

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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IN THE HIGHEST

STANDARD

OF MORALITY

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Living Stream Ministry
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A SALVATION IN THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY

Because Luke's Gospel is one of the synoptic Gospels concerning the Savior's humanity, its purpose is to present the Savior as a genuine, normal, and perfect Man, revealing God among men in His saving grace to fallen mankind. It narrates a complete genealogy of the Man Jesus from His parents back to Adam, the first generation of mankind. This shows that He is a genuine descendant of man—a son of man. Its record of this Man's life impresses us with the completeness and perfection of His humanity. Hence, its emphasis is the Man-Savior. It presents, based upon the moral principles which apply to all men, gospel messages as in 4:16-21; 7:41-43; 12:14-21; and 13:2-5; gospel parables as in 10:30-37; 14:16-24; 15:3-32; and 18:9-14; and gospel cases as in 7:36-50; 13:10-17; 16:19-31; 19:1-10; and 23:39-43; these are not recorded in the other Gospels. Luke does not stress the dispensational aspect or the Jewish background as

Matthew does. The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel written to mankind in general, announcing the good news to all people (2:10). Its characteristic is absolutely not Jewish, but Gentile (4:25-28). It is a Gospel to all sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. As such, its record is according to the sequence of morality, not according to the sequence of historical events. According to the Gospel of Luke, our Savior lives, behaves, and works in the highest standard of morality. Moreover, His salvation is carried out in the highest standard of morality.

A SALVATION IN THE LORD'S HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The Lord Jesus as the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and born of a human virgin with the human essence. Therefore, He possesses both the divine nature with its divine attributes and the human nature with its human virtues.

The Man-Savior's salvation, which is in the highest standard of morality, is a salvation in His human virtues with His divine attributes. Such a salvation is illustrated in the gospel parables and shown in the gospel cases recorded in Luke.

GOSPEL PARABLES

The parable of the good Samaritan in [chapter ten](#) is an excellent example. This Samaritan signifies the Lord Himself, who was slandered by being called a low and mean Samaritan ([John 8:48; 4:9](#)) by the self-exalting and self-justifying Pharisees.

According to this parable, a “certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who having both stripped him and beat him, went away, leaving him half dead” ([Luke 10:30](#)). Both a priest and a Levite observed him and then passed by on the opposite side. Then a certain Samaritan came down to him and was moved with compassion ([v. 33](#)). “And coming to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. And placing him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him” ([v. 34](#)). In this simple story, which even children may appreciate, we see that the Man-Savior lived in the highest standard of morality. He cared for the wounded man, brought him to the inn, and said to the inn-keeper, “Take care of him; and whatever you spend in addition, when I return, I will repay you”

(v. 35). This is not only a matter of love; it is also a living in the highest standard of morality.

The three parables in Luke 15 also illustrate the Man-Savior's salvation in the highest standard of morality. These three parables form a full set. The good shepherd signifies God the Son as our Shepherd, the woman signifies the Holy Spirit, and the loving father, of course, signifies God the Father. Hence, in these three parables we have the Trinity working together to seek, save, and receive a repentant sinner. The good shepherd loves the lost sheep, the woman treasures the lost coin, and the loving father receives the prodigal son when he returns.

Some readers of the Gospel of Luke may regard these parables merely as illustrating love. But we need to realize that it is Luke's intention in his narration to portray the divine Trinity full of the divine attributes shown in human virtues. In these parables we see not only the divine attributes, in particular, the attribute of love; we also see the divine attributes in human virtues.

GOSPEL CASES

The Man-Savior's salvation in the highest standard of morality is also shown in the gospel cases recorded in Luke. In 7:36-50 we have the

case of the Lord Jesus forgiving a sinful woman. This woman was despised by the Pharisee who had invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. As we read this portion of the Gospel of Luke, we see that in dealing with this sinful woman, and also with the Pharisee, the Lord lived according to the highest standard of morality.

Another case that reveals the same high standard is the case of Zaccheus ([19:1-10](#)). Although Zaccheus, a tax collector, was an evil person, he was seeking the Man-Savior. Because he was seeking Jesus, “he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree that he might see Him” ([v. 4](#)). The Lord Jesus responded to Zaccheus, saying, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house” ([v. 5](#)). The Man-Savior’s response must have far exceeded all that Zaccheus could have hoped for. The Man-Savior was not held back by the fact that Zaccheus was a despised man, one rejected by society. The Lord went with Zaccheus and stayed in his house. In His dealing with Zaccheus, the Man-Savior lived in the highest standard of morality.

Even when the Man-Savior was on the cross, He acted in the highest standard of morality in relation to the two criminals who were crucified with Him. One of the criminals said to the

Lord Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” ([23:42](#)). Immediately the Man-Savior answered, “Truly I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise” ([v. 43](#)).

In these three cases we have a portrait of the Man-Savior with the highest standard of morality. This is a crucial matter in the Gospel of Luke. This Gospel depicts a Man who possesses the divine nature with all the human virtues. In the Man-Savior the divine attributes are mingled with the human virtues as one unit. Therefore, the Lord’s human virtues, according to this Gospel, are strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes.

THE CHRIST WHO LIVES IN US

Today the very Christ who lives in us is still the One who possesses the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes. While He was on earth, He lived a life in the highest standard of morality. Such a life was a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. Of course, the Lord Jesus lived this kind of life outside the disciples. But from the time of His resurrection He has been living this kind of life within the believers. This means that within us today the Man-Savior is

still living a life in the highest standard of morality, a life that is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. If we see this, we shall say with Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” ([Gal. 2:20](#)).

Have you ever realized that the Christ who lives in you is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues? The kind of life He lived on earth He is now seeking to live in us.

THE VIEW OF THE MAN-SAVIOR AND HIS SALVATION

We have seen that the Lord spoke in parables to illustrate a life in the highest standard of morality. We have also seen this life displayed in different gospel cases. Suppose you had been the criminal who asked the Lord to save him, and He immediately gave you more than you had asked without any terms or conditions. Perhaps you would say, “Oh, what love this is!” Actually, it is not adequate to call this love. This is the highest standard of morality.

Suppose you had been the one wounded by robbers and left to die without anyone to care for you. Then this good Samaritan came, was moved with compassion, and did everything necessary to save you. This also is something more

than love—it is the highest standard of morality. I hope that we all shall see this.

MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

At this juncture I would like to explain further what we mean by the highest standard of morality. In [chapter one of Genesis](#) we see that man was created in God's image and according to God's likeness. God is love and light. Love is the nature of God's being, and light is the nature of God's expression. Furthermore, God is holy and righteous. God is holy in His nature and righteous in His actions. These four attributes—love, light, holiness, and righteousness—are revealed in the law of God. In the law we have the basic principle of divine love, divine light, divine holiness, and divine righteousness.

To say that man was created in the image of God means that man was created according to what God is. Man was created according to the God who is love and light and who is also holy and righteous. However, at the time of his creation man did not have God within him. For this reason, God placed the man created by Him in front of the tree of life. This indicates that it was necessary for the God-created man to take God into him as his life. If man had taken God into

him as life, then the divine attributes of love, light, holiness, and righteousness would also have come into man.

The man created by God had only the appearance of God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Man cannot have the reality of these attributes unless he receives God into him as his life. We know that according to the book of Genesis man failed to take God into him as his life.

THE LIVING OF THE LORD JESUS

One day God Himself became a Man named Jesus. This Man was conceived of the divine essence and born of the human essence, the very essence God created in man. This means that the human essence of which the Lord Jesus partook was that created by God according to what He is—the human essence with the appearance of God's love, light, holiness, and righteousness.

As we have seen, the Lord Jesus, the God-man, was a composition of the divine essence with all the divine attributes and the human essence with all the human virtues. When He was on earth, He lived a life that was a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. This is the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality is the living of the One whose

life was a composition of God with the divine attributes and man with the human virtues.

When we speak of the highest standard of morality, we are not using the word “morality” in a traditional way. By morality we mean the standard of life God requires.

From the beginning, in the first two chapters of Genesis, we see that man with the human virtues was created by God according to what He is. In particular, since God is light and love and is holy and righteous, He created man according to these attributes. The creation of man in the image of God is described in [Genesis 1](#).

We have pointed out that at the time of his creation man did not have the reality of love, light, holiness, and righteousness. The reality of these divine attributes is actually God Himself. This means that through creation man had the image of these attributes, but he did not have the reality of them. This was the reason God in [Genesis 2](#) put man in front of Himself as signified by the tree of life, indicating that God wanted man to take Him as his life so that he might have the reality of the divine love, light, holiness, and righteousness. This would enable man to live a life in the highest standard of morality.

Although the man created by God failed to

live such a life, the Lord Jesus, the Man-Savior, possessing the divine nature and the human nature, lived a life on earth with the attributes of God expressed in the virtues of man. This crucial matter is revealed in the Gospel of Luke.

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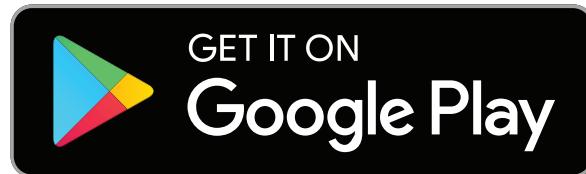
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