee that our human effort can satisfy God's requirements, then neither will there be any motivational strength to "*live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world*" so full of pleasurable sin.

This lesson seeks to establish that Christ is himself that assurance, that at Calvary he became the one who now satisfies God for sin and is consequently himself the motivation unto obedience of faith.

## I. CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST

Be careful not to turn this off as an unnecessary revival of a complicated Old Testament subject. The priesthood of Christ has a very practical meaning for the Christian.

### A. The Function of God's High Priest

The function of the priest was to offer sacrifices for sin (Hebrews 5:1). During the Mosaic economy, the high priest would enter into the most holy place and sprinkle the blood of the sin offering upon the mercy-seat (the covering of the ark of the covenant) to make atonement for the sins of Israel (Leviticus 16; cf. Hebrews 9:1-7). This act was prophetic of the work of Christ as high priest and was behind Peter's statement that Christians were elected "*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 1:1- 2).

### B. Christ Became Our High Priest

1. The provision of the old law was inadequate to save sinners.

Priests, being mere men, under the old system, died and were "hindered from continuing" to sacrifice sin offerings (Hebrews 7:23). Since the inferior cannot atone for the superior (cf. Hebrews 9:23) then "*it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*" (Hebrews 10:4). And, further, since those priests were also sinners, they needed daily "*to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the*

*people*” (Hebrews 7:27).

In other words, the Bible is teaching us that a continual sin offering must be before God for the sake of a people who are continually in sin and in need of forgiveness. And in order for that sin offering to be perpetually in God’s presence, it is necessary that a high priest be continually there to present it.

2. Christ was provided as high priest and sin offering.

Now Jesus is “such a high priest” (Hebrews 8:1) who “*offered himself without blemish unto God*” (Hebrews 9:14). Thus Christ is both sin offering and high priest. “*And inasmuch as he abideth forever ... he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*” (Hebrews 7:24, 25)

## II. CHRIST OUR PROPITIATION

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood.* (Romans 3:24, 25)

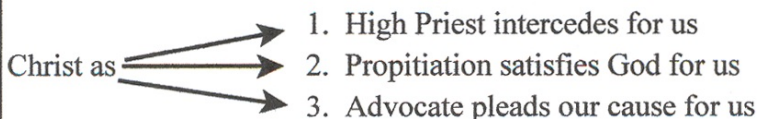
The apostle stresses that Jesus Christ became something when he was crucified which we cannot become—a provision which will continue to satisfy God for men who are continually in sin. He became our propitiation.

### A. Definition

The word “propitiation” is translated “mercy-seat” in the Old Testament. The same word is translated “mercy-seat” in Hebrews 9:5. The marginal reading of Hebrews 9:5 renders it “the propitiatory.” The marginal reading in Romans 3:25 is “*whom God set forth to be propitiatory.*” The New English Bible translates, “*God designed him to be the means of expiating sin*” (Romans 3:25), and in Hebrews 9:5, “*the place of expiation.*” Thus expiation, or sacrifice, and propitiation are equated. This idea of atonement includes the covering of sin so as to appease God’s wrath against sinners. We can say, then, that Christ at Calvary offered himself to God to satisfy God for sin.

### B. Christ Became Our Propitiation at the Cross

In Romans 3:24, 25 we are taught that redemption is in Christ since he is the one “*whom God set forth to be a propitiation.*” Christ himself, not man, satisfies God for sins. At the cross he became something he was not until he died—a propitiation, a satisfaction for sin. Thus, John writes that “*God ... loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). And again, “*he is the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 2:2).



Practically speaking, Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient to satisfy God for all our past sins, and also to continually satisfy God for the sins of his faithful, but imperfect, people.

***In conclusion***, Christ Jesus as high priest offered himself to God for our sin. After the resurrection, he ascended “into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24) to continually satisfy God for our sins. Now, as perpetual high priest and perpetual sin offering, he continues to satisfy God for the sins of his people who continue to trust and obey him. Thus, the subjects of Christ's high priesthood, sin offering, and propitiatory work are inseparable. As stated by the Hebrew writer:

*Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17)*

### III. CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE

*My little children, these things I write unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)*

#### A. Definition

The word “advocate” suggests giving aid to one in need. It was used in a court of justice to denote

a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate, one who pleads another's cause as in 1 John 2:1. It is sometimes translated "comforter," for it is comforting for another who has power with the powers that be to take your side and plead your cause.

### **B. Christ Is Presently Pleading Our Cause**

John tells us that as a lawyer before the court, so Christ before God is standing up for his faithful Christians. Thus the New English Bible translates, *"But should anyone commit a sin, we have one to plead our cause with the Father, Jesus Christ, and he is just."*

Here is the symbolic meaning of the Lamb in the book of Revelation. He "hath overcome" Satan by his life, death, and resurrection (Revelation 5). This is the idea of the triumphant Lamb through whom the saints conquer death and Satan. When the devil accuses a Christian of a sin (Revelation 12:10, 11) Christ then intercedes as a lawyer, presents his own sinless life to God for his sake, offers his own sacrificial death as a substitute for his sin, and thus pleads the cause of the Christian on this basis. God accepts this plea as sufficient to let the sinner (the Christian) go free (if he is struggling to be faithful). Realizing that Christ is pleading for him, the Christian shall be sufficiently motivated to be "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10).

***In conclusion***, on the basis of Christ's present position before God as high priest, propitiation, and advocate, we confidently draw the following conclusions:

1. *Jesus' success takes the place of our failure.* Christ

lived for us that sinless life we cannot live. He died for us the death we will not have to die. He became for us what we cannot become, and now, before God, does for us what we cannot do.

2. *We can be saved and have continual assurance of salvation.* To partake of this salvation, we have only to believe that it is a reality, repent of a life of sin, be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38) (at which point one is initially saved), and then continue faithfully as a Christian to walk in the light of his commandments (1 John 1:7). If these conditions are met, Jesus will continue to be propitiatory for the sins we commit while yet in the flesh. In this way, we can be continually assured that we are saved. He has not required perfect obedience, but trusting obedience—an obedience which trusts him to keep us cleansed from sin while we struggle to be what he wants. It is this trust which will both “casteth out fear” of punishment at judgment (1 John 4:17, 18) and, consequently, empowers us to keep his commandments.
3. *The cross of Christ knocks the ‘T’ out of can’t. I can live it. I can be faithful in a sinfully infected world. For though Satan employs all the fury of hell against us, through our faith in Christ we can overcome the world. For “this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith”* (1 John 5:4).



### **Questions**

1. What major function of the high priest did Jesus do for us?
2. What is the meaning of propitiation?
3. When did Jesus become our propitiation?
4. What is the meaning of “advocate”?
5. Can we have continual forgiveness of sins?

### **Discussion Points**

1. Explain the basis of the assurance of salvation which Christians can have.
2. Discuss the reasons for not having an assurance of salvation other than willful sin.
3. How is it that “faith is the victory”? Faith in what? Victory over what? Make a practical application to the Christian.



# 11

## VICTORIOUS CONQUEST THROUGH CHRIST – OUR CREATOR GOD

Our study of redemption makes it increasingly obvious that man's lawbreaking has greatly disabled him. Only God can redeem him and empower him to live a righteous life. The divine Christ meets the redemptive needs of sinful man.

### **I. JESUS CHRIST—OUR CREATOR GOD**

Too many have a concept of Christ which is far below the majestic picture painted in Scripture of the divine nature and creatorial power of Jesus.

#### **A. The Godhood of Jesus**

The word "God" in Scripture refers not merely to the Father, but to the *deity* class. Jesus is also God or deity. He is a part of the Godhead, a member of the deity class, as is also the Holy Spirit. These three members of the Godhead comprise the deity or the God of the Bible.

|                         |            |                   |            |                           |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Jesus<br>is<br>Immanuel | →<br>=<br> | God<br>with<br>Us | →<br>=<br> | Deity<br>with<br>Humanity |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------------|

# 1. Jesus is God.

## a. *John 1:1*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Verses 5-17 make it clear that Jesus is the Word of this prologue. Since the Word was God and Jesus is the Word, then Jesus is God.

## b. *John 20:28, 29*

*Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Thomas, a Jew, confessed Jesus to be his Lord and his God. To the Jews, this would be blasphemy of the highest sort if Jesus were not God. Then Jesus himself endorsed the statement by pronouncing a blessing upon all who believe the same thing.

c. *Philippians 2:5, 6*

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.*

The word translated “form” is *morphe* meaning nature or essence (not a bodily configuration). Paul thus wrote that Christ preexisted in the nature of God, that he was equal to God.

d. *Colossians 1:15, 2:9*

*who is the image of the invisible God ... for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

The word “image,” *eikon*, means a representation and a manifestation. Jesus would have to be God in order to manifest God. It is also affirmed that in Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. This word “Godhead” is *theotes* meaning the very essence, being, character, and quality of deity. Paul is teaching us that Jesus is the image of the very essence and being of God. He is what God is.

e. *Hebrews 1:8; Psalms 45:6, 7*

*But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of*

*thy kingdom.*

This New Testament quotation of the Old Testament reference to God's eternal throne is applied to "the Son," to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the "God" of Psalms 45.

*f. Titus 2:13*

*Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Of this language, Vine comments that Moulton shows, from papyri writings of the early Christian era, that among Greek-speaking Christians this was "a current formula" as applied to Christ. (Vine's Expository Dictionary)

These references, and numerous others, make it clear that Jesus is divine.

2. Jesus became man.

*a. Matthew 1:22-23*

*Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.*

Note that the angel announced to Joseph that Jesus is "Immanuel ... *God with us.*"

That is, deity with humanity, God with man. Jesus, on earth, was God among men.

This was earlier seen by the prophets (cf. Isaiah 9:6). “For unto us a child is born ... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” And Micah 5:2-5 speaks of the man of peace as the ruler in Israel “whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” Jesus was both God and man.

b. *John 1:1, 14*

*The Word was God . . . 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.*

The apostle John tells us that God became flesh. The same idea is mentioned in Romans 8:3 where Paul spoke of God “sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

c. *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,*

*becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*

As earlier mentioned, the word “form” means nature and is so rendered in the New English Bible. So Paul teaches that Jesus, who is divine in nature, also took on human nature. He was “found in fashion as a man.”

When Jesus “emptied himself,” he did not divest himself of his divine nature, for then he would not have been Immanuel, God with us. Rather he added to his divine nature the nature of man. Thus the writer of Hebrews says of Jesus,

*But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus. ... Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same. . . . Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren. (Hebrews 2:9,14,17)*

***In conclusion***, Jesus Christ referred to himself as both the Son of God (John 10:36) and the son of man (John 5:27). He was deity and humanity at the same time.

A brief definition of God is one who is unlimited in all his attributes. Jesus on earth manifested these attributes of deity in his sinless life, his knowledge, his miraculous deeds, and his own bodily resurrection. This is what John meant when he wrote that “*the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory . . .)*.” The glory

of his deity evidenced itself though he was in the flesh. So also Paul could write that “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” The very essence, being, character, and quality of deity evidenced itself in Jesus while in his fleshly body, Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.

## **B. Jesus, the Creator**

False doctrines from the first century to the twentieth have attempted to make Jesus less than divine by teaching that he was a created being. But the Scriptures insist that he existed from all eternity and that all created things came from him.

### *1. John 1:3*

*All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.*

The word “made,” *egeneto*, means came into being or came into existence and is so translated in some versions. Jesus, who is the divine Word, brought into existence everything which exists as a result of creation. If Jesus were created, he would therefore have to have created himself. He was already in existence when things began to be created. The New English Bible translates, “When all things began, the Word already was.” It is correct, therefore, to speak of the eternal preexistence of Christ who himself brought into being all created things.

### *2. Colossians 1:15-17* - Paul writes that Jesus is.



*. . . the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things; and in him all things consist.*

The word “firstborn” is *prototokos* and means primacy or first place or preeminence, as in Exodus 4:22, Romans 8:29, and 1 Timothy 1:15 (where *protos* is rendered “chief”). This is not speaking of time, as though Jesus had a beginning. Rather, it is speaking of his primacy over all creation, inasmuch as he is the creator of all things. Thus, “*He is the firstborn (preeminent one) of all creation: for (the reason being) in him were all things created.*” Paul points out that the creator has the preeminence over his creation.

### 3. *Revelation 3:14*

*These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*

This passage has often been used as a proof text to teach that Jesus had a beginning, that he was the first of God’s creation. But the word “beginning” is *arche* and carries the idea of an origin, an active cause or source of the thing created. Hence, “the prime source of all God’s

creation” is the translation of the New English Bible. The marginal rendering of the New American Standard Bible is “source, origin.” The meaning is that Jesus is the source, the origin, the active cause or beginner of God’s creation. Jesus is himself the God from whom all created things began.

***In conclusion***, who was that lowly Nazarene? That carpenter’s son from Galilee? He was the Almighty God, the Jehovah, the Lord of the Old Testament, the Deliverer of Israel. He was the one of whom Moses wrote when he penned these immortal words, “In the beginning God. . .”

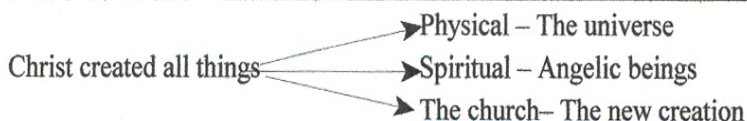
## **II. THE LORD GOD IS OUR REDEEMER AND PRESENT HELPER**

The teaching of the divine nature of Jesus must not be allowed to become a mere question of theology, for it is certainly practical. It must be viewed as the Scriptures intend it to be, as meaningfully applicable to man’s redemptive need. When Christians view their redeemer as the all-powerful God, they will have confidence to receive him as one who can make good his claims and promises. The biblical view of Christ is that he is:

### **A. Our Powerful Re-creator (Colossians 1:18)**

On the heels of Paul’s doctrine of creation by Christ Jesus, he then practically applies such creatorial power to sinful man and states: “*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*” Soon after

man's creation he sinned and brought death to himself. Christ's mission in coming to his created things was to re-create something new out of the ruined mess. Paul says that the church is Christ's new creation, what he is re-creating in the earth. Jesus is the beginner (*arche*), the source, the active cause, the origin of the church. He was proven to be all-powerful at his resurrection, "*the firstborn from the dead*" (not speaking of time, but of primacy). Thus, Christ is both the creator of the universe and of the church, of all things physical and spiritual. In this we understand why Paul concluded "*that in all things he might have the preeminence.*"



Through Jesus Christ, sinful and dead humanity can be re-created to live again. The church of Christ is the re-created world of those alive in Christ.

**B. Our Power to Conquer Satan** (Romans 8:35-39; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 John 5:18)

Paul and John were persuaded that no power from hell or heaven could conquer the faithful Christian, for Christ will guard us from Satan to the extent that "*the evil one toucheth him not.*"

### **C. Our Power to Fulfill the Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20)

This great Scripture announces Christ's limitless authority, the mission of the church, and his own pledge to ever be with the church to accomplish the task of world evangelism.

*All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

The "therefore" of Jesus' great commission to disciple all nations comes out of his total authority over all nations. As all-powerful God, he assures us that he will always accompany our efforts to evangelize the earth. Therefore, no nation can successfully stand against the efforts of the church of Christ to preach the gospel while the Christ of the church yet controls the affairs of the nations.

Christ is also the one with whom we providentially experience the victory over anti-Christian governments to preach the gospel in lands where men would otherwise keep us out. And so Jesus triumphantly shouts, "behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut" (Revelation 3:8). And John declares, "*Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ*" (Revelation 12:10).

***In conclusion***, according to the biblical doctrine of Christ our Creator-God, we conclude that Christ Jesus has the power to save us and to keep us saved. Redemption through world evangelism is the only justification for the present exercise of God's power in the church. Without this mission as foremost, the church cannot glorify God, for,

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us [that is, in the church, to save lost souls], unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20, 21)*

## Questions

1. What is the two-fold nature of Jesus?
2. Is Jesus half God and half man?
3. How long was Jesus God before he became man?
4. When he became man and emptied himself, did Jesus empty himself of his divine nature?
5. Is Jesus the God of Genesis 1:1? See Revelation 3:14.
6. What is the meaning of “firstborn” in Colossians 1:15?
7. Is Jesus able to re-create sinful man into something better?
8. Will Jesus actually help us take the gospel to all nations? How? See Colossians 4:3, 4; Revelation 3:7, 8.
9. Does the church have a practical access to the unlimited power of God?

## Discussion Points

1. Practically apply the fact of Jesus’ deity to our own needs in Christian living. See Hebrews 4:15, 16; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 John 5:18.
2. Discuss the purpose for which the Lord extends his power to the church. See Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 3:20, 21.



# 12

## THE RELATION OF THE NEW COVENANT TO REDEMPTION (Part 1)

### A New Covenant Promised

Among God's provision for man's redemption is a new covenant. It is the aim of this lesson to show the relation of the New Covenant to redemption from sin and the universality of its requirement upon sinful man.

#### I. THE PASSING OF THE OLD MOSAIC COVENANT

Failure of Bible teachers to make a distinction between the Old and New Covenants has contributed much to present religious confusion. Much of present-day denominational error is traceable to this failure.

##### A. The Old Covenant and the Law Were the Same

In Exodus 24:1-8 Moses records the dedication



of the Old Covenant, which contained “*all the words which Jehovah hath spoken*” (v 3), in Exodus 20:123, 33. This included the Ten Commandments. The writer of Hebrews speaks of this event (Hebrews 9:18-20) and refers to the Old Covenant as “the Law” Therefore the Old Covenant and the Law were the same. What happened to one happened to the other.

## **B. The Old Covenant Removed**

1. The Mosaic Covenant became old and ready to give way to a new.

The book of Hebrews records that when Jeremiah predicted the coming of a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that at the moment he foretold it, the Mosaic Covenant became old “*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away*” (Hebrews 8:13).

The first covenant, the Law of Moses, became the Old Covenant at the very time when Jeremiah predicted that God would make a new covenant. And, we are told, whatever is old and aged is “nigh” or near vanishing away. Thus the Old Covenant of the Law of Moses could not last indefinitely following the prediction of the coming of a new covenant.

2. The passing of the Old Covenant at Calvary.

When Jesus died, the Old Covenant gave way to the New.

*a. Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20*

Jesus died at Calvary to bring to us the New Covenant, but, according to Hebrews

8:13, the Old Covenant would have to “vanish away.”

b. *Romans 7:4-7*

Paul teaches that we “*were made dead to the law through the body of Christ . . . now we have been discharged from the law*”

Then carefully he points out that the Law from which we are discharged is “the law (which) had said, Thou shalt not covet.” This is the tenth commandment of the Decalogue. It is that law to which we were made dead.

c. *2 Corinthians 3:4-16*

Paul tells us that the skin of Moses’ face which brightly radiated after speaking with God atop Sinai (Exodus 34:29), which radiance eventually passed away, was symbolic of the passing of the glory of the Old Covenant for a more glorious covenant. He speaks of “the Old Covenant” and then plainly states that “*it is done away in Christ.*”

d. *Ephesians 2:15*

“*The law of commandments contained in ordinances*” was “abolished” in order that Jesus might re-create Jews and Gentiles into “one new man” the Christian.

e. *Hebrews 10:1-10*

The Hebrew writer contrasts the sacrificial blood of both covenants and stresses that animal sacrifices can never remove sins. Christ’s sacrifice was necessary to sanctify us. Then he says,

*He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will [covenant] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (vss. 9, 10)*

***In conclusion***, the Law of Moses, the Old Covenant, with its sabbaths and circumcision, has been abolished, done away at Calvary. It became old in the days of Jeremiah and vanished away when Jesus went to the cross. Redemption from sin is not to be sought by an appeal to the Old Law of Moses.

## **II. REDEMPTION PROMISED UNDER A NEW COVENANT**

*Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)*

Jeremiah foretold the coming of a new covenant which was to be different from the one made with Israel at Sinai *“not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers.”*

#### **A. The New Covenant to Be Different from the Old**

The difference is as follows:

1. A Jew was born into covenant relation with God.

Because of the special covenant God made with Abraham “and his seed” (Genesis 17:3-14), anyone born a Jew was also born into a covenant relationship with God. But as a child, he could not know Jehovah or the Law of Jehovah. His Jewish brethren must teach him as he grows about the covenant and his special relationship to God. Thus, under the Mosaic economy, the Jew was ignorant of his special relationship to God until taught.

2. Under the New Covenant, all shall know Jehovah.

There would be no exceptions. All, from the least to the greatest who would have their sins forgiven, would know and understand the terms of the New Covenant. Jeremiah reasons as follows.

- a. All would be educated to the New Covenant*

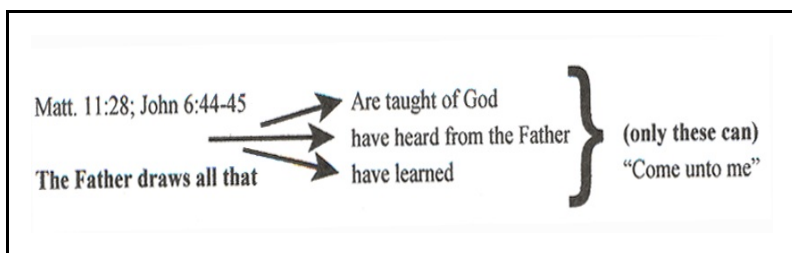
*“I will put my law in their inward parts”*

says the prophet. The New Testament rendering of this verse reveals that those “inward parts” are the minds of men (Hebrews 8:10). The only way to put laws on men’s minds is to educate them to those laws. Therefore, all who would have their

sins forgiven must know Jehovah; they must be educated to God's New Covenant.

*b. This is what Jesus taught*

- 1) During his ministry, Jesus gave the great invitation: *"Come unto me, all ye that labor. . ."* (Matthew 11:28). Notice the "all." Yet that "all" is qualified. Jesus also stated that *"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him"* (John 6:44). Jesus then explains how the Father draws men to Christ: *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me"* (John 6:45). Men are enabled to accept Christ only after having been taught about him. Then they can come to him according to the teaching.



- 2) Consequently, Jesus gave the Great Commission to go into all the world teaching the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Baptism is only for those who have been taught.

## **B. Redemption Limited to Those under the New Covenant**

Only responsible men who are able to learn of the New Covenant and render obedience to its terms can receive pardon. Jeremiah emphasized that fact by stressing the personal pronoun “their”: *“I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more”* (Jeremiah 31:34). Whose iniquity will God forgive? Theirs in whose minds and on whose hearts are the laws of the New Covenant. Those who thus know Jehovah are the ones of whom Jeremiah said *“their sin will I remember no more.”*

No one can receive forgiveness and not know it, for no one can be forgiven without knowing the laws of the New Covenant and obeying them.

***In conclusion***, God’s provisions for man’s redemption includes a new covenant. According to Jeremiah, a knowledge of this New Covenant and its laws are essential in order to receive pardon from sin. There can be no exceptions; in order for sinful men to be redeemed, they must all know Jehovah. From the least to the greatest, all must have the laws of that New Covenant in their minds and in their hearts. Therefore, education is essential to salvation. On this basis, world evangelism is the only hope for the billions who are yet untold.

## Questions

1. Name the two great divisions of the Bible.
2. The Old Covenant was also called what? How do you know?
3. When did the Mosaic Covenant become the Old Covenant?
4. When did the Old Covenant pass away?
5. What did Jeremiah specify would be the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
6. According to Jeremiah, forgiveness of sins is limited to whom?
7. Can a man become a Christian and not know it? Why?
8. What is world evangelism? To whom has this task been committed?
9. What agreement is there between Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Matthew 28:18-20?

## Discussion Points

1. Experimental religions are based upon feelings which are produced by experiences such as modern visions, miracles, speaking in tongues, etc. These experiences are supposed to be the confirmation of God's favor upon the recipient. Discuss the difference between experimental religion and Bible Christianity using Jeremiah 31:33-34 as a basis.
2. What did Jesus teach which corresponds to what Jeremiah taught? See John 6:44, 45; Matthew 28:18-20.
3. What did Paul teach which corresponds with Jeremiah and Jesus? Start with Romans 10:17.



# 13

## THE RELATION OF THE NEW COVENANT TO REDEMPTION (Part 2)

### The New Covenant Provided

The cross of Jesus Christ is the center of redemptive Christianity. Earlier lessons considered that at Calvary Christ became something—our high priest, our sin-offering, and propitiation. But that is not the end of God's provisions for our salvation. He has also provided, at the cross, something for sinners to do in order to become partakers of the redemption which is in Christ.

The last lesson discussed the passing of the Old Covenant and the promise of a New Covenant. The New Covenant has been provided at Calvary, and obedience to the terms of that covenant brings redemption.

#### I. Christ's Death Provided the New Covenant

*And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under*



*the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. (Hebrews 9:15-20)*

#### **A. The Death of the Testator Required for a Covenant to Be in Force (vs.16,17)**

As stated in the above passage, “*for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth.*” Consequently, the terms of the New Covenant that are now required unto salvation were not required prior to the death of Christ.

##### **1. The thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43).**

The thief is frequently offered as proof that new covenant baptism is not essential “*unto remission of sins*” (see Acts 2:38). The contention is that if he was saved without being baptized, why not the rest of us today? But this fails to take into account two things:

*a. The thief lived and died under the Old Covenant.*

This was before Christ gave the command to be baptized by his authority (cf. Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). The thief was

never obligated to the baptism of the New Covenant.

b. *We do not know the thief was not baptized.*

He was commanded to be baptized by John the baptizer (see Mark. 1:4; Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 7:30). To say the thief was not baptized is saying more than the New Testament says.

2. The palsied man (Matthew 9:2-8).

This man was forgiven of his sins without any conditions whatever required of him. The purpose for which he was brought to Jesus was for physical healing. Forgiveness of sins was not the intent or even the consideration of that purpose. As a matter of fact, Jesus healed him of his palsy to prove that he had power to forgive sins. While on earth, Jesus forgave sins as he saw fit. Now we are under the covenant of his blood and must comply with its stated terms in order to receive forgiveness of sins.

## **B. The New Covenant Dedicated by Christ's Blood** (vs. 18-20)

This reference to the dedication of the Old Law by blood is to show that the New Covenant must also be dedicated by blood. At the institution of the Lord's supper, Jesus himself promised that shedding his blood would dedicate the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28). So Paul, writing about the Lord's supper, said, "*he took the cup after supper, and said, This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood*" (1 Corinthians 11:25, New English Bible).

Remember, for future reference at the

conclusion of this lesson, that the New Covenant was the thing dedicated by the blood of Christ.

### **C. Prophecy Fulfilled**

Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) was fulfilled at the cross. It is interesting to recall those with whom the Lord would make his New Covenant that "*they shall be my people,*" and then compare that to the statement made by the angel to Joseph that, "*thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). God's people are all those who have been saved from sins. The Jews today have no special relationship to God. Only those, whether Gentile or Jew, who have had their sins forgiven can justly claim a special relationship to God. (See also Zechariah 9:11.)

## **II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT**

*But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.* (Hebrews 8:6)

According to the Hebrew letter, covenants are enacted upon promises. Therefore the nature of the Covenant is determined by the nature of the promise. The nature of the New Covenant is as follows:

### **A. It Is a Better Covenant**

That is, it is a better covenant than the Mosaic Covenant in that it provides remission of sins, which

the Old Covenant could not provide. The New Covenant is better because it is based upon the better blood of a better sacrifice.

A blood sacrifice is essential to remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). Since the blood of animals cannot take away sins (Hebrews 10:4), it was impossible for the Old Covenant to offer remission from sins. The New Covenant has been, however, dedicated by the better blood of a better sacrifice in the person of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:23, 24).

#### **B. It Is an Eternal Covenant (Hebrews 13:20)**

It will not be cancelled or replaced by another. Neither can anything be added to it to perfect its purpose. It is able to provide remission of sins and so accomplish God's purpose for man.



### **III. OBEDIENCE TO THE NEW COVENANT IS THE WAY TO HEAVEN**

While the object of our faith is Jesus and our trust is in him to provide salvation, yet he will save us only as he teaches—by our obedience to the terms of his New Covenant. Disobedience is to count the blood of the New Covenant as unholy (Hebrews 10:29).

#### **A. The New Covenant Is the Way Christ Dedicated for Us to Enter Heaven**

The thing dedicated, as learned earlier, is the New Covenant. The Hebrew writer teaches that we enter into the holy place (heaven, cf. 9:24) "*by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way*" (Hebrews 10:19, 20). Heaven is gained through the work of Jesus

shedding his blood, our faith in his blood, and obedience to his covenant terms.

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Matthew 26:28</b><br/>Jesus' blood<br/>dedicated the<br/>new covenant<br/>unto remission<br/>of sins.</p> | <p><b>Hebrews 10:19,20</b><br/>We enter by <u>Faith and</u><br/><u>Obedience</u><br/>1. <u>The blood</u> (our<br/>faith here)<br/>2. <u>The new covenant</u>,<br/>the way he<br/>dedicated, the new<br/>and living way<br/>(obedience to this)</p> |  |
|---|---|--|---|

## B. The Covenant Terms of Obedience unto Remission of Sins

The apostles were given a word-ministry by which men were reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19).

But they were made ministers of a new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:4-6). Therefore the words of their ministry included the words of the New Covenant. It is only through the New Covenant that sinners can be reconciled to God.

The covenant terms of that reconciliation are as follows:

1. Faith in Christ and his blood as propitiatory (Romans 3:24, 25).
2. Repentance from sins and repentance towards God (Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 20:21).
3. Confession of the deity and lordship of Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Philippians. 2:9-11).
4. Baptism.

The relation of new covenant baptism to redemption is seen in the following:

- a. *The New Covenant laws must be received in order for sins to be forgiven* (Jeremiah 31:33, 34), and the blood of Christ was shed unto remission of sins (Matthew 26:28). Since baptism is the command “*unto remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38), we must conclude that baptism is essential as a term of the New Covenant to receive the saving blood of Christ.
  - b. *The blood of the New Covenant washes or looses us from our sins* (Revelation 1:5), but we are washed from our sins when baptized (Acts 22:16). Therefore baptism is a necessary term of obedience under the New Covenant.
  - c. *The blood of Christ cleanses the conscience* (Hebrews 9:14), but the conscience, or the heart, is cleansed when one is baptized (1 Peter 3:21), that is, when his body is washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22). Therefore baptism is essential to a pure conscience by those who respect God’s New Covenant.
5. A faithful Christian life unto death (1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10).

***In conclusion***, the purpose of this Christian dispensation is to save men from their sins. The New Covenant of Christ is sufficient to provide salvation conditioned upon a willingness to obey the terms of pardon. Though man, apart from Christ’s work at Calvary, cannot save himself, Peter at Pentecost commanded repentance and baptism as man’s response to that work. There is an obedience which sinful man must render by faith in order for faith to save

him; Peter exhorts “*Save yourselves from this crooked generation*” (Acts 2:40).

### Questions

1. What event provided the New Covenant? How do you know?
2. Was the thief on the cross baptized or not? How do you know?
3. According to Jeremiah’s prophecy of a new covenant, who are to be identified as God’s people?
4. Do Jews today sustain any special relationship to God that Gentiles do not? How do you know?
5. List the better thing which made the New Covenant better than the old.
6. List the terms of the New Covenant which are essential to forgiveness of sins (that is, to becoming a saved person).

### Discussion Points

1. Why is it futile to appeal to the thief on the cross as an argument that baptism is not essential to salvation?
2. Why was a new covenant essential to the redemption of humanity?
3. Why do you think the New Covenant was called “the new and living way” (Hebrews 10:19, 20)?
4. Discuss the essentiality of new covenant baptism to Jeremiah’s promise of forgiveness under the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:33, 34) to Jesus’ blood of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28; Acts 2:38).

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