

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

"How shall we escape, if we neglect SO GREAT salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Heb 2:3)

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

So far as man is concerned, and at this present time, the preeminent manifestation of God's Kingdom is the reconciliation of man unto Himself. This is the project, so to speak, that is currently the stress, or point of emphasis, of God. In this great enterprise God has involved HIMSELF (John 14:21,23; 1 Thess 3:11; Phil 2:13; 1 John 3:9), HIS SON (Phil 4:7,13; Col 1:27; 1 John 5:20, Heb 2:10; 7:17), HIS SPIRIT (Rom 8:13,26,27; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 5:5; 1 Pet 1:22-23), and THE ANGELIC HOSTS (Heb 1:13-14). His mercy, righteousness, and wisdom have joined together to accomplish a work so transcendent that it will be the cause of praise, "world without end" (Eph. 3:21).

ONE VIEW – A COMPLETED WORK

Man's restoration to God is frequently mentioned as something that has already taken place. "And all things are of God, who HATH RECONCILED us unto Himself by Jesus Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 5:18-20); "Even when we were dead in sins, HATH QUICKENED us together with Christ . . ." (Eph. 2:1-5); "And having MADE PEACE through the blood of His cross . . . And you,

that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now HATH HE RECONCILED . . .” (Col. 1:20-22) “Who HATH SAVED us . . .” (2 Tim. 1:9), and “For by one offering He hath PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified” (Heb 10:14).

It may appear that to human understanding as though these things have not been accomplished – but there is a sense in which they have, else it would be a debilitating delusion for them to have been stated. Faith can, and must, take hold of these statements.

ANOTHER VIEW – A WORK IN PROGRESS

It is also true that salvation is not yet complete, but is being brought to completion by Divine workings.

God the Father is WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). He is WORKING IN US both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:13). He is making His people STAND (Rom 14:4). He is not allowing His children to be tempted above their ability, but MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE from every temptation (1 Cor 10:13).

Jesus is BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY (Heb 2:10). He is TEACHING us of God, so that we may know Him that is true (1 John 5:20). He is INTERCEDING for those who are coming to God through Him (Heb 7:27). He is the SHEPHERD AND BISHOP of our souls (1 Pet 2:25). He is sending His children GRACE AND PEACE (1 Cor 1:3). He is the AUTHOR AND FINISHER of our faith (Heb 12:2).

The Holy Spirit is CHANGING US from one increasing stage of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). He enables us to WAIT FOR THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Gal 5:5). He INTERCEDES for us (Rom 8:26-27). He enables us to ABOUND IN HOPE (Rom 15:13).

The salvation of God is so thorough, and so complete, that a valid reason cannot be put forward for not being a part of it. Those who do not embrace it will be summarily condemned – not because it did not adequately meet their need, or that it was not applicable to them, but because they, of their own will, did not accept it! God will do nothing more to effect salvation than He has already done. It is the acceptance of His provision that is now the issue!

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Chapter 2

A DEFINITION OF SALVATION

"Deliverance" and "preservation" are synonyms for salvation, emphasizing what we are delivered from, and preserved for. Other English synonyms include "conservation," "keeping," "

"safekeeping," "sustentation," "rescue," "sustain," "maintain," "safeguard," "shield," "spare," "defend," and "protect." In the Hebrew language, "save" includes the idea of "deliverance," "rescue," and "prosperity." In the Greek language it carries the idea of "rescue," "safety," and "deliverance." What a large word!

There are both physical and spiritual deliverances. Perhaps the most visible deliverance was Israel's rescue from the hand of Pharaoh and his armies. That memorable experience, when the Red Sea parted for the Israelites, and closed upon the Egyptians, was called "the SALVATION of the Lord" (Exod. 14:13). Upon the completion of that mighty rescue, the people of God sang, "The Lord is my Strength and my Song, and He is become my SALVATION . . ." (Exod. 15:2). That occasion serves to demonstrate the nature of salvation: The enemy is subdued and God's people are rescued from danger.

Similarly, and in a depiction of the salvation possessed in Christ Jesus, when king Saul soundly defeated the Ammonites, he said of the occasion, “the Lord hath wrought SALVATION in Israel” (1 Sam 11:11-13). During the reign of Jehosaphat, when the Ammonites and Moabites came against Israel, God moved them to destroy each other rather than fight against Israel. The Lord informed them of what He was going to do through Jehaziel who said, “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the SALVATION of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you” (2 Chron 20:17).

In Christ, salvation extends beyond the seen. “The salvation of our God” (Psa. 52:10) now deals with eternal issues, not merely temporal ones! The term is used no less than 43 times following Christ’s exaltation. A careful examination of the texts will reveal that every single one of them refers to a spiritual salvation – a salvation having to do with unseen, yet very real, circumstances (Luke 1:69,77; 2:30; 3:6; 19:9; John 4:22; Acts 4:12; 13:26,47; 16:17; 28:28; Rom. 1:16; 10:10; 11:11; 13:11; 2 Cor. 1:6; 7:10; Eph. 1:3; 6:17; Phil. 1:19,28; 2:12; I Thess. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:15; Titus 2:11; Heb. 1:4, 2:3,10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; I Pet. 1:5,9,10; 2 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3; Rev. 7:10; 19:1; 12:10).

This “eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) proclaims the overthrow of Satan, and the preservation of man. It speaks of the maintenance of life as well as its genesis. It includes the idea of protection and sustenance. Under the heading of SALVATION the saints are provided a way of escape from every temptation (1 Cor 10:13). They are enabled to “resist the devil” (James 4:7), and cast down high thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:3-5). SALVATION includes the matter of Christ’s intercession for those who are coming to God through Him (Heb

7:25). It also involves the intercession of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer (Rom 8:26-27). There is also the maintenance of the saved one, portrayed as God making him stand (Rom 14:4), and keeping him from falling (Jude 1:24).

There is also the idea of being delivered from this present evil world (Gal 1:4), so that it is no longer able to hold the believer captive. It includes protecting the child of God so that no influence external to the believer is able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:35-39). Once this salvation is embraced, Satan is powerless to dominate man, and man is able to enter into personal relation with God.

Salvation also involves spiritual nourishment. “In the day of SALVATION have I succored thee,” proclaims the Lord (2 Cor. 6:2). That is, Satan’s subduement and man’s liberty not only consist of an initial deliverance, but of continued safety, sustenance, and growth.

In addition, this wonderful word encompasses man’s final deliverance from the temporal order, when the faithful shall be raised from the dead and joyfully inducted into the very presence of the Almighty. It is in this sense that the word is used in Romans 13:11. “Now is our SALVATION nearer than when we believed.” This is truly an “eternal salvation” (Heb 5:9). It commences with the remission of sins, and it finally brings the saved one into the very presence of God Himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, where they will dwell forever.

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Chapter 3

A BROAD SPECTRUM

Salvation has a broad spectrum. Included in it are Satan's overthrow, and the liberation of men to embrace the truth. There is also the element of spiritual nourishment while in this world, as well as participation in the resurrection unto life. "The salvation which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10) is a "great salvation" (Heb. 2:3). Consequently, no single term can encompass its greatness.

Seen from the viewpoint of the price paid, it is "redemption" (Heb. 9:12). The word "reconciliation" declares the accomplishment of Divine fellowship (2 Cor. 5:18-19; 1 Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3), while "sanctification" proclaims the involvement of man himself in God's work (1 Cor. 1:30).

In consideration of salvation's effect upon God, we read of the "atonement" (Rom. 5:11), or the satisfaction that resulted from the death of Christ (Isa 53:11). The thorough acquittal of man from guilt prompted the use of the word "justification" (Rom. 4:25). This also includes the Divine transaction of making a person

righteous, or being “made the righteousness of God” in Christ (2 Cor 5:21).

The Scriptures also view salvation from the standpoint of experience – i.e. man’s participation in it. Such words as “washed” (I Cor. 6:11), “born again” (John 3:3,5), “purged” (2 Pet. 1:9), “partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14), “raised” (Eph. 2:6), “illuminated” (Heb. 10:32), “converted” (Acts 3:19), “forgiveness” (Col. 1:14), and “obey Him” (Heb. 5:9), emphasize this wonderful participation.

From the highest vantage point, it is true that God has “from the beginning chosen you to salvation,” and it is “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess 2:13). That is, the Holy Spirit prepares the receptive individual by convicting them "of sin, because they believe not on Me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:9-11).

The paramount sin is not believing “the record God has given of His Son” (1 John 5:11). That is, God has testified of the real Jesus, while Satan has promoted “another Jesus” (2 Cor 11:4). It is within the framework of the Spirit’s work that the individual perceives the true Jesus and desires to be His disciple. Equally true, the persuasion of the absolute requirement of righteousness is the result of the Spirit’s working. The fact that Jesus is “the Righteous One” (1 John 2:1) is confirmed by His presence in heaven – at the right hand of God, invested with all power in heaven and earth. So far as Satan is concerned, the Spirit shows the individual that the devil has already been judged and defeated. He has no power to separate or overthrow the one who is believing on Christ.

Had Jesus not revealed these things to us, there is no way we could have associated the persuasion of the saved with the working of the Lord. However, they have been revealed to assist us in profitable self-examination, so that we can actually know that Christ is in us “of a truth” (2 Cor 13:5). This kind of awareness is imperative if we are to overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:13-14), pass boldly through the judgment (1 John 4:17), and be forever with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17).

When “salvation” is viewed from the causal point of view, it is always traced back to God and Christ (Isa 51:5; 56:1; Jonah 2:9; Rom 5:9-10; Eph 2:1-8; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5; Heb 5:9). It is God who quickened us (Eph 2:1,5), raised us and made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), reconciled us (2 Cor 5:19), put us into Christ (1 Cor 1:30), opened our heart (Acts 16:14), gave us the ability to believe (Phil 1:29), sent us ministers by whom we believed (Rom 10:14-15; 1 Cor 3:5), and put us where he wanted us in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18).

Come even higher, and you will perceive that God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” (Eph 1:3), “hath chosen us before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), and “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph 1:5). These are not matters to be debated, but are to be believed. Neither are they substitutes for human responsibility, and they must not be viewed as such. Once a person is actually “in Christ,” statements like those given above are provided as explanations for what has happened. The CAUSE of salvation must not be traced to men, to their choice, or to their aptitude. The cause is the Lord.

We have a parallel to our salvation in the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. With unvariable consistency, that deliverance is traced to God Himself. He “delivered” them from the Egyptians (1 Sam 10:18). He “saved the people out of the land of Egypt” (Jude 12:5). He “brought” the people”out of Egypt” (Ex 13:9). He “carried them forth out of Egypt” (Ex 14:11). God told Israel, “I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself” (Ex 19:4).

Yet, there were many things that the Israelites had to do in preparation for that deliverance. They had to select and eventually slay the Passover lamb (Ex 12:3-6). They had to take of its blood and put it on their doors (Ex 12:7). They had to eat the lamb in a specified way, and after it has been cooked in a particular way (Ex 12:8-11). They had to obtain goods from the Egyptians (Ex 12:35-36). They had to gather their belongings, including their bread pans and other utensils (Ex 1:34). They were required to get their flocks and herds together and take them as they exited Egypt (Ex 12:37-38). They had to bake some unleavened bread to take with them (Ex 12:39).

Who would dare to ascribe the cause for Israel’s deliverance from Egypt to any or even all of the things they did? Where is that deliverance ever traced to what the Israelites themselves did? This does not remove the fact that they had to do those things – there is no question about that. But how do you account for the fact that three to five million people did it without a single dissenter (there were over 603,000 men over twenty (Ex 12:37; 38:26) ? How do you account for the fact that they “all” came out of Egypt without a “hoof” being “left behind” (Ex 10:26), or a single Egyptian dog barking at them (Ex 11:7)? How is it that they “all” passed through the Red Sea, ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink (1 Cor 10:1-4). To whom are we to ascribe these

things? To God, or to man?

It should not be difficult to make the transition from Israel's deliverance from Egypt to being delivered from the world (Gal 1:4), sin (Rom 6:22), and the devil (Eph 2:2-3).

The salvation of which we speak is so great, so high, so unfathomably wide, that no single word – no single concept – can adequately encompass its greatness. Little wonder that the Apostle said of it, “I . . . cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that . . . the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what [is] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe . . .” (Eph. 1:16-19). Again, it is written; “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in [His] love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge” (Eph. 3:16-21). That is the “great salvation” of which we speak!

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Chapter 4

THE CENTRALITY OF SALVATION IN SCRIPTURE

The dominating subject of the prophetic messages of old was the "salvation" which is now proclaimed through the Gospel (I Pet. 1:9). The thrust of the Apostolic message also concerned this theme. "Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). They proclaimed Jesus as the "Captain of our SALVATION" (Heb. 2:10), and "the Author of eternal SALVATION" (Heb. 5:9). The hope which sustains the soul and protects the mind is called "the hope of SALVATION" (Eph. 6:17; I Thess. 5:8).

"The Gospel of Christ" is God's power "unto SALVATION" (Rom. 1:16), and "with the mouth confession is made unto SALVATION" (Rom. 10:10). The "end," or objective, of our faith, is "SALVATION" (I Pet. 1:9), and we are admonished to "work out your own SALVATION with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

Salvation is nowhere mentioned incidentally by the Apostles! No

inspired man ever approached it with indifference or disinterest. It is always primary, central, and critical. This is the theme of the Apostles' doctrine! They were not social reformers, domestic problem solvers, or political revolutionists. They were appointed to proclaim "the way of SALVATION" (Acts 16:17) – to announce the destruction of Satan (Heb. 2:14), the spoiling of Satanic powers (Col. 2:14), and the remission of sins (Luke 24:47). Everything they had to say related to that theme – nothing was divorced from it!

Incidentally, with unwavering consistency, when the Apostles left the exposition of salvation to deal with other matters, it was due to the carnality of the church (Jude 3-25; 2 Pet. 2-3). Even in these instances, however, the Apostolic objective was to get the people back to a proper view of, and participation in, salvation – the proper emphasis!

THE HEART OF ALL OF SCRIPTURE

The salvation of man is the heartbeat of prophecy, the objective for which the Law made preparation, and the quest of all truly informed individuals. The book of Genesis is no more potent than when the coming "Seed" is foretold (Gen. 3:15), the blessing of "all families of the earth" (Gen. 12:1), and the "gathering of the people" unto the coming Shiloh (Gen. 49:10). The eye of faith perceived the coming Lamb of God in the paschal lambs slain the night Israel spoiled Egypt, and was brought out with a strong arm (Exod. 12). The priesthood of Leviticus shouted to man of the coming High Priest, Christ Jesus (Lev. 21:10). The promise in the book of Numbers of entrance into a promised land foreshadowed a "better land" pledged in Christ (Num. 13). The emphasis upon the written Law in Deuteronomy prepared men for the writing of God's law upon the heart (Deut. 5).

The anticipation of the coming salvation erupted in Job's longing for a "Daysman" (Job 9:33), the "Covert" of Isaiah (Isa. 32:2), and the "Sun of righteousness" of Malachi (Mal. 4:2). Zechariah wrote of the "Branch" of righteousness (Zech. 3:8), Haggai proclaimed the "Desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7), and Daniel declared a coming "Messiah" (Dan. 9:25). THE SALVATION OF MAN! The Word of God is nothing without that theme!

The Apostles took up the refrain in the light of the fullest revelation ever given to man. Their fundamental theme was the salvation of man! Personal deficiencies were a lament in view of this great salvation (Rom. 7). Immorality was firmly denounced as antithetical to the salvation of Christ (I Cor. 6:9-11). The world was pronounced "evil" in view of redemption (Gal. 1:4). The zealous and personal activity of men for God was identified with working out one's own "salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

Were it possible to remove the theme of salvation, the prophets and the Apostles would have nothing to say, no counsel to give, no hope to offer! There would be no need for Christ, the church, or religious enterprises of any sort! Salvation is never viewed as secondary, optional, or of no consequence. Salvation is central in the Scriptures. No message must be permitted that pushes salvation into the background, or shines the light of emphasis upon the realm from which God's salvation delivers us (Gal 1:4).

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Chapter 5

THE HARMONY OF SALVATION WITH GOD'S CHARACTER

God's Kingdom is a perfect expression of His nature and demonstration of His character. More of God and His rule is comprehended in the saving of man through Jesus Christ than in any previously-known Divine activity. The reconciliation of man to God through Jesus is not a mere accommodation to the need of man; it is an expression of the Person of God. He is what He represents Himself to be in the Gospel. It is not the language of hyperbole – no exaggeration – that we have in the good news of a “ransom for all” (I Tim. 2:6).

Think of the terms associated with salvation. There is “the grace of God” (I Pet. 5:12), and the “love of God” (Rom. 3:21). How the mind is stirred by the contemplation of the “longsuffering of God” (I Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15), and the “will of God” (Col. 4:12)! In the Gospel we have a proclamation of “the works of God” (Acts 2:11), “the power of God” (Rom 1:16), “the righteousness of God” (Rom 1:17), “the forbearance of God” (Rom 3:25), and “the gift of God” (Rom 6:23). There is “the purpose of God” (Rom 9:11), “the

goodness and severity of God” (Rom 11:22), “the gifts and calling of God” (Rom 11:29), “the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom 11:33), and “the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10).

A message is declared that makes known “the truth of God” (Rom 15:8), “the mercies of God” (Rom 12:1), “the kingdom of God” (Rom 14:17), “the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10), and “the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1). We are reminded of “the commandments of God” (1 Cor 7:19), “the promises of God” (2 Cor 1:20), “the gospel of God” (2 Cor 11:7), and “the life of God” (Eph 4:18). There is “the armor of God” (Eph 6:11), “the righteousness which is of God” (Phil 3:9), and “the high calling of God” (Phil 3:14).

How glorious it is to hear of “the peace of God” (Phil 4:7), the “acknowledgment of the mystery of God” (Col 2:2), “the operation of God” (Col 2:12), and “the increase of God” (Col 2:19). There is “the foundation of God” (2 Tim 2:19), “the kindness and love of God” (Tit 3:4), “the foreknowledge of God” (1 Pet 1:2), and “the witness of God” (1 John 5:9). Time would fail us to speak of “the name of the Lord” (Rom 10:13), and “the mind of the Lord” (Rom 11:34)

All of these marvelous facets of the great God of heaven converge in Christ Jesus. Further, they come together harmoniously, working together to produce a people who will at last be a shining diadem in His hand. No part of God’s essential character is absent in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The atoning work of Christ has not changed the character of God, or forced Him to subdue any aspect of His Person. The changes wrought through Christ are in men, not God. This ought to be apparent, for God cannot change (Mal 3:6).

It is God Himself that is reaching out for man in Christ Jesus. He does love humanity! That is why He has provided a thorough and effective salvation for them – something He did not do for the fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6). That love is individualized in Christ Jesus, and by means of the great salvation He has provided. Through Christ Jesus, His grace and favor are toward mankind!

God has maintained His integrity and righteousness in providing a ransom for His offspring! His longsuffering toward men is not merely a tolerant attitude – it is a revelation of His Person! The “abundant mercy” that is offered those who have “sinned and come short of the glory of God” is an expression of God’s heart! It is true – He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9), a statement that is made to believers.

In redemption we have a perfect expression of God’s nature. That is the reason for its absolute harmony with the nature of its Author. For it to be otherwise would require incongruence in the Lord Himself.

There are several conclusions that are dictated by these observations.

1. No man can question the applicability of the Gospel to himself without questioning the integrity of God.
2. God does not have to be begged in order for salvation to be

appropriated. Faith and obedience consistently obtain the promised benefit.

3. God is no more pleased than when His redemptive provision is received by faith.

4. God is not more displeased than when His provision of eternal life is rejected.

5. God Himself must be a prominent part of preaching.

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Chapter 6

MEETING DIVINE DEMANDS

The perfect harmony of salvation with God's Person is seen in the way it exactly meets Divine demands. Nothing that is necessary has been omitted. God has been completely "satisfied" with the price paid, and is joyful over the results of its acceptance. A salvation that did not address every facet of the Divine nature could not be consistent with it! So far as the basis for man's acceptance by God is concerned, nothing remains to be done! Here the genius of the Kingdom is perceived.

HE WILL NOT ACQUIT THE GUILTY

God has revealed an aspect of His nature that is not to be ignored. At Sinai, when "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood" with Moses, He "proclaimed the name of the Lord." He unveiled His Person to Moses, opened up what He was like, and exposed that meek man to the Divine nature. Incorporated in that revelation was this word, "and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex 34:5-7). Through Nahum the Lord revealed, "'The LORD is slow to anger,

and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." (Nahum 1:3). What a revelation is this! God cannot call guilt anything other than "guilt"! He cannot overlook it, ignore it, or treat it lightly. That is His nature! He cannot and will not simply forget one's involvement in sin, or treat the individual as though it was not there.

Until the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, sin remained. Though the guilt was often unacknowledged by men, under the convicting hand of the Law, the whole world remained "guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). No one was cleared of guilt, no conscience purged, no reconciliation accomplished! God could by no means "clear the guilty"!

In Christ, however, this aspect of God's nature was satisfied. Perfect harmoniousness! Man's guilt was laid upon Christ, in order that God's righteousness might be imputed to man. The guilt was not ignored, but dealt with in "wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8). As it is written, "For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). God did not "clear the guilty," but justified "the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5). Thus is salvation consistent with His Person!

HE WILL HAVE MERCY

God also revealed to Moses that He was "merciful and gracious . . . keeping mercy for thousands" (Exod. 34:6-7). In an even more exact statement of the case, the Lord said to Moses, "I will be

gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” (Ex 33:19). The point here is not an arbitrary or discriminatory conferring of mercy upon selected individuals. Rather, we have here an assertion that God’s desire always accompanies His mercy. It is never revealed as an expression of legality, but of Divine will. In other words, God’s mercy is an expression of His desire, not of mere pity.

If salvation is to be consistent with God’s Person, it must provide for the expression of mercy. In mercy the need of man and the desire of God meet together! Man’s condition requires Divine tenderness and consideration, without which he will surely perish! On the other hand, God desires to show compassion and lovingkindness – that is His nature! “But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved)” – Eph. 2:4-5. This mercy has been bestowed upon man without any compromise of the Lord’s character. He forfeited nothing in order to show mercy, but retained all of His essential attributes because of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Divine consistency!

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Chapter 7

THE LAMB OF GOD

That day when Abraham climbed mount Moriah with his only son, to offer him as a sacrifice unto God, his heart was heavy, but his faith was keen and perceptive. God had commanded him, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and . . . offer him . . . for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:2). As they made their way up that mountain, Isaac asked a heart-rending question. "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" In a grand assertion of faith, Abraham proclaimed the very nature of God. "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:7-8). Commenting on the faith of the patriarch, the Spirit informs us of how Abraham reasoned. "'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb 11:17-19).

Abraham's confession embraced more than he perceived in that age of twilight revelation. It is as though God spoke through him,

unable to conceal the intense Divine anticipation of a Savior for man! Indeed, in Christ Jesus God did “provide Himself a Lamb” – the ultimate Lamb! Jesus was “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). God selected Him, offered Him, and bore the unfathomable grief of loss and separation.

In the book of Revelation there is an underlying emphasis on God’s “Lamb” – His provision for Himself. Over and over the vision John received made reference to “the Lamb” – twenty-five of them!

1. He is seen “as a Lamb as it had been [newly] slain.” (5:6)
2. Lofty heavenly personalities “fell down before the Lamb.” (5:8)
3. It is said of Him, “Worthy is the Lamb.” (5:12)
4. Blessing, honor, glory, and power are ascribed to the Lamb. (5:13)
5. The Lamb is the One who opened the sealed book. (6:1)
6. The wrath that shall come upon the world is referred to as “the wrath of the Lamb.” (6:16)
7. A great multitude from all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongue stand before the Lamb. (7:9)
8. Salvation is ascribed to the Lamb. (7:10)
9. The saved are said to be those who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (7:14)
10. It is the Lamb that is depicted as leading the saved. (7:17)

11. The saved overcome the devil by the blood the Lamb. (12:11)
12. The book of life is described as “the book of life of the Lamb slain.” (13:8)
13. The Lamb is seen standing on mount Zion with 144,000, said to be those “redeemed from the earth,; and identified as “all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Rev 7:4). (14:1)
14. This multitude is said to be “the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (14:4)
15. The lost shall be punished “in the presence of the Lamb.” (14:10)
16. The redeemed sing “the song of Moses and of the Lamb.” (15:3)
17. The wicked of the earth “make war with the Lamb.” (17:14)
18. The bringing of the church and Jesus together is described as “:the marriage of the Lamb.” (19:7)
19. The feast of celebration is called “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (19:9)
20. The glorified church is called “the Lamb’s wife.” (21:9)
21. The twelve apostles are said to be “the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (21:14)
22. The Temple John saw is described in these words, “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” (21:22)
23. “The lamb is the light” of the eternal city. (21:23)
24. The book of life is again described as “the Lamb’s book of life.” (21:27)
25. The heavenly throne is said to be “the throne of God and of the

Lamb.” (21:1,3)

That “Lamb” so completely fulfilled the requirements of God, that those who embrace the Lamb, are given power to overcome the world! God provided Himself a Lamb in order that all of His attributes might remain intact. They now work together for the benefit of fallen man! Wonderful congruence!

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 8

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

When man sinned, death enveloped him. As it is written, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). That death resulted in man being cut off from His God. Adam and Eve died the day they sinned, in that they were separated from the Living God. "Dead in trespasses and sins," is on the spiritual tombstone of fallen humanity (Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13).

At the very threshold of human history, God demonstrated that the taking of innocent life was required for the sustaining of the life of sinful man. Before driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden, God made "coats of skin, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21-24). Every time those "coats" were considered by the guilty pair, recollection was stirred of an innocent victim suffering death for their transgression!

Later, the second son of the created couple, Abel, "brought of the firstlings of his flocks and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had

respect unto Abel and to his offering” (Gen. 4:4). Once again, an innocent living victim was offered to God in behalf of an alienated soul!

Under the first covenant, God developed the significance of these innocent victims. It was the “blood” that was emphasized. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11). Man, who had died toward God, could now approach unto God by being identified with guiltless life!

The blood of those beasts was called “the blood of the covenant.” Moses, it is written, “took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people” (Ex 24:8). The sprinkled blood symbolically conferred upon the people an acceptable relationship with God. Spiritual life was, so to speak, simulated in the old covenant. The slaying of an innocent victim, and the sprinkling of its blood typified the bestowal of that victim’s innocence upon the people. With Israel, it was but a shadow of reality, and not the reality itself. That is, it testified of a future provision. In Christ, we have the reality. It is written of the blood of those animals sacrificed under the Old Covenant, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:4).

We are “made the righteousness of God in Him,” proclaims the Apostle of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21). That transaction is accomplished by the “blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20) being “sprinkled” upon us. This “sprinkling” is spiritual in nature, and results in an awareness or conviction of Christ’s righteousness. Before Jesus returned to heaven, He told His disciples that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to carry on the

heavenly ministry. The Spirit would, among other things, convince the world of righteousness, because Christ went to His Father (John 16:8-10). The persuasion of Christ's absolute sinlessness before God gives personal reality to the acceptance of His sacrifice by God – that is, the individual is persuaded of the fact of Christ being the Righteous One (1 John 2:1), and consequently trusts implicitly in Him, doing whatever He says.

Those possessed of this conviction “know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Pet. 1:19). Our acceptance by God is based upon the merit of Another! That is the significance of the “blood of the covenant.”

The evening of our Lord's betrayal, He instituted a memorial without parallel. It was designed to provide man's memory with the very truth we have been considering – that God approves of us because of the sacrifice of His Son. As he took the cup that night, He said, “Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:27-28). It was the voluntary forfeiture of His life on our behalf that made the covenant blessing possible.

The point to be seen here is that Divine demands were met by “the blood of the new testament.” Guilt was addressed effectually, thus enabling God to bless man as He desired to do. Every aspect of salvation fully comports with the nature and character of God.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 9

GOD IS PLEASED

Integral to the will of God is His satisfaction, or good pleasure. He cannot confer a blessing against His will, or in a state of displeasure. The curse is consistently associated with the Lord's dissatisfaction. Onan, son of Judah through "a daughter of a certain Canaanite," was slain because he "displeased the Lord" (Gen. 38:10). The murmuring Israelites so displeased God that He sent a fire "among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp" (Num. 11:1). Other plagues and curses were said to have occurred because God was "displeased" (2 Sam. 11:27; I Chron. 21:7; Zech. 1:2). Blessings cannot be conferred while God is not pleased!

Unwilling to let man go, God dealt with His own displeasure in the saving of man. He will not ignore the fact that man has sinned! He cannot simply clear him of guilt with an act of sovereign will. He cannot be pleased with man while man walks contrary to His law. Inherent in God's nature are certain reactions to sin and righteousness, to repentance and impenitence, to tenderheartedness and hardheartedness.

Here, the wisdom of our God bursts forth! Because He loved the world, and desired to do good unto humanity, He sent His only begotten Son into the world. Jesus came on a mission to provide a just basis for man's acceptance.

While in this world, Jesus was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” As if that were not enough, “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” (Isa. 53:1-6). He assumed the responsibility for every vile thing ever committed by man! Every wicked thought, every act of rebellion, all disobedience – the responsibility for it all was laid upon Him – “in His body on the tree” (I Pet. 2:24).

Never before had sin in any form touched His Person. He was in every sense “separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). He had never in any way transgressed or contradicted the Law of God. Yet in His death, God “laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). As that iniquity touched His undefiled spirit, it constrained His Father to forsake Him (Matt. 27:46). The sufferings inflicted at the hands of men were nothing to compare with bearing our sins and being forsaken by God. He “made His soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10).

It is, however, the reaction of God to this experience that will determine whether or not it is valid. It is written – and God be praised for it – “Yet it PLEASED the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief . . . the PLEASURE of the Lord shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10).

Jesus was openly declared to be God's Son at the very beginning of His earthly ministry. "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased," confessed the Father at Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:17). He was further "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection confirmed Christ's Sonship, and proved the acceptance of His sacrifice. Jesus Himself experienced satisfaction in the fruit of His death (Isa. 53:11) – and so did His Father!

An exalted Christ proves the acceptance of the atonement! His obedience "unto death" became the ground for God to highly exalt Him, and give Him "a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:8-9).

This is the truth depicted by the Apostles' doctrine concerning Christ's entrance into heaven. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). It was God who accepted the atonement! The redemption price was paid to God Himself – and it has been accepted! Thus God blesses man with salvation in perfect agreement with His nature. Blessedness comes from His good pleasure!

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD

In Scripture, God is called "blessed" – both times following the entrance of "the Man Christ Jesus" into heaven (I Tim. 2:5).

"According to the glorious gospel of THE BLESSED GOD . . ." (I Tim. 1:11).

The term "blessed," as used in this text, denotes intelligent, or rational, happiness and joy. It is the term used in the beatitudes – a word depicting a beneficial condition that is discerned and enjoyed. From the subjective point of view the word also carries the ideas of satisfaction, delight, and pleasure. Such is the case with Jehovah as regards the death of Christ.

No other God is noted for being "blessed," joyful, or satisfied. The idols that have been made to other gods reflect the total absence of joy, satisfaction, or gratification. Most of them are gruesome in appearance, reflecting anger and malice. In fact, these concepts are not associated with the gods of man's making. It can be said of no other God, "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He

will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in his love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph 3:17). In this matter, "the true God" (John 17:3; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 John 5:20) stands apart from all other proclaimed Deities. You might say that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 1:3) is the only happy, jubilant, and satisfied God.

This is not a giddy or irrational joy, like that found in man. It is not a delight or good pleasure that is found in iniquity, or even in the death of the wicked. God Himself says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezek 33:11).

Holy men of old spoke of the benefits that are realized by those in whom the Lord takes delight. Moses told the Israelites as they were wandering in the wilderness, "If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Num 14:8).

Now our text speaks of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." A "glorious Gospel" is one in which God Himself can be seen. It is a message that exposes men to a satisfied and joyful God. This satisfaction has been caused by the vicarious work of Jesus Christ – particularly His atoning death.

By Christ's death Satan has been cast down (Heb. 2:14), the "handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us" has been taken "out of the way" (Col. 2:14), sin put away and condemned in the flesh of Christ (Heb. 9:26; Rom. 8:3), and a mighty deliverance from this present evil world accomplished (Gal. 1:4). Jesus has opened "a new and living way"

to God (Heb 10:20), “spoiled principalities and powers” (Col 2:15), “made peace” (Col 1:20), reconciled us to God (Eph 2:16), and broken down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles (Eph 2:14). God is joyous over the achievements of Jesus!

The Divine mission has been fulfilled – and that without any Divine compromise whatsoever! Now God, Who “delighteth in mercy” (Micah 7:18) can show it justly, freely, and without reservation! While He did not delight in “burnt offering” (Psa. 51:16), He does delight in Christ’s offering. It is written that “Christ also hath loved us, and hath give Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor” (Eph. 5:2). What the Law “could not do,” Christ Jesus has done, and magnificently so (Rom 8:2).

God is joyful about Jesus’ accomplishment! Jesus Himself is pleased with it! It remains for man to be pleased with it – for him to receive the glorious Gospel of the “blessed God.” How satisfied are you with Jesus? That satisfaction reflects the joy God has in you.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 11

THE PERFECT ADAPTABILITY TO MAN'S NEED

One of the major aspects of salvation's congruence is its perfect adaptability to man's need. To discern its value and lay hold of it, man must be aware of, and willingly confront his need – "need" as God defines it. Man's true awareness of his "need" will accord with and reflect heaven's perception of that need.

THE END OF THE LAW

The Law not only brought "the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); it removed any ground for boasting and confidence, rendering "all the world . . . guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). Its merciless finger pointed at man's transgression – willful transgression – and shouted "guilty" with an authority that could not be contradicted!

The entire thrust of the Law was against man's unregenerate nature. It was reflected in what is called "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" (Col. 2:14). Those "ordinances" were the

various laws pertaining to life, including all of what men call “the ceremonial law.” They told men how to sow their seed, sow their garments, establish the borders of their property, and deal with rebellious children. It particularly defined what was clean or unclean. There were laws concerning the handling of leprosy, mildew, and occasions when an owner’s ox gored a neighbor. Certain feasts were imposed upon Israel, together with the weekly Sabbath, land sabbaths, and the year of Jubilee. The proper handling of servants was covered, as well as infidelity and the defilement of a young woman. These were all laws that told the people how to carry out the Ten Commandments. Where they were violated, death was meted out “without mercy” (Heb 10:28).

The Law was delivered against the backdrop of man’s alienation, and addressed man as being distant from God. It did show man a way back to God – a valid way. Of the commandments it was said, “The man that does them shall live in them” (Lev. 18:5 ; Gal. 3:12; Rom. 10:5). While this was a legitimate offer – one which, if fulfilled, would have been honored by God – it was soon discovered that no man could perfectly fulfill the Law. The Law required more strength and moral stamina than fallen men possessed. Humanity was defiled within by an appetite for sin, and the law chafed against the soul of every person who was aware of it. The same words that pointed out what he should and should not do, also proclaimed that he had miserably failed on every count. Thus “the commandment which was ordained unto life” was “found to be unto death” (Rom. 3:10).

The Law made no provision for failure, offered no lasting remedy for sin, and opened no door of hope. One failure nullified the totality of the covenant. No mistakes were permitted, no failures, no forgetfulness! It was an exacting taskmaster, demanding perfection on all points, and permitting absolutely no deviation. It

was this condition that James described when he wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend on one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Oh, how man needed deliverance from the principle of justification by the works of the Law!

Salvation meets this need! Jesus took the handwriting of ordinances that was against us “out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Col. 2:14). You might say that a “how-to” written procedure was absolutely removed. The propensity of religious men to continue to write such codes reveals that they do not realize what Jesus has done, nor are they cognizant of the glory of the New Covenant. In a powerful proclamation of this aspect of Christ’s death, Paul elsewhere wrote, “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances . . .” (Eph. 2:15). An undeniable emphasis is perceived in this language: “took it out of the way” – “nailing it to the cross” – “abolished.” This., Paul states, was not the Ten Commandments themselves, but the principle of them that was “contained in ordinances.”

This is by no means intended to teach that men are now without law or Divine restraint. Christ has brought an end to the Law AS A MEANS to righteousness. As it is written, “For Christ is the end of the law FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS to every one that believes” (Rom. 10:4). The righteousness that makes a man acceptable to God is no longer the result of personal achievement. Whereas the Law spoke of the righteousness of works, the Gospel of salvation speaks of the “righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:11). It is also called “the righteousness which is of faith” (Rom. 9:30), and “the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9). Faith, not works, is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5; Gal. 3:6), or “imputed” for righteousness (Rom. 4:22). This is the sense in which Christ “is the end of the Law for righteousness. . . .”

When Christ “Himself purged our sins” (Heb. 1:3), He ended “the ministration of condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:9) for everyone that would receive that atonement. With sin removed, the Law had no more that it could do! Righteousness, as God counts it, is now a matter of receiving and acting upon the Gospel. Merit is, in a manner of speaking, attached to faith in Christ. “Whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins,” proclaimed Peter (Acts 10:43). Where there is remission of sins, righteousness has been realized.

“The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for unholy and profane . . .” (I Tim. 1:9). Those in Christ have been removed from this category of men, and thus the Law is no longer “for them” – i.e., its condemning role is no longer applicable to them. In this sense also, Christ has made an “end of the Law” – ending its resounding condemnation of all believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 12

THE PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE

Man, being made in the image of God, cannot escape the effect of his sin upon his own person. One of his chief resources – his mind – is defiled by his involvement in transgression. This defilement results in a fear that forbids him to voluntarily confront the Living God. This effect was seen in the sin of our parents, Adam and Eve. When they deliberately violated the Divine prohibition, they “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). They could not bear to face Him. By their own confession they were “afraid” (Gen. 3:10). This was the unavoidable result upon an intelligent being of involvement in sin.

One of the most graphic expressions of a defiled conscience is provided by David, following his grievous transgressions of adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11).

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and

cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me . . . Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice . . . Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation . . .” (Psa. 51:1-14).

This was the cry of a contaminated conscience.

A defiled conscience can only surface when God is considered. Apart from that consideration, deadness pervades the conscience of the transgressor. This condition was aptly described by Jeremiah the prophet. “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush . . .” (Jer. 6:15). An Apostolic representation of the same truth is found in Ephesians 4:19; “Who being PAST FEELING have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Paul also identified this condition when he wrote of latter-day apostates; “. . . having their CONSCIENCE SEARED with a hot iron . . .” (I Tim. 4:2). The salvation of God does not provide a glossing of this state.

There must be a recovery from this condition before the Gospel will exert its drawing power. Such a recovery was sought when Paul “reasoned” with Felix “of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.” When Felix was confronted with these realities, “he trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). The defilement of his conscience took place at that time, prohibiting Felix from making further inquiry into the Gospel. It is this condition that is confronted and solved by the “faith of the Gospel” (Phil. 2:27), or the faith that “comes” through the hearing of the Gospel (Rom 10:17).

Under the law, “worshippers” approached God by external ordinances. They were called “comers” because they meticulously obeyed the laws concerning religious service. Yet, their approach to God obtained no eternal advantage for them. Their only advantage pertained to their stewardship of God’s oracles (Rom. 3:1). The closer they came, so to speak, the more contaminated their conscience became. Their sacrifices, rather than placating their conscience, stirred up a “remembrance” of “sins every year” (Heb. 10:1-3) – and that was even on the high day of atonement.

The “ordinances of Divine service” (Heb. 9:1) of the first covenant only served to emphasize that man was not acceptable to God! To put it another way, “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4).

The “Gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13) effectively addresses this need. Those who “come unto God by” Christ (Heb. 7:25) experience a purging of the conscience – something that could not be achieved under the Law. Phrases denoting this spiritual experience are “make the comers thereunto perfect,” “worshippers once purged,” and “no more conscience of sins” (Heb. 10:1-2).

The proclamation of the Gospel is, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE from dead works to serve the Living God?” (Heb. 9:14). This is the cleansing of which John wrote; “. . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin . . . cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:7,9). This cleansing results in a spiritual awareness of the truth of the Gospel. Jesus really did “put away sin by the sacrifice

of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). The belief of that truth, coupled with conformity to the demands of the Gospel, frees the conscience from guilt.

In view of the Divinely-appointed objective for man, one of his greatest needs is that of a purged or cleansed conscience. This must not be a mere salving of the conscience, but a purifying that is the result of the apprehension of reality. The blood of Christ achieves this. This also eradicates the psychologically-termed experience of not forgiving yourself – an expression not found in Scripture. It is a rather clumsy way of saying “defiled conscience.”

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Chapter 13

THE RENEWAL OF THE MIND

When "judgment came upon all men unto condemnation" (Rom. 5:18), God repudiated the entire natural order. It was cursed so that no aspect of it could blend with the "world" or "ages" to come. The body, or tabernacle, of man is of that cursed order – together with the "will" and the "fleshly mind" (John 1:13; Col. 2:18).

For those in Christ, this situation has introduced a principle of deterioration, which is death in its process. Because of this, the things of God, if not given due attention, will actually fade from the mind. Also, strength of heart wanes even while engaged in heavenly enterprises. This is because spiritual life requires strenuous activity: standing under assault (Eph 6:13), keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:7), fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12), resisting the devil (James 4:7), running the race set before us (Heb 12:1-2, and pressing toward the mark (Phil 3:14). Thus did the Apostle speak of "weariness" (2 Cor. 11:27).

Without required renewal, it is quite possible for followers of Jesus

to become “wearied” and to “faint” in their “minds” (Heb. 12:3). This is a phenomenon that many would rather not talk about. However, it is not only a reality that must be addressed, but something that is dealt with in God’s great salvation.

Mere religious discipline cannot sustain the strength of the inner man! While we are in this world Divine strength is required to renew and refurbish our spirits. As in every aspect of salvation resources outside of our own natural inventory and aptitude are required.

It is written, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall RENEW their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31). The Apostles’ doctrine defines this work more precisely. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the RENEWING of your mind . . .” (Rom. 12:2). The association of salvation with this refurbishment is a matter of revelation: “. . . according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the RENEWING of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5, NKJV).

The continuity of this work, as well as its initiation, is also proclaimed. “And have put on the new man, which is RENEWED in knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:10); “. . . and be RENEWED in the spirit of your mind . . .” (Eph. 4:23).

The willing exposure of the mind to the truth of God is involved in the restoration of inner strength. That is the meaning of the words, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to

be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). Faith is the hand of the soul, so to speak, that takes hold of what the Word affirms.

This strength is only useful in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. While it meets a required need of man, it is impossible to exploit it, or to capitalize upon it for earthly advantage. Thus, not only is the need of man supplied, but the glory of God is protected. Wonderful harmony! Thus it is written, ““For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5). The factor by which renewal takes place is faith, and the means is the Word of God. Neglect the Word, and faith will wane, and the renewal of the mind – something that is imperative – will not take place.

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Chapter 14

SOMETHING TO EMBRACE

In God's Kingdom, relinquishing the love of this world is required in order to embrace the next one. Solemnly we are told, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15). Lest we forget, James reminds us, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4). Those with a propensity to being justified by works are told, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col 2:20). From the foundational point of view the doctrine is that Jesus "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal 1:4).

It is the business of every professing believer to know what these expressions concerning "the world" mean. Their tone tells us not to linger in coming to an understanding of them, for they bear directly upon how God views us.

Yet, to abstain from the forbidden is not an end of itself. In fact, it is of no value before God if not attended by laying hold on eternal things. It will do no good to imagine that we have let go of the world, if we have not laid hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12). If there is not a corresponding embrace of Christ Jesus and the life that He came to give (John 10:10), the individual really has not let go of this world. Self has not been crucified, and the person remains dead in trespasses and sins.

It was this activity that characterized the saints of old time. “These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13). They were not merely “strangers and pilgrims” by Divine decree, but by personal preference. Having seen the good promises of God by faith, they preferred them, consequently rejecting the things of this world, and assuming the role of wayfaring men. With unwavering consistency, those who have let go of this present evil world have seen the glories of the world to come. They have abandoned the priority of life in this world in order that they might obtain eternal life. It is the obtaining of that life that makes them unique.

Those who “seek first the Kingdom of God,” while they are in a strange land, are fully justified in their radically-strange behavior, as it is perceived by the worldly mind. They have “embraced” eternal things by faith, which is the “substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Their desire to have possessions is met in Christ Jesus. As it is written, “For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours” (I Cor. 3:21-22). These “things” are embraced by faith – by a conviction of their reality and a preference for them.

It is alarming that so much of the world is seen in the modern church. Too often it dresses like the world, thinks like the world, and talks like the world. The stench of the world is found in its music, its professed worship, and its meager spiritual diet. What makes the matter so alarming is that God will not allow a person who is firmly holding to this world and its manners to participate in His great salvation. If Jesus gave Himself to deliver us from the world, remaining attached to it can in no way be justified.

If a person will let go of the world in order to take hold on eternal life, he will find that the rich things of God bring joy and satisfaction that cannot be equaled by any other posture. To me, one of, if not the chief, weaknesses of the modern church is its meager spiritual appetite. It simply is not hungry and thirsty for righteousness. This is because it is wedded to the world, and the world is its wedded name.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

"How shall we escape, if we neglect SO GREAT salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Heb 2:3)

Chapter 15

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Although Satan attempts to get man to live only for the present, the quest for the future is an integral part of true wisdom, and of salvation itself. Throughout history, the men who perceived this world correctly, hoped for the future. Although the ages prior to the salvation of Christ were marked by an absence of clarity concerning the future, men still hoped in the Lord – i.e. they relied upon God to answer the cry of their hearts.

“In Thee, O Lord, do I hope,” cried the Psalmist (Psa. 38:15). Although the full grounds for a justified hope for the future had not yet been revealed, Solomon declared that “the righteous hath hope in his death” (Prov. 14:32), and Jeremiah pronounced a blessing on “the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is” (Jer. 17:7). In the book of Hebrews the Spirit reminded us of people living before the coming of Christ who looked for a “better country, that is, an heavenly” (Heb 11:16), and “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” (Heb 11:10). Hope played a prominent part in the life of Job, who also lived prior to the writing of Scripture. When undergoing an

epochal trial he said, "'And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:26-27).

An optimistic anticipation of the future is a must for the man of God! "We are saved by hope," proclaims Paul (Rom. 8:24), underscoring the present benefits of it. The prevalence of this hope in God's purpose for man is seen in the Apostolic statement: "Ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). It was the desire of the Apostle that men's eyes be opened to this "hope" (Eph. 1:18) – that they might comprehend it and rejoice in it. The reason for this is quite obvious – hope is integral to salvation; to the purpose of God. Speaking of the Object of hope, the Scriptures speak of "The hope that is laid up" in heaven for the faithful (Col. 1:5).

This is not simply an optional benefit. Hope is the strongest incentive to be holy. As it is written, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And EVERY MAN that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).

This is called a "blessed hope" that is taught to us by the Holy Spirit, whom God has poured out abundantly upon us. As it is written, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in

this present world; LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). It is not possible to receive and respond to the grace of God without hope being kindled in the soul.

That hope anticipates the coming of the Lord, when all that is against us will be removed, and the salvation we have experienced will be brought to its intended perfection (1 Pet 1:5,13). Even when we eat "the Lord's supper," we "show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor 11:26).

Those in Christ are said to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2; 12:12). There is "one hope of your calling" (Eph 4:4) – a single conclusion in which the fulness of salvation will be realized, and we shall be ushered into the presence of the Lord. Objectively speaking, the thing for which we "hope" is not on earth. It is in heaven. As it is written, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col 1:5). In fact, it is "Christ in you" that constitutes "the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

This hope is indispensable, even being the means by which our minds are protected from the invasions of the wicked one. That is why the "helmet" we wear is called "the hope of salvation" (1 Thess 5:8; Eph 6:17).

It is of deep concern that so little these days is being said about the coming of the Lord, and the realization of the "hope of glory." Charlatans have spoken more of the coming of "antichrist" than that "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20). Posing themselves as

authorities on the end times, they tell the people of the amalgamation of earthly government, the battle of Armageddon, the beast and his mark, and the fear of being “left behind.” Then, after they have the people shaking with fear, they tell them not to worry, that the church will be raptured out of this world before the trouble all begins. They fail to remind the people that “hope” has to do with what and where we SHALL BE, not what is coming on the earth after the mythical “rapture” takes place. They do not tell the people that “we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2), and that we shall “ever” be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:16-17). They fail to accent the time when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev 21:4). They do not speak often enough about the time when “there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 22:3-5).

If it is true that we are “saved by hope,” then it is time to be elucidating that hope, and declaring “the hope of His calling” – which is WHY the Lord has called us. Tell the people of the time when the Lord will “bruise Satan” under our feet (Rom 16:20), and “praise” those who have been faithful to their calling (1 Cor 4:5). The future is bright for those who have left all to follow Jesus, and they need to hear about it. There is no salvation without it! The spiritually informed man realizes his need for this hope, and rejoices in its possession.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

"How shall we escape, if we neglect SO GREAT salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Heb 2:3)

Chapter 16

AN INTERCESSOR IN HEAVEN

Prior to the accomplishment of redemption, righteous men longed for a representative in heaven. Job lamented, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay His hand upon us both" (Job 9:33). A "daysman" would represent God to man, and man to God. Such an individual was as necessary to God as he was to man. He would clarify God's message to man, and represent man favorably to God.

In a limited sense, Moses was such an individual. He was the "mediator" in whose hand the Law was ordained by angels (Gal. 3:19). He brought God's word to the people, and presented the people to God. He even stood between them and God, interceding for the people, and pleading with the Lord to spare them – which He did, for a season (Ex 32:10-14). But Moses by no means fulfilled the need of mankind in this area. Men needed more than temporal deliverance, and short-termed mercies.

Isaiah prophesied of a Messiah that would make "intercession for

the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12). He also proclaimed that, apart from the coming Savior, “there was no man . . . no intercessor” (Isa. 59:16). Here was something that was needed if man was to be made acceptable to his God.

As we have already mentioned, the intercession of Christ is integral to salvation. “Wherefore He is able also to SAVE THEM to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). In an inspired overview of the implementation of salvation, Paul wrote, “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also makes intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).

The intercession of Christ does not consist of fervent pleas for God to ignore His own holiness in the acceptance of man. Rather, it is accomplished by His APPEARANCE before His Father in our behalf. From that position of Divine favor, He pleads the efficacy of His sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:12-14). His very presence constrains God to anticipate the reception of “His brethren (Heb. 2:17), whom Jesus Himself is “bringing” to glory (Heb 2:10).

It is sad to acknowledge that much theology of our day addresses the salvation of men as though there was really no required Intercessor to enable them to run the race, finish the course, and stand at last at the judgment with confidence and joy. The intercessory ministry of Jesus is involved us coming to, and thanking God (Rom 1:8). It is why our faith justifies us, giving us peace with God THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). It accounts for us having access to into the grace wherein we stand (Rom 5:2). The gift of eternal is “through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 6:23). It is because of Jesus that we are “washed,”

“sanctified,” and “justified” by the Spirit of God (1 Cor 6:11). God gives us the victory “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:57). The person who is saved is “an heir of God through Jesus Christ” (Gal 4:7). Intercession is an integral part of Christ’s High Priesthood (Heb 4:15).

Jesus is able to “save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). The phrase “save them to the uttermost” is an intriguing one. Other versions read, “save them forever” (NASB), “save completely” (NIV), “for all time to save,” NRSV and “completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity” (AMPLIFIED). And how is it that He is able to do this? It is because He “ever lives to make intercession for them!”

There is no such thing as a sure salvation that does not involve the current ministry of Jesus – the ministry of intercession. In a circumstance like this, it is foolish to think of salvation as something into which men are locked. Further, the intercession of Christ applies to those who are “coming” to God through Him – that is what the text unequivocally states. Although men may speculate on this matter, I do not think there is a man alive who can substantiate that Jesus is bringing people to glory whose minds are fixed upon the earth, who live for self, and who do not avail themselves of the fellowship with Christ into which we are called (1 Cor 1:9). A people who are stumbling about like a drunken man in the courts of the Lord cannot be said to be coming to God. If that assessment is true, they are also a people for whom Jesus is not said to be interceding. Now, that is something to think about!

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 17

THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor 13:14, NKJV)

Until the appearance of "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13), Divine fellowship can only be enjoyed by faith. Christ dwells in the heart "by faith" (Eph. 3:17) – i.e. only to the degree that we discern and appropriate the significance of His Person and work.

We are not, however, warranted in supposing that this indwelling by faith is not real. It is real! It is a genuine spiritual experience – but it is not sensually perceived or complete in its scope. It is accomplished within our spirit, which constitutes one third – and the determinative – part of our being. Man is comprised of "spirit and soul and body" (I Thess. 5:23) – in that order of priority! The soul, or physical life, of man, together with his body, is not immediately affected by salvation. Both of them tend away from the things of God, and must be brought under subjection. The "soul and the body" constitute the lower part of our nature, and have

been irrevocably tainted with sin. They shall be redeemed at the resurrection of the dead. Our tenure in the “present evil world,” among other things, is to be devoted to making our spirits compatible with the coming resurrection body. In a salient remark about the resurrection body, Paul wrote, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this [body] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked . . . Now he that HATH WROUGHT US FOR THE SELFSAME THING IS GOD, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." (2 Cor 5:2-5).

The Holy Spirit of God is given to those who are in Christ – to them that “obey Him” (Acts 5:32; I John 3:24; 4:13). The Spirit leads men in the work of subduing of the flesh. “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:14). This leadership is accomplished through the Word of God, which is the Spirit’s sword (Eph. 6:17). It is also performed from within the believer, where the Holy Spirit’s enablement is found (Eph. 3:16). Without the Word of God, the Spirit’s leading would be unintelligible, and consequently ineffectual for those made in God’s image. Without being performed from within, there would be no awareness of it or participation in it.

The union of man’s spirit with God’s Holy Spirit is not theoretical but actual. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” proclaims the Word (I Cor. 6:17). With that union comes a oneness of purpose. There can be no Divine fellowship apart from a common objective. That commonness consists of man participating in God’s objective, not God aiding man in his mundane and subjective objectives.

This is the “fellowship of the Spirit” (Phil 2:1) and “the communion of the Holy Ghost” (2 Cor. 13:14) of which the Apostles wrote. Jesus alluded to this spiritual unity in His words to the Apostles; “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). This is accomplished by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as perceived in the words, “In Whom [Jesus] ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

Any approach to religion that does not consent to, and participate in, the communion of the Holy Spirit is skewed in the wrong direction. Such an approach does not point one toward heaven, nor make one more suitable to dwell forever with the Lord.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 18

THE HARMONY OF SALVATION WITH GOD'S REVEALED OBJECTIVES

Objectively, God's declared undertaking in Christ is to bring "many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10). Subjectively, it is to conform the ones He has justified to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29).

Reconciliation – the removal of enmity and the agreement of the reconciled ones – is required for the realization of that purpose. Those who are at a variance with God cannot walk with Him – in this life or the one to come! Two cannot walk together except they be agreed – and this is particularly true of God and man (Amos 3:3). Those outside of Christ are His "enemies" (Rom 5:10), the wrath of God is upon them (John 3:36), and they have "no hope," and are "without God in the world" (Eph 2:12).

Reconciliation is an integral part of salvation! As it is written, "God, who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ . . . God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself . . ." (2 Cor. 5:18-19). "And that He might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile]

unto God . . .” (Eph. 2:16). “And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death . . .” (Col. 1:21-22).

The Gospel is the proclamation of this accomplishment. If believed, it will produce an experiential reconciliation within man. He will begin to see things the way God sees them – Jesus, sin, the world, and the inheritance laid up in heaven, will be perceived in truth. This is what is involved in man being reconciled by God and to God, and how sorely the perception of it is needed!

Such received reconciliation may also be perceived as the writing of the law upon the heart (Heb. 8:10-13), the result of which is agreement with God – something that is imperative if one is to be saved, for God will not walk with someone who is in fundamental disagreement with Him (Amos 3:3).

Salvation restores what was lost in Eden – the effective discernment of good and evil. It is said of those who avail themselves of the “things that accompany salvation” (Heb. 6:9): that they, “by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). It is not their involvement in iniquity that exercises their “senses,” as it did in Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit, but their apprehension of the truth. Iniquity is then perceived by way of contrast with righteousness. It appears evil by way of contrast with the “good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-3; Eph. 5:10).

God has revealed His objective, and it is a marvelous one: "Having

made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph 1:9-10). The means through which this marvelous objective is being realized is God's "great salvation" (Heb 2:3) – a salvation that delivers men from the power of darkness, and translates them into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col 1:13). It is a salvation that delivers men from this present evil world, and the devil who is its god (Gal 1:4; 2 Cor 4:4). This is a salvation that enables those gazing at the glory of the Lord to be changed from one increasing stage of glory to another by the Spirit of God (2 Cor 3:18). The Holy Spirit is put into the hearts of such people by God Himself, giving them an innate sense of the fact that God is their Father (Gal 4:6). Salvation puts man in a race that terminates in glory, and gives him the ability to willingly and aggressively run that race with patience while looking unto Jesus (Heb 12:1-2).

Everything about the salvation of God is in agreement with His revealed purpose or objective. However, a weak and vacillating church, a people who are stumbling in the dark, and constantly overcome by sin, are not at all in harmony with God or His purpose. They are not what salvation produces! There really is no such thing as a person who is reconciled to God, yet prefers sin; or a person who has been sanctified, yet is at home in this present evil world; or a person who knows the Lord, yet is ignorant of His ways; or a person who is in the light, yet draws back from it.

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Chapter 19

RESISTING THE DEVIL

“ . . . Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7).
““Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet 5:8-9).

In the beginning, Satan was not resisted. The fall of man occurred because of a failure to draw back from that early confrontation of the adversary. From that time until now, the failure of men in general to resist the devil is seen in this single statement, “. . . the devil, which deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

If not resisted, the Devil will lead men into Hell! It is absolutely necessary that those in Christ be not “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). This particularly applies to those who have been delivered from the powers of darkness (Col 1:13), and brought into the liberty that is in Christ Jesus (Gal 5:1). While in this world, no one is so close to God, or so protected by God, that they do not need to “resist the devil.” The religious landscape is cluttered with the carcasses of those who did not take this word seriously: “Resist

the devil!”

To “resist” means to refuse to do what Satan tempts them to do. That posits that the people perceive his intent, and ignore his enticements. Such resistance requires strength of soul, clearness of vision, and firmness of persuasion.

Salvation wonderfully meets this need. Those who live by faith have this promise, “Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). If Satan does not flee, he has not been resisted – it is really just that simple. Professing believers may concoct reasons why they were overcome by the devil. They may blame it on someone else – like both Adam and Eve did in the beginning (Gen 3:12-13). But the truth of the matter is that such souls have not resisted the devil – even though the Lord told them to do so.

Boiled down to its essence, resisting the devil is not yielding to temptation. It is being able to say “NO!” to “ungodliness and worldly lusts.” If there is some poor soul who imagines this is not possible, or that it lies beyond the perimeter of their ability, let them ponder the word of the Lord on this matter: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:11-13, NIV). The grace of God is an effective teacher – just as effective as it is in erasing the guilt of sin. As if that was not sufficient, believers are also given access to the “throne of all grace,” so that if they will come to that throne at the time of temptation, the High Priest will give them mercy and grace to do what He has commanded – “Resist the devil” (Heb 4:15-16), or say “No!” to his enticements.

The resistance of Satan is actually accomplished indirectly – not by an immediate confrontation of the Tempter. Warning us of the ferocity of our opponent, Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour; WHOM RESIST, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH . . .” (I Pet. 5:8-9). Men may be casual about the matter of sin, but Satan is not.

What of the person who is NOT “steadfast in the faith” – an individual who is not strong in the faith, but vacillates morally and spiritually? That person will not be able to resist the devil, but the devil will run roughshod over him.

Steadfastness in the faith provides such a clarity of spiritual vision that Satan’s enticements are neutralized, losing their attractiveness and power. When our “affection” is set on “things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2), we, like our Lord, learn to “choose the good and refuse the evil” (Isa. 7:15-16; Heb 5:14). Such discernment cannot be learned by rote or mere catechism. While such procedures may enable us to begin in this area, it is our experiential fellowship in the truth that frustrates the tempter!

The religious leader who does not inform the people of the nature of the enemy and the power of faith has, in fact, handed the people over to the devil.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

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Chapter 20

REIGNING IN LIFE

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness SHALL REIGN IN LIFE by one, Jesus Christ)." (Rom 5:17)

Man was made to have dominion – that is why God created him! It is written, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and LET THEM HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen 1:26).

Because of this, there is an underlying desire in man to rule. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16) are nothing more than a Satanic appeal to this desire. Unlike the Divine objective for man, these appeals are centered in self. It is the lust of one's own flesh and eyes that is the sin, as well as the pride, or sinful exaltation, of personal and unregenerate life.

By nature, man wants to govern his own life, and often, the lives of others as well. All crime is the expression of this propensity.

Our text develops this matter in a characteristically godly manner that is in perfect harmony with the character of God. It describes how man is reigned over apart from Christ, and how he does, in fact, himself reign through Christ. The cause for both reigns is traced to a single individual. The two men involved in these reigns are Adam and Jesus.

Of Adam it is written, “through the offence of one many be dead . . . the judgment was by one unto condemnation . . . by one man’s offense death reigned by one . . . by the offense of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation . . . by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom 5:15-19).

Of Jesus it is written, “the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, hath abounded to many . . . the free gift is of many offences unto justification . . . they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ . . . by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life . . . by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:15-19).

If what is said about Adam is true, then what is said concerning Jesus is also true. If the impact of Adam’s transgression was found in all of his progeny, as is stated, then the impact of Christ’s righteousness will be found in all of his progeny. It is not possible to find an offspring of Adam in whom the described effects are not found. Likewise, it is not possible to find an offspring of

Jesus who lacks the effects that are said to have been caused by Him. Everything hinges on the connection of the individual with either Adam or Christ. Furthermore, one's principal connection is single – Adam or Christ. As God reckons things, no one can be in both genealogies at the same time. Fundamentally speaking, every person is either in the lineage of Adam or of Christ. Furthermore, the lineage in which they are found will be characterized by the effects clearly stated in Romans 5:15-19.

In Christ there is a legitimate provision for man's reign. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). This reign begins now, as, by faith in Christ, men subdue the tendencies resident in their mortal bodies. It will be consummated in the world to come, when death shall have been swallowed up of life.

What does it mean to "reign in life?" – more specifically, to "reign in life by One, Jesus Christ"? This reign is described in the sixth chapter of Romans: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom 6:12). The reign, then, is over one's own body – described as a "vile body" (Phil 3:20-21), "the body of this death" (Rom 7:24). Being "in the body" subjects us to the suffering of adversity (Heb 13:3). Further, while we are in this "body," we are said to be "absent from the Lord" (2 Cor 5:6). How can such conditions be neutralized, so that we are no longer captivated as we were when we were "without Christ?"

Those who have been raised with Christ to "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4), have been made superior to their bodies. They no longer are irrevocably compelled to obey its lusts (Rom 6:12).

Grace effectively teaches them to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Tit 2:11-12). The part of them that is united with Jesus “cannot sin” (1 John 3:9), and the wicked one “toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18). If a person will “walk in the Spirit,” it is guaranteed that he “shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). That is what it means to “reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.”

I realize that this circumstance does not at all describe the status of the modern church. That failure, however, is not owing to any falsity in the doctrine on the subject. It rather indicates that what calls itself the church, is not the church at all. How can the church, which is Christ’s body” (Eph 1:22-23; 5:23; Col 1:18), lack the effects of His obedience, while Adam’s progeny all bear the effects of his disobedience?

Also, for the saint of God, the future is bright with the prospect of reigning. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him . . .” (2 Tim. 2:12), proclaims the Apostle. This is the time when we shall “judge the world” and “angels” (I Cor. 6:2-3). Jesus promises, “To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21).

Admittedly, these promises soar beyond the sphere of current experience of many professing Christians. But they are true, and they shall come to pass for those that keep the faith. The desire for rule and authority is met in Christ – now, by dominion over our bodies and their proclivity to sin. In the world to come its experience will not have the present limitations of competing desires – desires that are to be subdued in our present reign.

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

"How shall we escape, if we neglect SO GREAT salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Heb 2:3)

Chapter 21

THE REQUIREMENT OF A UNIVERSAL OFFER

"Who gave himself a ransom FOR ALL, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim 2:6; 2 Cor 5:14; Heb 10:10)

Salvation's congruity requires that it be offered – legitimately offered – to all men. First, salvation is portrayed as being for the "world." "For God so loved the world . . ." (John 3:16). "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 4:42; I John 4:14). And, Jesus is called the "bread of God" which "gives life to the world" (John 6:33). He also declared Himself to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5).

Whoever is included in the phrase "the world" is included in salvation's provision. We are told that the Devil "deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12:9), and that "the whole world lies in wickedness" (or, under the dominion of the wicked one (I John 5:19). **THE PERIMETER OF DECEPTION IS THE SAME AS THAT OF SALVATION!** Salvation reaches as far as the effects of

wickedness! The potential of the blessing can be no less broad than the extent of the curse. John wrote, “And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2).

The point is that it was not merely a portion of the world that was deceived by Satan, but all of it. The view that Christ died for only part of those deceived ones, as the phrase “limited atonement” teaches, belies John’s declaration that His death propitiated the sins of the “whole world.” Thus the doctrine that salvation is available to only a part of the deceived world of men is false. That, in the end, the effective realization of salvation will only be experienced by a portion of the human race cannot be denied. However, that fact does not imply limits to the provision of salvation. Even then, the Scriptures indicate that the number of the saved will not be small, either in totality or proportionately – which presumes an enormous harvest at some point in time (Rev 7:9; 19:6; Isa 54:1-3). Further, if it is true that Scriptures indicate those dying in infancy will be saved – and if a third part of the race has, in fact, perished in infancy, as record-keepers allege, then a decided advantage is given to the count of the saved. One might conclude that infants, who have not committed transgression, do not need a Savior. But that is not true, for they are born with a propensity to sin (Psa 51:5; Rom 5:19), and they have a mortal body, which must be raised from the dead. The fact that infants die is proof enough that there is some sense in which they are linked to sin, which confirms their identity with Adam (Rom 5:15-19). Christ’s death propitiated for the human condition for every person who came from Adam. That is the teaching of Scripture. Gaining the advantage of that Propitiation is another matter.

ALL HAVE SINNED

Not only were all men deceived by Satan, all men responded to the deception. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” asserts the Spirit (Rom. 3:23). In further confirmation of this, the Apostle credits the universality of death to the universality of sin; “. . . and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

The Apostolic interpretation of Christ’s death was this; “Christ came into the world to save “sinners” (I Tim. 1:15). He Himself said that he came to call “sinners” to repentance (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

Christ entered the world bearing the likeness of those He came to save (Heb. 14-18). Over sixty-five times, God’s Word refers to Jesus Christ as “the Son of man.” Even after He had been exalted into heaven, this term was applied to Him by Stephen as he was about to enter into the Divine presence (Acts 7:56). It was “the Son of man” that had “power on earth” (Mark 2:10), and “the Son of man” that was betrayed into the hands of men (Matt. 17:22). In that capacity He was “delivered up” (Luke 24:7), and raised from the dead (Mark 9:9). His presentation to the world as the Divine remedy for sin is one of “the Son of man” being “lifted up” (John 3:13-14; 12:32-34).

The salvation of God must, in its provisionary aspect, be for all men, or it can be for no man. If provision has not been made for every man, then no man can be assured of its applicability to himself! The need applies to all men, and so does the salvation!

A MACRO-VIEW OF GOD'S SALVATION

"How shall we escape, if we neglect SO GREAT salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Heb 2:3)

Chapter 22

CONCLUSION TO SERIES

WHOSOEVER WILL

The closing verses of God's revelation to men sounds a universal note that cannot be denied. Wherever there is a hungry heart, a searching spirit, or a thirsting soul, Divine encouragement is provided. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely [without restraint or limitation]" (Rev. 22:17).

The Holy Spirit gives the summons through the Gospel. Everywhere it is preached in truth, a universal invitation is given. No one can possibly conclude that he is exempted! "COME"! The invitation is not to some men – it is to all men! The Holy Spirit knows of no man not included in the summons! The salvation has been "prepared before the face of ALL people" (Luke 2:31). Cursed be the one that preaches any other kind of Gospel (Gal. 1:8-9)!

The bride – Christ’s church – also says “COME”! This is not a limited invitation, but one to all men! All men are perceived as sinners – all men are urged to come and be reconciled to God! The provision of salvation extends as far as the moral boundary of “sinners.”

Anywhere there is a thirsty soul – one that has realized the emptiness of the world, and its inability to satisfy the need of God’s offspring – there is a positive note of hope. “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely.” As those words are heard, they seem to echo the words of our Lord as He stood and cried on that great day of the feast; “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7:37).

The heart of God has always pulsed with a desire for every man to come to Him (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9). The prophets proclaimed this desire. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa 45:22). “Ho every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price . . . incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live” (Isa. 55:1-3).

It is not to be denied there are many voices in the world calling for the allegiance of man. But above the din of those discordant notes, there sounds a clarion call from heaven! It is to all men everywhere, and declares a salvation for the whole world – a consistent salvation that meets the real need of every man! “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev 22:17). That is the initial

qualification – that men desire, or want, what God announces through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If any man is lost, it will not be because no provision was made for him to be saved? It will not be owing to the ineffectiveness of Christ's death and resurrection? It will not be because heaven forbade the Gospel to be preached to him. It will not be owing to the Gospel itself announcing his exclusion from its provisions. It will only be because he did not want the redemption that is in Christ Jesus – he did not thirst for it, yearn for it, and press in to obtain it.