

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #24

COMMENTARY ON: 5:14-17

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

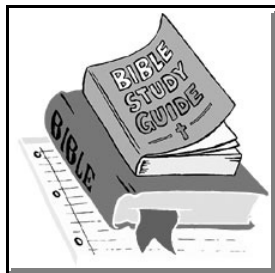
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

PROPER CONSTRAINT

The newness of life includes powerful and compelling reasons to live and work for the Lord. It is ever true that it is not possible to either live unto the Lord, or labor together with Him, without compelling reasons. Those reasons must be sound, and in perfect harmony with both the nature and purpose of God. They must also be based upon fact, or ultimate reality, and not upon mere human imagination or desire. Our text will introduce us to this refreshing and effective manner of thinking. It will confirm that there are excellent reasons for living unto the Lord.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"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 we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 24



TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE= Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE= Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

PROPER CONSTRAINT

“ 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor 5:14-17)

INTRODUCTION

Paul continues to elaborate on his own personal motives – motives that moved him to declare the Gospel faithfully, plainly, and with great faith and conviction. Such a manner of proclamation cannot be taught by men. It is the result spiritual insight and “*the full assurance of faith*” (Heb 10:22). When preaching the Gospel is approached as a mere marketing activity, or accompanied with techniques that men employ to peddle their goods for profit, something is wrong. When it comes to delivering the

message, the church has never had a need for experts in worldly ways. **The world does not suddenly become our friend when it comes to declaring God's Word.**

It is quite true that “*the earth helped the woman*” (Rev 12:16). However, that “*help*” was inadvertent. The church did not seek it, and “*the earth*” did not offer it. That circumstance was the evidence of Divine rule, not the voluntary assistance of the world from which we

have been delivered.

The apostle has already divorced himself, and those who labored with him, from base motives and methods, freely declaring what was NOT in their message or efforts.

☛ **THEIR MANNER OF LIFE WAS NOT WITH FLESHLY WISDOM.** “*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not*

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

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with fleshly wisdom . . . we have had our conversation in the world” (1:12).

- ☛ **THEIR ESSENTIAL MESSAGE WAS NOT MIXED WITH YES AND NO.** *“Our word toward you was not yea and nay . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea” (1:18).*
- ☛ **THEY DID NOT SEEK TO DOMINATE PEOPLES’ FAITH.** *“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand” (1:24).*
- ☛ **PAUL WAS NOT MINISTERING A CODE OF CONDUCT.** He was a minister, *“not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life” (3:6).*
- ☛ **ALL FORMS OF DISHONESTY WERE RENOUNCED.** *“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s*

conscience in the sight of God” (4:2).

- ☛ **THEY DID NOT CORRUPT THE WORD OF GOD, ADAPTING IT TO HUMAN OBJECTIVES.** *“We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God,” “peddling the word of God” ^{NASB} (2:17).*
- ☛ **THEY THEMSELVES WERE NOT THE SUBJECTS OF THEIR MESSAGE.** *“We preach not ourselves” (4:5).*

As you can see, considerable corruption crept into the church from the very first. There is something about “religion” that calls out to the charlatan and the carnally minded opportunist. Among other things, this is because men tend to associate religion with intellectual simplicity and dogmatism. When the professed church seems to justify these erroneous conclusions, bigots and opportunists flock to it like buzzards to a dead carcass.

Paul is in the midst of confirming ¹ the true nature the Gospel, ² the New Covenant, and ³ life in Christ Jesus. **He is showing that there is nothing about things associated with Christ that are in any way of this world.**

- ☛ The Gospel itself is a pure message, centering a single Person, and through which God Himself works. It is *“the glorious gospel of Christ” (4:4).*
- ☛ The New Covenant is *“of the Spirit,”* and ministers both life and righteousness (3:6-9). It is a ministration in which there is *“liberty”* and effective *“change”* and advancement (3:17-18).
- ☛ Life in Christ Jesus involves illumination (4:6), transformation

(3:18), excellent power (4:7), the experience of Christ’s dying (4:10) and Christ’s life as well (4:11).

Paul has also established that true spiritual life is evidenced by focusing on the things that are *“not seen,”* rather than those that *“are seen.”* This indispensable concentration causes the most grievous afflictions to be perceived as *“light”* and *“momentary”* (4:17-18). That very same focus produces a certain sustaining knowledge within the believer. Even though the *“outward man”* is perishing, the person living by faith is keenly aware of the increasing strength that is being experienced by the *“inward man.”* **Through both teaching and insight, the reason for regeneration is seen to be the appointed putting on of immortality (5:1-5).** Further, an intense preference is formed and maintained for what is to come, in contrast to our present experience. Walking by faith causes a strong desire to be *“absent from the body”* and *“present with the Lord.”*

It is imperative that believers be challenged to think in this manner. The *“flood”* that Satan has spewed out against the body of Christ (Rev 12:15-16) consists largely of corrupt words, erroneous concepts, and false doctrines. **A foreign manner of thinking is being promoted among professing believers that emphasizes what men do and de-emphasizes what the Lord does.** It allows for a neglect of Scripture, the advance of novices, and the retirement of the mature. It ranks education too highly, and shoves faith to the bottom of the list of criteria. Even though God has chosen to save men through preaching (1 Cor 1:21), praise is now being touted as preeminent. Even though we are *“saved by hope,”* in our day, **the emphasis is now being placed on what is seen** – which emphasis requires **no** hope (Rom 8:24-25).

A foreign manner of thinking is being promoted among professing believers that emphasizes what men do and de-emphasizes what the Lord does. It allows for a neglect of Scripture, the advance of novices

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For these, and many other, reasons, our text is especially critical. It allows us to adjust our thinking to be in harmony with *“the mind of Christ”* (1 Cor 2:16). **If heaven assesses thoughts and ways that are not in synch with those of God as being totally unacceptable, we must depart from**

all teaching and preaching that leaves us thinking they are in any way satisfactory. If ignorance alienated us from the life of God in the first place (Eph 4:18), spiritual life cannot possibly be promoted by its continuance. We must preach and teach the right thing with the correct emphasis. Our motives must be

pure in the sight of God. Our reasons for preaching must not be flawed, and our message must be pure. **Our perceptions of spiritual life must be accurate, and our understanding of what occurs in Christ cannot be wrong. It seems to me that this ought to be very apparent.**

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

^{5:14a} **For the love of Christ . . .** Other versions read, *“For Christ’s love,”*^{NIV} *“For it is the love of Christ,”*^{BBE} *“For the charity of Christ,”*^{DOUAY} and *“Whatever we do, it is because Christ’s love.”*^{NLT}

DEFINING THIS LOVE

Christ’s love for us is central to both sound doctrine and faith.

☛ *“Who shall separate us from **the love of Christ?** shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”* (Rom 8:35).

hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor” (Eph 5:2).

☛ *“Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church,** and gave himself for it”* (Eph 5:25).

☛ *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. **Unto Him that loved us,** and washed us from our sins in His own blood”* (Rev 1:5).

☛ *“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that **I have loved thee**”* (Rev 3:9).

☛ *“As many as **I love,** I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”* (Rev 3:19).

This magnanimous love has no compelling power until it is seen, or perceived. It is at that point – and only at that point – that it becomes a driving spiritual force within us.

I take this passage to refer to our love for Christ – a love that has flamed into being because of our perception of His love for us. Christ’s love for us has no constraining power unless it is seen, perceived, or comprehended. Too, that perception will **always** produce a strong and consistent love for Christ within us.

Confirmed In Scripture

Elsewhere the Spirit confirms that



This love can be taken to mean Christ’s love for us, or our love for Christ. A purely technical view of the verse does not clearly lend itself to only one of these views. We know that love, at its root, has to do with God loving us, not us loving God. As it is written, *“Herein is love, **not** that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10). **God’s love is the fountain from which valid human response springs.** I am going to affirm that it is not possible to love Christ **until** the love that moved God to send Him is perceived.

☛ *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of **the Son of God, who loved me,** and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20).

☛ *“And to know **the love of Christ,** which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”* (Eph 3:19).

☛ *“And walk in love, **as Christ also***

our love for the Lord is founded upon the comprehension of His love for us. Our love, by this very nature, is a response. *"We love Him, because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).

Again, the comprehension of this unfathomable love produces a unique participation in the Divine nature. *"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 passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"* (Eph 3:18-19). Being *"filled with all the fulness of God"* involves sharing in His love for the Son. Jesus twice affirmed, *"The Father loveth the Son"* (John 3:35; 5:20). Thus the Father referred to Jesus as His *"Beloved Son"* (Matt 3:17; 17:5; 2 Pet 1:17).

Therefore, our text speaks of our love for Jesus – a love that is the result of our perception of God and Christ's love for us – a love which is of the same order as God the Father's love for the Son. I will further say that the effect of the love of our text requires both the comprehension of Divine love for us, and a dominating and consistent love for the Christ Himself. Where either of these are missing, the effects now declared will **not** be found.

THE KIND OF LOVE

Our love for Jesus has certain characteristics. This is not a theoretical love, or one that is in *"word only"* (1 John 3:18). Because of the shallowness of contemporary religion, the phrase *"I love Jesus with all of my heart"* has become a synonym for *"I am a Christian."* The way in which it is ordinarily used by no means suggests whole-heartedness, or choosing to love Christ above anything and everything else. This phrase easily falls off people's tongues. It is not unusual to hear it followed by the acknowledgment of indifference and sin, as though saying such a love compensated for moral and spiritual failures.

The *"love"* of our text is of quite another order. It is the result of comprehending the great love God that is confirmed in Jesus *"laying down His life for us"* (1 John 3:16). This is the unprecedented kind of love that is intended in this text.

Jesus Speaks of this Love

In His teaching, Jesus revealed the kind of love that would permeate His church. As is apparent, it differs vastly from the anemic views of love that are being espoused today.

No one can be loved more than Jesus. *"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"* (Matt 10:37).

Love relates immediately to the awareness of the forgiveness of sins. *"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little"* (Luke 7:47).

Those who are begotten of God love Jesus. *"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came*

come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:21,23).

The person who does not love Jesus does not maintain a hold upon His sayings. *"He that loveth Me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me"* (John 14:24).

When a person loves Jesus, because of that love, the Father loves him. *"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God"* (John 16:27).

Loving Jesus has a direct bearing upon feeding His sheep. *"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou*

Therefore, our text speaks of our love for Jesus – a love that is the result of our perception of God and Christ's love for us – a love which is of the same order as God the Father's love for the Son.

from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent Me" (John 8:42).

The love of Jesus requires that one to keep His commandments. *"If ye love Me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever"* (John 14:15-16).

The person who loves Jesus maintains a grasp on His commandments and words. *"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love He, he will keep my words: and My Father will love him, and We will*

Me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And He said unto him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17).

It is apparent, therefore, that loving the Lord Jesus is anything but casual or nonchalant. This is a compelling love that yields certain fruits.

Apostolic declarations

The Apostles also spoke of our love for Christ – a love that is prompted by the discernment of God's love for us. Their words are strong, confirming the nature of this *"love."*

The weight of loving Christ is therefore very obvious. This is not an option, and can by no means assume a secondary position. If our love for Jesus wanes, everything that is given through Him wanes as well, becoming inaccessible to the individual.

The person who does not love Jesus is cursed. *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”* (1 Cor 16:22). In the place of *“Anathema,”* other versions read, *“accursed,”*^{NKJV} *“a curse be on him.”*^{NIV}

Grace is given to those who love Jesus. *“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen”* (Eph 6:24).

A crown of righteousness, the objective of the life of faith, will be given to those who love Christ’s appearing. *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His*

appearing” (2 Tim 4:8). No person can love Christ’s appearing who does not love Him personally. It is one’s love for Christ that produces the longing for His appearing, for then we shall be *“like Him”* (1 John 3:2).

The crown of life – the ultimate consequence of laying hold on eternal life – is promised only to those who love Jesus. *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him”* (James 1:12).

The kingdom of God, which is to be sought first, along with God’s righteousness (Matt 6:33), is promised only to those who love Christ. *“Hearken, my beloved brethren,*

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2:5).

Believing on Christ is necessarily associated with loving Him. *“. . . Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory”* (1 Pet 1:7b-8).

The weight of loving Christ is therefore very obvious. **This is not an option, and can by no means assume a secondary position.** If our love for Jesus wanes, everything that is given through Him wanes as well, becoming inaccessible to the individual. **Every blessing is contingent upon our love for Jesus.**

Our text will deal with yet another dimension of this love. **Our love for Jesus, as motivated by God’s love for us, is now declared to be compelling in its very nature, moving us into all manner of spiritual activity.** It also causes us to think in concert with the Lord, so that His thoughts become ours. His objectives also become our own.

CONSTRAINETH US

^{14b} *“ . . . constraineth us . . . ”* Other versions read, *“compels us,”*^{NKJV} *“controls us,”*^{NASB} *“urges us on,”*^{NRSV} *“which is moving us on,”*^{BBE} *“presseth us,”*^{DOUAY} *“impels us,”*^{NAB} *“overwhelms us,”*^{NJB} *“overmasters us,”*^{IE} *“continually constrains me,”*^{WILLIAMS} *“controls and urges and impels us,”*^{AMPLIFIED} and *“the very spring of our actions.”*^{PHILLIPS}

The word *“constraineth”* is an unusual one, pregnant with meaning. It has a root meaning of “to hold together, or sustain.” It also carries the idea “devoting oneself completely” to a thing, and being “impelled, or urged on,”^{THAYER} “of being totally claimed by a task; devote oneself completely; to be occupied with;”^{FRIEBERG} “be occupied or absorbed with.”^{UBS} As used in this text, *“constraineth”* speaks of an inner rational compulsion. It is not a

drive like hunger or thirst, but is the result of insight, as contrasted with natural appetites. It means to be controlled, and for that condition to be what is preferred, as opposed to something that is against our will. When the perception of the love of God (1 John 3:16) interfuses with our sustained love for Christ, the result is unparalleled compulsion.

ONE GRAND PURPOSE

There is a technical aspect here that ought to be noted. The person who is *“constrained”* is kept to **one** objective (Psa 27:4; Phil 3:13), even though that determination is often attended with remarkable

difficulty – “devoting oneself completely to a thing.”^{THAYER} The word from which *“constraineth”* is taken (συνέχει), is the



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This kind of rational and deliberate obsession drove Paul to labor for the Lord even in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. It is that same spirit that pushed the martyrs to seal their testimony with their blood – and to do so gladly and willingly.

same word used by Jesus in Luke 12:50: *“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I **straitened** till it be accomplished!”* (Luke 12:50). The *“baptism”* to which Jesus referred was suffering unto death, or being overwhelmed and immersed in suffering. His commission was not a pleasant one – to lay down His life, and take it up again (John 10:17-18). For He who *“came down from heaven,”* being *“in the flesh”* was like being in a strait jacket. Although He came from a realm in which He knew no restraint, now, as a Man, He had that experience. From the high point of view, He was confined to one grand work – one

ordained purpose. It was for this reason that, when the time of His death approached, *“He **steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem**”* (Lk 9:51). He was, in the sense of our text, *“constrained.”*

This kind of rational and deliberate obsession drove Paul to labor for the Lord even in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. It is that same spirit that pushed the martyrs to seal their testimony with their blood – and to do so gladly and willingly.

Notice how Paul’s motivation

blends two seemingly contradictory things: ¹ *“the terror of the Lord,”* and ² *“the love of Christ.”* Both of them have to do with the Lord Jesus. It is He who will judge the world, as all stand before His *“judgment seat.”* It is also He who *“gave Himself for our sins”* (Gal 1:4), which deed provokes a compelling love that burns within the heart of those who perceive it. **These two things – fear of God and love for Christ – come together in faith. When they are joined, the individual has a firm grasp on both the past and the future – what Jesus has done, and what He will do.**

In the persuasion of these realities – Christ’s vicarious death, and the time He will *“judge the world in righteousness”* – the work of the Lord is seen in a whole new light. **Being a faithful steward now makes a lot of sense, and strong desires to please the Lord rise to the surface.** Powerful incentives now propel the individual into the work of the Lord.

RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

^{14c} *... because we thus judge* Other versions read, *“having concluded this,”* ^{NASB} *“because we are convinced that,”* ^{NIV} *“because we are of the opinion that,”* ^{BBE} *“having judged this,”* ^{DARBY} *“judging this,”* ^{DOUAY} *“we have come to the conviction that,”* ^{NAB} *“when we consider,”* ^{NJB} *“Since we believe,”* ^{NLT} *“the conclusion at which we have arrived being this,”* ^{IE} *“because we are of the opinion and conviction,”* ^{AMPLIFIED} *and “We look at it like this.”* ^{PHILLIPS}

Holy reasoning is the fruit of faith. Thus, when Abraham was told he would have a son in his old age, and through a barren and aged wife, *“he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to*

perform” (Rom 4:19-21). Again, after Abraham had grown accustomed to Isaac, the Lord told him, *“And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”* (Gen 22:2). Again, Abraham reasoned after a godly manner. *“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).

Those in Christ are to engage in holy and righteous judgments.

☛ *“Yea, and **why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?**”* (Luke 12:57).

- ☛ *“Judge not according to the appearance, but **judge righteous judgment**”* (John 7:24).
- ☛ *“But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, **judge ye**”* (Acts 4:19).
- ☛ *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but **judge this rather**, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way”* (Rom 14:13).
- ☛ *“I speak as to wise men; **judge ye what I say**”* (1 Cor 10:15).
- ☛ *“For if we would **judge ourselves**, we should not be judged”* (1 Cor 11:31).
- ☛ *“Let the prophets speak two or three, and **let the other judge**”* (1 Cor

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14:29).

MEAT AND MILK

At this point – judging, or reasoning upon the truth – a separation is made between the learned and the unlearned, the novice and the mature. This is, in fact, where spiritual “meat” comes into the picture. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor 3:2). Hebrew believers were also told, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb 5:12). As is apparent, not being able to digest spiritual meat is anything but a virtue. This confirms that spiritual infancy is a time of limitation, and therefore men must not spend long in it.

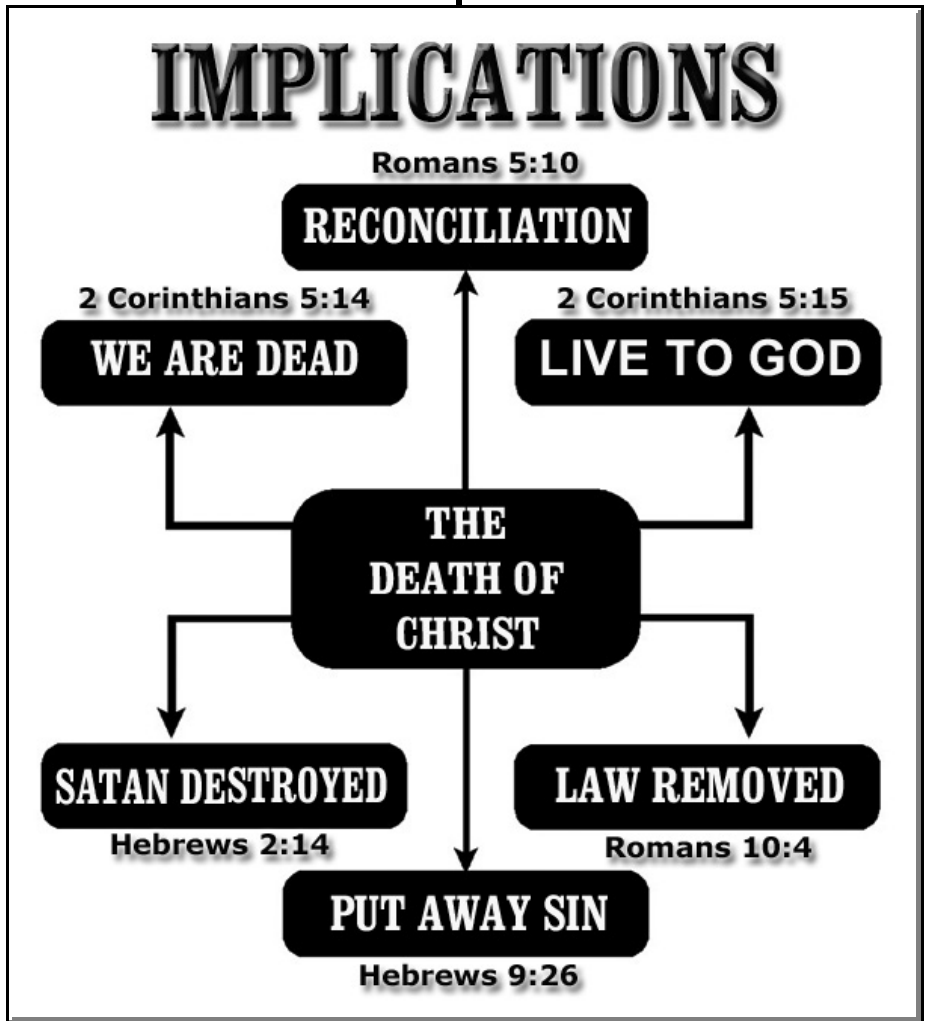
Men have conjectured concerning spiritual “meat,” and the record of their conjectures is not good. There is a tendency to relegate the Gospel itself to the category of “milk,” and the apostolic instructions in righteousness to the class of “meat.” **This is very foolish reasoning, for it reduces the proclamation of the Gospel to elemental teaching, and exalts rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness to the profound matters of God’s Word.** It does not require much thought to see how absurd this is. How is it that a message concerning Jesus Christ – the embodiment of truth (John 14:6), the epitome of Divine wisdom (1 Cor 1:30), and the one in whom “all the fulness of the Godhead” dwells (Col 1:19; 2:9) – in any way be considered elemental, rudimentary, or “milk.” Conversely, what form of insanity it is to consider works concerning the duty of mortals, themselves fallen creatures, to be the most profound of all Divine utterances? Are we to believe that what God has to say about Jesus – the “record” He has “given of His Son” – is inferior to His words concerning human behavior and obligation? **The whole notion is so utterly absurd that one must be deceived by the devil to take it up into his mind and mouth!**

This warped thinking is at the root of the nonsense that affirms the Gospel is preached only to sinners, while the church is taught the weightier things relating to its conduct and manners. This view is espoused and promulgated even though the Epistles are filled with the Gospel – in fact, that is the ONLY place the Gospel is truly opened up – proclaimed and expounded.

Allow me to take this matter a little further, for right here is where multitudes are being led astray. Is it more weighty to reason about why men ought

The “Milk” is the Word Itself

Peter makes clear that the “milk” is not what is said **about** the Word, but is the Word itself. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere **milk of the word**, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet 2:2). Throughout the epistles to the churches, it is taken for granted that the people are familiar with the text of Scripture. This is in keeping with the nature of spiritual life, which requires the Word of God if that life is to be sustained – “That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4). Thus we are frequently summoned to consider the



not to commit fornication (1 Cor 6:15-20), or to reason upon the matter of Christ’s death (as our text will do)? Which course of teaching is “meat,” and which is “milk?” Even a child should be able to see the answer clearly.

verbatim text of Scripture: “it is written” (i.e. Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 4:3; 8:36; 1 Cor 1:31, etc), “what saith the Scripture” (Rom 4:3; Gal 4:30), “according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3,4; James 2:8), etc.

When the “implications” of Scripture are increasingly perceived, the thoroughness of the Word of God becomes more and more apparent. The wisdom of the world will chaff against the soul, and the folly of worldly pursuits becomes more evident.

When you have a body of people who do not know, or have a consciousness of, the text of Scripture, you have a people who “have need of milk.” There is no organizational activity that can compensate for such a state. Further, such a people are in continual jeopardy, for Satan preys on such poor souls, and they have no way to defend themselves.

The word “meat” is never applied to the Word itself – even though people are prone to use the phrase, “the meat of the Word,” an expression that is never used in Scripture. Those who employ this unsound expression view sections of the Word as being especially meaty. It is to be acknowledged that portions of God’s Word are unusually profound – like some of Paul’s writings that were “hard to be understood” (2 Pet 3:16).

That condition, however, was not because the Word was not clear. **Rather, it was owing to the obtuseness of those to whom it was spoken.** Which soul has not come to see certain texts with clarity that were once surrounded by darkness? Once you saw it, and the text was as clear as a cloudless sky, did you think that text was still “meat,” “hard to be understood?” Indeed not, you rather

marveled that you had not seen it before – now that it was so plain to you.

The “Meat” is the Implications of the Word

By “implications,” I mean the truth that is logically related to the Word – the Divinely appointed intent of the Word. **These are the revealed associations necessarily connected with Word.** While they are made known in the Scriptures, they are only discerned by those who are mature in Christ Jesus. Those who can use “strong meat” see these associations. They are meshed with their reasoning processes, and their faith has taken hold of them, deriving their benefits.

These “implications” are areas of testing in which the precision and verity of the Word are confirmed to the heart and mind. **They are also areas in which the validity of ones profession is confirmed.** It is in these reasonings that the novicehood or maturity of a believer is revealed. Those who can receive “strong meat” have their “senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Heb 5:14).

Those who can dispense “meat” are those who “handle accurately the

Word of God”^{NASB} (2 Tim 2:15). To handle the Word of God “accurately” does not mean to merely quote the text precisely as it is written – although it is to be acknowledged that novices often have trouble even in this area. **Proper usage goes further than textual accuracy, so that the teacher expounds the text in keeping with the will and purpose of God.** Such individuals can integrate the sayings of Scripture with the revealed purpose of God. They are also able to see Scripture as a whole, perceiving the relationship of various texts with the “great salvation” that is in Christ Jesus. Those who can handle the Word of God can also bring sundry texts to appropriately bear upon life in “this present evil world.”

When the “implications” of Scripture are increasingly perceived, the thoroughness of the Word of God becomes more and more apparent. The wisdom of the world will chaff against the soul, and the folly of worldly pursuits becomes more evident.

It is what you are able to do with the truth – how you handle it – that distinguishes one as a teacher or preacher. This will become very apparent in the text before us. The judgment that Paul renders is not his own private view of the text – although he personally had embraced it. **This is, in fact, what Christ’s death involved. It is integral to His death, and is not a mere philosophical view of it.** Men might call what follows an “application,” but it is actually an “implication” – something that is inherent in the fact upon which Paul is reasoning. The text necessarily includes the implication.

IF HE DIED FOR ALL, ALL ARE DEAD

^{14d} . . . that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

Paul will now expound a certain facet of the Gospel – the death of Jesus Christ. What he is going to say is actually involved in Christ’s death. It is an objective that God had determined, and

which was fulfilled by means of Christ’s death.

It will become very apparent that reasoning of this sort is not common within the professed church. **While men spend an inordinate amount of time trying to explain the presence of**

moral and spiritual deficiencies, the Holy Spirit will show us the absolute unreasonable of sin within the body of Christ. The carnal mind tries to find an explanation for sin. The spiritual mind moves one to “abstain from fleshly lusts” because they are utterly unreasonable. Almost without exception, those who are

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

noted as specialists in moral recovery, deal with the **causes** for the failure. **Paul digs in the truth to uncover the root of holy conduct, showing that it is not possible to be connected to that root and yet continue in sin.** If Christ's death is not effective against sin, it has no more power than the bloody sacrifices within the Levitical system. If, in fact, those who are in Christ have the same wayward character as the Israelites of old, **then the New Covenant is nothing more than a sham, and there is not an ounce of truth to it.** Men must come to grips with this reality, else they will be charged with neglecting God's "*great salvation*" – and there is no escape from the consequences of such a neglect (Heb 2:3).

IF

"... *that if...*" Other versions read, "*that is,*"^{NKJV} "*if,*"^{DOUAY} and "*that as,*"^{WILLIAMS}

This is a term employed in spiritual reasoning. **It introduces a conclusion that is based upon an established fact** – a conclusion that is integral to that fact. If the fact is true, then the consequence of it is true – that is the reasoning. The reality of the first statement confirms the reality of the second. Both statements stand together, with the second depending upon the first. If there is no question about the reality of the first statement, then there can be no question concerning the reality of the second.

ONE DIED FOR ALL

"... *one died for all...*" Other versions read, "*one died for all,*"^{NKJV} "*one has died for all,*"^{NRSV} "*that is one was put to death for all,*"^{BBE} "*Christ died for everyone,*"^{NLT} "*that One having died for everyone,*"^{WEYMOUTH} and "*one died for all men.*"^{PHILLIPS}

Here we come to grips with the substitutionary aspect of our salvation. This is something with which many students of Scripture struggle – that one could stand for the many. In my judgment, this is not taught with sufficient clarity in our time.

The "*One*" is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the "*all*" is humanity in general, and the saints in particular. By

this I mean Christ's death is sufficient for all, but its effects are only realized by those who "*receive*" the Son (John 1:12). The particular point that is developed here regards **the impact of Christ's death upon those who have been baptized into it** (Rom 6:3-4).

The point here is Christ's **death**. It is not His birth, His ministry, His resurrection, or His intercession – all of which are absolutely essential. Here, however, we focus particularly upon Christ's **death** – what was accomplished by means of the cross.

The Death of Christ

The death of Christ is one of the pillars of the Gospel. **It was a vicarious**

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death, that is, a substitutionary death. He did not die for Himself, but for others. His death was foretold at the very beginning when God told the devil, "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel*" (Gen 3:15). The twenty-second Psalm spoke in remarkable detail of the death of the Christ. Other Psalmic references include Psalm 34:20, 69:22,61; and 109:25. Isaiah also spoke of the Messiah's death: Isa 52:14; 53:3-12. The Lord revealed aspects of Christ's death to Daniel (Dan 9:26). Zechariah also received insights into this death (Zech 12:9-10; 13:6-7).

Jesus Himself spoke frequently of His death (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-20; 21:33-39; 26:2,12; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Lk 9:22,44; 12:50; 17:25; 18:31-33; 22:37; John 10:11,15,17-18; 12:7; 12:32-33).

The Apostles particularly expounded the design of Christ's death.

☛ Justified freely by it (Rom 3:24; 5:9).

- ☛ Propitiation through His blood (Rom 3:25).
- ☛ Commendation of God's love (Rom 5:8).
- ☛ Reconciled by it (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-20).
- ☛ Atonement through it (Rom 5:11).
- ☛ Condemned sin in the flesh (Rom 8:3).
- ☛ Through it became Lord of the dead and the living (Rom 14:9).
- ☛ Purchased us through it (1 Cor 6:20).
- ☛ Redeemed us from the curse of the

Law (Gal 3:13).

- ☛ Delivered us from this present evil world (Gal 1:4).
- ☛ Redeemed those that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal 4:5).
- ☛ Redemption and forgiveness (Eph 1:7).
- ☛ We are made nigh (Eph 2:13).
- ☛ Abolished the enmity in His flesh (Eph 2:15-16).
- ☛ To sanctify and cleanse the church (Eph 5:26).
- ☛ To present the church to Himself a glorious church (Eph 5:27).
- ☛ Made peace (Col 1:20).
- ☛ To present us holy, unblameable, and unproveable in His sight (Col 1:22).
- ☛ Spoiled principalities and powers (Col

2:15).

- ☛ Delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:10).
- ☛ That we should live together with Him (1 Thess 5:10).
- ☛ Gave Himself a ransom (1 Tim 2:6).
- ☛ To purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit 2:14).
- ☛ Purged our sins (Heb 1:3).
- ☛ Destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14).
- ☛ Deliver us from bondage (Heb 2:15).
- ☛ Obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb 9:12).
- ☛ The means by which we are sanctified (Heb 10:10).
- ☛ To perfect the sanctified (Heb 10:14).
- ☛ Consecrated a new and living way (Heb 10:20).
- ☛ Redeem us from a vain manner of life (1 Pet 1:19).
- ☛ To bring us to God (1 Pet 3:18).
- ☛ Made us kings and priests unto God (Rev 1:5-6).

There is a list of thirty-three accomplishments associated with the death of Jesus Christ. All of them were required, and none of them could be achieved by man. You can see how apparently central is the death of Christ. It is also clear that such marvelous things are to be regularly proclaimed to the saints.

The Substitution Proclaimed

Our text declares that Christ's death was not the consequence of His own actions. He did not die for himself, but "for all men."

- ☛ He bore OUR griefs (Isa 53:43a).
- ☛ He carried OUR sorrows (Isa 53:43b).
- ☛ He was wounded for OUR

transgressions (Isa 53:5a).

- ☛ He was bruised for OUR iniquities (Isa 53:5b).
- ☛ The chastisement of OUR peace was upon Him (Isa 53:5c).
- ☛ With His stripes WE are healed (Isa 53:5d).
- ☛ The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of US all (Isa 53:6).
- ☛ For the transgression of God's PEOPLE He was stricken (Isa 53:8).
- ☛ God made His soul an offering FOR SIN (Isa 53:10).
- ☛ He shall bear THEIR iniquities (Isa 53:11).
- ☛ He bare THE SIN OF MANY (Isa 53:12).
- ☛ He was made to be sin FOR us (2 Cor 5:21).
- ☛ He was made a curse FOR (Gal 3:13).
- ☛ He died FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4).
- ☛ He is the Propitiation FOR OUR SINS (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

Foreshadowed in Abraham

The principle of substitution was foreshadowed when Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac, his "only son," as a burnt offering to God. "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen 22:2). When Abraham and Isaac arrived at the appointed mountain, Abraham and Isaac left the servants behind, and headed to the place where the sacrifice would be accomplished. As they went, Isaac inquired, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen 22:7). Not yet knowing the details of what would take place, Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen 22:8).

When they came to "the place which God had told him of," Abraham built an altar, laid wood upon it, bound Isaac, and laid him upon the altar. He then took his knife "to slay his son." With his hand raised, and fully intending to do precisely as he was commanded, Abraham was arrested by the voice of an angel who twice called out his name, "Abraham, Abraham." After acknowledging he had heard the voice, Abraham was told, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen 22:12). Immediately, Abraham raised his eyes and saw "a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." By faith, knowing what he should do, "Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for as burnt offering IN THE STEAD OF HIS SON" (Gen 22:13). Another version reads, "in the place of his son." ^{NASB}

SUBSTITUTION! The ram took the place of Isaac, and God was fully satisfied with the substitute, for He Himself provided it.

Foreshadowed in the Law

The Levitical sacrificial system also foreshadowed the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. As it is the nature of revelation to become greater as it progresses, so the Law provided some additional insights into the nature of God's appointed Substitute.

On the day of atonement, Aaron was commanded to take two goats and present them before the Lord. One goat was to be offered as a sin offering to the Lord, and one goat was to be a "scapegoat." That goat would remain alive, but be sent into an uninhabitable land. The goat that was offered was first slain, and its blood brought inside the most holy place, and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat. It was put on the horns of the altar, and sprinkled upon the altar seven times (Lev 16:7-19).

Following this, Aaron was to place both of his hands upon the head of the live goat, and "confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the live goat, and send him away . . . And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities

into a land not inhabited” (Lev 16:20-22).

SUBSTITUTION! Both goats depicted the dying Savior. In the one, the penalty of sin was paid. In the other, the guilt was transferred from the people to the live goat, then carried away from the presence of the Lord.

Thus, the sins of the world were first placed upon Christ, the appointed Substitute: *“the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isa 53:6). Just as surely as the live goat bore the iniquities of Israel away typically, so the Lord Jesus

already “dead in trespasses and sins.” This, however, is not a proper view of the case, nor does it blend with the reasoning that follows.

The Differing Versions

Seen correctly, there is no conflict in the various versions, even though, on the surface, it appears as though there is.

- *“They were all dead.”*^{KJV} When Jesus was dead, they were also dead.
- *“Then all died.”*^{NKJV} When Jesus died, they also died.

The point being made is that the “all” of reference died with Jesus, He did not die with them. In this text, Jesus did not die because they were dead, but they became dead with Him in His death. This is the same reasoning found in the sixth chapter of Romans. There we are said to die with Jesus.

“bore our sins in His body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24), becoming personally responsible for them, and carrying them away from the presence of the God against whom they had been committed.

If this is true – that *“One died for all”* – **then the statement that follows is necessarily true.** That is, the objective of Christ’s death was, in fact, accomplished. That is precisely why we can reason upon the basis of that achievement.

THEN WERE ALL DEAD

“ . . . then were all dead.” Other versions read, *“then all died,”*^{NKJV} *“therefore all died,”*^{NIV} *“died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live,”*^{NLT} *“then the whole died,”*^{YLT} *“His death was their death,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“then all have died,”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“then, in a sense, they all died.”*^{PHILLIPS}

There are two ways of viewing this text: one is right, and one is wrong. The first affirms that *“then were all dead”* means those for whom Jesus died were

• *“Therefore all died.”*^{NIV} Because Jesus was their Representative, when He died, they all were reckoned to have died.

• *“We have all died to the old life.”*^{NLT} As Jesus, in the capacity of the sin-bearer, died to sin, so we died to sin in the capacity of servants to it.

• *“His death was their death.”*^{WEYMOUTH} Christ’s death is reckoned to us in the same manner as God’s righteousness is imputed to us.

• *“In a sense they all died.”*^{PHILLIPS} The “sense” in which we died was real, but it was on a different level, and not according to the flesh.

The point being made is that the “all” of reference died **with Jesus**, He did not die with them. In this text, Jesus did not die because they were dead, but they became dead with Him in His death. This is the same reasoning found in the sixth chapter of Romans. There we are said to die with Jesus. **Further, this is a death “to sin,” not “in sin”** (as in Ephesians

2:1-3).

• *“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* (Rom 6:2).

• *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”* (Rom 6:3).

• *“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Rom 6:4).

• *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”* (Rom 6:5),

• *“For he that is dead is freed from sin”* (Rom 6:7).

• *“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him”* (Rom 6:8).

• *“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).

• *“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with him”* (2 Tim 2:11).

Whatever death was required in us is made effective in the death of Christ Himself. His is the only effective *“death.”* **Our death to sin is effective only because we have been put into Christ’ death.** Christ’s death put Him out the reach of the sins that were laid upon Him. Thus it is written, *“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, he liveth unto God”* (Rom 6:9-10). **Our death with Him puts us out of the reach of sin as well.**

One effective death is reckoned for all of humanity, and one effective life is reckoned for them all as well. That one death and

one life belongs to Christ Jesus. We are partakers of them both.

A VITAL POINT

This is a most vital point: **in Christ Jesus, there is a very real death to sin!** Because men have exalted the worldly wisdom, there is a lot of philosophizing on this point. As I have said before, men tend to extend themselves to explain **why** sin erupts among those who bear the name of Jesus. The truth of the matter is that such eruptions **contradict** the very nature of *“newness of life.”* **Sin can only surface in our lives where we are not “dead” to it.**

When we were *“quickenened”* with Christ, or *“made alive,”* our new life started with the *“old man”* being crucified

– put upon the cross through *“the operation of God.”* Thus Paul reasons, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”* (Rom 6:6). It is not possible to *“serve sin”* while the *“old man is crucified.”* The only way sin can express itself is for the Holy Spirit to be *“quenched”* or *“grieved,”* which empowers *“the old man”* to be removed from the cross. This is so because it is the Holy Spirit who leads us in mortifying, or putting to death, the *“deeds of the body”* (Rom 8:13-14). **Without His leading, this mortification, or keeping the “old man” crucified, will not, and cannot, be done.**

It is with this in mind that John writes, *“My little children, these things*

write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous [One]” (1 John 2:1). I do not believe it is possible to successfully address life without coming into the realization of the truth of these things. It is further my observation that far too little is taught on this subject, which circumstance puts believers at a great disadvantage. **If those subjected to the persistent, enlightened, and extensive teaching of Paul had difficulty in these matters, what can be said of those who have little or no understanding of these things.** Is it not necessary to frequently and powerfully affirm these realities? Indeed, it is! What is being affirmed in this text is something that can and must be faithfully declared and *“known”* among believers.

WHY HE DIED FOR ALL

“^{15a} And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves...”

Paul has first stated the cause: one death, and only one, **is accounted to all** – *“therefore all died.”*^{NASB} There is really only one death and one life that has merit before God – and both belong to Jesus Christ. In His death, He is *“the Lamb.”* In His life, He is *“the Lion of the tribe of Judah”* (Rev 5:5). No other death is lauded by God. No other life obtains meritoriousness before Him.

Now, the Spirit will affirm the ultimate reason for which Christ died. It will be very apparent that this is not the manner in which the flesh reasons. There is a Divine objective behind the death of Christ – and it was not simply to sever you from the past, or remove you from attachment to sin. More is involved here than deliverance from the power of darkness. **The border of salvation extends beyond rescue and clearing the record of debt, and the purging of the conscience.** We have not been brought from enslavement to sin and Satan to adhere to a new set of rules.

AND THAT HE DIED

“And that he died for all, . . . ”
Other versions read, *“and He died for all,”*^{NKJV} *“And that He underwent death for all,”*^{BBE} *“Christ died for all,”*^{DOUAY} *“He indeed died for all,”*^{NAB} *“in dying for all humanity,”*^{NJB} *“He died for everyone,”*^{NLT} *“and for all He died,”*^{YLT} *“Christ died for everyone,”*^{IE} and *“He died for all people.”*^{ISV}

Christ’s death reached as far as Adam’s transgression. It extended to the lowest depths to which sin caused men to sink. That is what is intended by *“for all.”* In the great assize, when men *“stand before the judgment seat of Christ,”* there will not be one offspring of Adam who will be able to say Christ’s death was not sufficient for him, or that its effects did not reach into the territory

he occupied. **No thought must be entertained that leads men to limit the scope of Christ’s death.** If it appears to transcend the capabilities of human reasoning, such terms as *“limited atonement”* must not be ascribed to it, for they will obscure the truth rather than clarify it.

This is not an area in which God will permit human speculation. Christ’s death was for ALL of Adam’s progeny, with none of them being excluded. The fifth chapter of Romans makes a powerful point of this.

☛ Through Adam, sin entered into the world, together with death. Both sin and death were passed to *“all men,*

Christ’s death reached as far as Adam’s transgression. It extended to the lowest depths to which sin caused men to sink. That is what is intended by “for all.” In the great assize, when men “stand before the judgment seat of Christ,” there will not be one offspring of Adam who will be able to say Christ’s death was not sufficient for him, or that its effects did not reach into the territory he occupied.

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

for that all have sinned” (Rom 5:12).

- From Adam to Moses, death reigned over the entirety of humanity – not because humanity had transgressed a word from God, but because Adam did (Rom 5:13-14).
- Through “the offense of one” [Adam] the many “be dead.” Likewise, through the “gift of grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, God’s grace hath abounded unto many” (Rom 5:15).
- Through the sin of one [Adam] judgment came upon all “unto condemnation.” Likewise, because the “many offenses” were imputed to Christ, justification is realized through Him (Rom 5:16).

causes it to appear that personal. He addressed what “one man” had brought in, and what He did reached as far as the impact of the one sin of that “one man.”

Paul introduces this section by reminding us of this fact – “One died for all” – that is, “all” of Adam’s offspring. The argument that he will draw from this is most arresting, and will expose the shallowness of much of the religion to which men are being exposed.

THAT THEY WHICH LIVE

“ . . . that they which live . . . ”

Other versions read, “that those who live,”^{NKJV} “so that the living,”^{BBE} “that they also who live,”^{DOUAY} “that those who receive His new life,”^{NLT} “that all who live – having received eternal life from Him,”^{LIVING} “so that people who are alive,”^{IE} and

They have been “justified from all things” (Acts 13:39), forgiven of “all trespasses” (Col 2:13), and “added” to the church (Acts 2:47).

Men may choose to refer to these as “Christians” (1 Pet 4:16). Others might choose to say they are “saved” (1 Cor 1:18). Still others refer to them as those who are “born again” (1 Pet 1:23), “born of God” (1 John 3:9), or “begotten of God” (1 John 5:18). However you may choose to view these souls, they once were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1-3), but now they are “alive unto God” (Rom 6:11). Once they were in “darkness,” but now they have been called “into” God’s “marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

Now, what is to be said of these “which live” – these who are reconciled to God and are not longer dead in sins? **For what purpose has this marvelous change taken place?** That is what the Spirit will now place before us.

Be sure of this, the results of such a far-reaching death cannot be variable, with only certain of its recipients being impacted. What is required of one is required of all, just as surely as sin had encroached upon them all. **There is a single bottom-line objective for all who have died with Jesus, and are consequently alive in Him.** What we are going to behold in this text is more than a human goal, or something each person is to try to do. This is a Divine objective, and all of the resources of heaven are devoted to its accomplishment.

Be sure of this, there is absolutely no provision in salvation that allows for this **NOT** to happen! Nothing will compensate for these things failing to occur in the individual. **You just as well attempt to affirm that Jesus’ death really did not take away sin as to affirm that what is now declared does not really take place in those who participate in that death.** I do not believe we can make too much of this. There is a pervading notion extant in the Christian world that encourages men and women to limp through life just as though there was no power or wisdom in redemption.

NOT UNTO THEMSELVES

“ . . . should not henceforth live

The point to be seen is that Christ’s death was necessitated by a universal situation that was traced back to a single man – Adam. Technically speaking, Christ did not die with certain individuals in mind – even though faith causes it to appear that personal. He addressed what “one man” had brought in, and what He did reached as far as the impact of the one sin of that “one man.”

- Death reigned because of the “offense of one” [Adam]. Likewise those who “receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:17).
- By the offense of Adam, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Likewise, “by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Rom 5:18).
- By one act of disobedience [Adam’s] “many were made sinners.” Likewise, by one act of obedience [Christ’s death], “shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

The point to be seen is that Christ’s death was necessitated by a universal situation that was traced back to a single man – Adam. Technically speaking, Christ did not die with certain individuals in mind – even though faith

“that their lives.”^{PHILLIPS}

The phrase “they which live” refers to those who died with Jesus, and were raised to “walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). These are the people who have been “quicken together with Christ” (Col 2:13). Earlier, in the fourth chapter, these people are referred to as those into whose hearts God has shined “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). These are the ones God has “established” and “anointed” (2 Cor 1:21). He has “sealed” them, and given them “the earnest of the Spirit in” their “hearts” (2 Cor 1:22). These are the people who are being “changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18).

“They which live” are those who have been “delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col 1:13).

unto themselves . . . ” Other versions read, “live no longer for themselves,”^{NKJV} “might live no longer for themselves,”^{NRSV} “might no longer for themselves, to please themselves,”^{LIVING} “live no longer to and for themselves,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “their lives should now be no longer lived for themselves.”^{PHILLIPS}

Here is the Divinely appointed objective for all who are “in Christ Jesus.” All are included in this aim, and none are excluded from this. There is no negotiation on this point, and no provision for coming short of it. No spiritual gift or responsibility can counterbalance the absence of this condition. **Where this circumstance is absent, there is no evidence of being “alive unto God.”**

As soon as a person is “baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27), “born again” (1 Pet 1:23), or “forgiven all trespasses” (Col 2:13), a line of demarcation has been drawn. At that point an abrupt halt is brought to self-centeredness. No longer do these people live “to please themselves.”^{LIVING}

No longer do they “live for themselves.”^{PHILLIPS} When they were “dead in trespasses and sins,” they were “the servants of sin” (Rom 6:17,20), and “walked according to the course of this world” (Eph 2:2). They were dominated by “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:15-17), and were so willingly. They lived for themselves, sought their own satisfaction, conducting their lives as though they were the primary persons, and this world was the primary world. Their will was the fundamental will. Their desires were the principal desires. Their objectives were the main objectives. They were most offended when their persons were maligned. They were most concerned about their plans, and their emotions rose and fell in accordance with how their own fleshly determinations were impacted.

What does it mean to live “not unto themselves?” First, it should be apparent that this is no mere fleshly discipline, **for it required the death of Christ in order for this to be fulfilled!**

This aspect of spiritual life is expressed in a number of different ways.

- **Denying** self and taking up the cross. “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34).
- **Denying self and taking up the cross every day.** “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23).
- **Crucifying the flesh.** “And they

obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Pet 1:14).

- **Denying, or refusing to yield, to ungodliness and worldly lusts.** “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” (Titus

Here is the Divinely appointed objective for all who are “in Christ Jesus.” All are included in this aim, and none are excluded from this. There is no negotiation on this point, and no provision for coming short of it. No spiritual gift or responsibility can counterbalance the absence of this condition.

that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal 5:24).

- **Mortifying our members that are upon the earth.** “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5).
- **Mortifying, or putting to death, the deeds of the body.** “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 8:13).
- **No longer serving sin.** “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom 6:6).
- **Not walking in the vanity of the mind.** “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Eph 4:17).
- **Not fashioning our lives according to former lusts.** “As

2:11-12).

All sin is for self, and there are no exceptions. Because Jesus came to “save His people from their sins” (Matt 1:21), continuing in sin necessarily excludes one from the benefits of Christ’s death. Further, if sin centers in self, making the individual the primary person, and the gratification of fleshly lusts the fundamental objective, then there can be nothing more serious than living to please self. **That is the ultimate insult to the Lord Jesus.** It amounts to “trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and unholy thing,” and doing “despite to the Spirit of grace” (Heb 10:29).

The Seriousness of the Situation

A phenomenal amount of contemporary religion is actually dealing with the preferences of people rather than the will of God. There is a Gospel being preached that allows people to bring their fleshly preferences into the church, filtering assembly manners through their biases for gatherings, music, clothing, and the likes. If you were to take the matter of human preference and self-centeredness out of the counseling business, there would not be much left.

Because the religion of our time makes it difficult to reason on these things, it is necessary to say a few more words on this matter. When men are presented with a “*form of godliness*” that allows them to culture their natural appetites in the name of the Lord, a most dangerous circumstance has taken place.

With one sweeping statement

with it either. Hope will altogether leave the room rather than spend a moment encouraging the person who seeks to live for himself. No word of God – not a single Scriptural expression – will encourage such a quest.

When people seek to “*live for themselves*,” the flesh rises to dominance, and the devil and his wicked horde rush in

men. It is an insidious form of self-love that has brought down many persons. As is customary, men have sought to tone down the seriousness of this condition by employing socially acceptable language like “peer pressure,” “keeping up with the Jones’s,” etc. Such expressions tend to diminish the seriousness of this transgression.

Scripture speaks candidly about those who forfeit Divine approval in order to gain the approval of men. “*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*” (John 12:42-43). Jesus said of this circumstance, “*How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?*” (John 5:44). This was one of the distinguishing traits of the scribes and Pharisees, whom Jesus sounded denounced as being hypocritical (Matt 23:5-7). He also affirmed “*for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God*” (Luke 16:15).

This is an aspect of living unto self that has gained remarkable dominance in the professing church. **It drives the quest for religious careers, building mega-churches, seeker-friendly services, and all manner of organizational gatherings and “ministries.”** However, a quest for the approval and praise of men is nothing but living for self in cheap and uncomely garb. There is no place for it in Jesus!

With one sweeping statement of remarkable clarity, our text removes self-will from the picture completely, and leaves no room for it to return. Redemption makes absolutely no provision for the insertion of the flesh into the salvation of God. There is not so much as a single Divine resource that will assist men in living for themselves!

of remarkable clarity, our text removes self-will from the picture completely, and leaves no room for it to return. Redemption makes absolutely no provision for the insertion of the flesh into the salvation of God. **There is not so much as a single Divine resource that will assist men in living for themselves!** Jesus will not devote a single second to interceding for such a thing. The Holy Spirit will not take up such a cause in His intercession, which is “*according to the will of God*” (Rom 8:26-27). Grace will not even engage in such a pursuit. Faith will have nothing to do

like a flood. The Spirit is quenched, and the holy angels cease to minister. All of heaven knows that Jesus died to abort such a manner of life, and that if any person should seek to live in such a manner anyway, it is at the expense of salvation! It is only a fool who attempts to cause a tree to grow after God Almighty has put His axe to its root – and God has done just that with living for self.

The Praise of Men

There is a subtle aspect of living unto self that is especially promoted by the devil. That is seeking the praise of

THE OBJECTIVE OF CHRIST’S DEATH

“^{15b} . . . **but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.**” Other versions read, “*but for Him who died for them and rose again,*” ^{NKJV} “*but to Him who died and rose again on their behalf,*” ^{NASB} “*but for Him who for their sake died and was raised,*” ^{RSV} “*but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again,*” ^{ASV} “*but to Him, who underwent death for them and came back from the dead,*” ^{BBE} “*Instead, they will to please Christ, who*

died and was raised for them,” ^{NLT} “*to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them,*” ^{LIVING} “*Instead they will live for the One who died and came back to life for Him,*” and “*but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sakes.*” ^{AMPLIFIED}

Let us be clear at the very outset of this discussion. **The “newness of life” can only be lived “unto” the**

Lord. Further, this is lifted from the realm of philosophy, for the One unto whom it is lived is specified: “*Him who died for them and rose again.*” ^{NKJV} **God will not receive any other kind of life!** If the life is not lived “*to please Christ,*” ^{NLT} it is lived in vain – totally in vain. Men waste their time speculating about the eternal destiny of those who do not choose to live in this manner. **Not a single person whose life centers in**

Himself can possibly be forever in a domain in which the Son of God is everything! Men may argue about whether or not it is possible for a person to be saved who does not live *“to and for Him Who died and was raised again”* for them ^{AMPLIFIED} What possible word can they produce that will lead them to think such a thing is possible? **If Jesus died in order that men might live *“unto Him,”* how is it possible that He will in any way honor those who do not live in this manner?** If such will be saved, would it not make Christ’s death to have been *“vain?”* – for then the cause for which Jesus died would not have been realized. In such a case, what confidence could we have that the other objectives of His death were realized? – i.e., forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, etc.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "LIVE UNTO HIM?"

The Way of Nature

Every life is pointed in a direction. To put it another way, life is driven by an objective, or purpose. By nature, men are self-centered. That is the purpose for all sin, which places the individual at the center of all things. A foolish bit of teaching that is once again making the rounds, is that we ought to love ourselves. This is based upon a childish view of the second commandment upon which the Law and the prophets hang: *“but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39; Gal 5:14). It is then taught that we cannot expect to love our neighbor if we do not first love ourselves. That is generally followed by some psycho-babble about low self-esteem. **Of course, the point of the commandment is that men already do love themselves, else there would be no point to word.** If it was, in fact, possible that men do not love themselves by nature, the commandment would justify NOT loving your neighbor. The commandment is **not** “Love thy neighbor,” but *“Love thy neighbor as thyself!”* The point is that men **do** love themselves, giving first priority to their own persons. Now, says the Law, love your neighbor the same way.

This is why it is written, *“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church”* (Eph 5:29). This is also why the first rule of discipleship is *“let*

him deny himself” (Matt 16:24). **That postulates that a fundamental preoccupation with self dominates the natural man.** Everything that is in the world presumes this engrossment: *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life”* (1 John 2:16). The love of self is at the center of it all.

Even the individual who, in the jargon of the day, “suffers from low self-esteem,” is victimized by self-love. Such poor souls have allowed distorted thoughts of what they should be to dominate them, and therefore they are cast down. But “self” is still at the center of their thoughts. It is just that they want “self” to conform to their own desires.

Unto Him

Living *“unto Him”* involves having

our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Such precious souls are *“waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor 1:7), for that is when *“we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:2).

Another passage related to living *“unto”* Christ is found in the Epistle to the Romans. *“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living”* (Rom 14:8-9). **For those in Christ, He has become the all-consuming reason for living.** Elsewhere Paul stated it this way. *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the*



the Lord Jesus in our eye – *“looking unto Him”* (Heb 12:2). He is our primary consideration, and the focus of our attention. That means that He is our fundamental deliberation. We want to *“know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death”* (Phil 3:10). Our aim is to be *“found in Him”* (Phil 3:9). The person who is living *“unto Him”* confesses, *“for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”* (Phil 1:21).

Living toward Christ involves looking and longing for His appearing: *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and*

life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

We were *“baptized into Christ”* (Gal 3:27), and now we live with Him being our primary consideration. God has put us *“in Christ Jesus”* (1 Cor 1:30), and now we deliberately live with Him in view. We were *“translated into the kingdom”* of God’s *“dear Son”* (Col 1:13), and now we live thankfully under His beneficent rule. It is **not** our will that is primary, but His. It is **His** honor that we seek, and **His** purpose that we have embraced as our own. We give our abilities to **Him**, for His use and glory. Our minds are offered to

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

Him for holy contemplations and cogitations. Being “with **Him**” becomes an all-consuming passion and a purifying expectation (1 John 3:3).

Within professed Christendom this kind of mind-set is most unusual. However, this is the **only** acceptable frame of mind and heart before God. He will receive no other kind of life. The life that is not lived “unto” Christ is lived in vain – totally in vain! There is no provision for living in the flesh, or being carnally minded – which is the epitome of “self.” As it is written, “For to be carnally

them. The holy angels will not come to their defense or minister to them. The Word of God will not nourish them, and their prayers will fall to the ground. For them, there will be no mercy, or grace to help in the time of need. The love of God will not be poured out into their hearts, nor will they be strengthened with might by God’s Spirit in the inner man. The “whole armor of God” will not fit them, nor will they be inclined to put it on.

If these things are not true, then Christ died in vain, for He died in order that men might “live unto

Jesus Christ is to be perceived. All of His capacities and ministries flow from this well! He died for us and rose again! That is the one toward whom we live, and upon whom our attention is focused. If His death and resurrection become vague to us, we begin to lose sight of who He is, and all of His resources slip from our hands. If we ever begin to think of Jesus as a mere “Friend” who is concerned with us, and wants the best for us in this world, our image of Him has become distorted. Jesus is in no way our peer, who accompanies us through life adopting our aims and granting our carnal desires.

Here is how our former lives impacted upon Christ: He “died for” us. **When our deeds were imputed to Him, He had to die!** Further, if He had not risen from the dead, we would still be in a hopeless state. He had to die in order that we could live “unto Him.” He had to be raised from the dead before our lives could **effectively** be lived “unto Him.”

If you are ever tempted to put Christ into the background in order to achieve your own personal objectives, cast down that imagination lest it pave the way for you into the bottomless pit. **It simply is not possible to violate the reason for Christ’s death and still be saved.** As simple as they may appear, it is not being made clear to the masses. “And He died for all, **so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves, but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake.**” AMPLIFIED (2 Cor 5:15). God has provided a universal provision intended for one ultimate purpose. Let it be found in you!

Let us be clear about this. A life that is not lived for the Lord and to the Lord is not an acceptable life. God will not receive it, regardless of one’s profession. Jesus will not direct such persons, nor will the Holy Spirit lead them.

minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom 8:6-8).

Let us be clear about this. A life that is not lived for the Lord and to the Lord is not an acceptable life. God will not receive it, regardless of one’s profession. Jesus will not direct such persons, nor will the Holy Spirit lead

Him!” There is not the slightest possibility that men can live for self and, in the end, be saved.

THE PROPER ONE

The Holy Spirit is very specific on this point. **God will not accept a life that is lived for a fictitious Christ – one of man’s own creation.** Our view of Christ must be right, and there is no room for error on this point. The Christ unto whom we live is the One “which died for them and rose again.” That is how

THE IMPACT OF LIVING UNTO HIM

“^{16a} **Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh . . .**”

In order to properly direct our thinking, the Spirit now moves Paul to elaborate on the **effects** of living “unto” Christ. This is how “the newness of life” expresses itself. The Spirit does not leave this matter to human speculation. **He rather moves Paul to identify precisely how life in Christ Jesus**

expresses itself. As is customary under the New Covenant, a meticulous list of details will **not** be provided. Instead, we will be confronted with principal considerations that are to mold how we think on the matter.

Where the following conditions are not found, either “newness of life” is absent, or it has waned due to an interest in fulfilling the desires of the flesh. **There**

is a great need in our time for solid preaching and teaching on this point. Much of the theology of our time is like India rubber, swaying back and forth between the extremities of disinterest and human opinion.

WHEREFORE HENCEFORTH

“Wherefore henceforth . . .” Other versions read, “Therefore, from now on,” NKJV “So from now on,” NIV “From now on,

therefore,^{NRSV} *“For this reason, from this time forward,”*^{BBE} *“Consequently, from now on,”*^{NAB} *“So we have,”*^{NLT} *“So,”*^{LIVING} *“Therefore for the future,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“So from this moment on,”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“This means that.”*^{PHILLIPS}

The new birth stands as a line of demarcation between two contradicting manners of life. The word *“wherefore”* allows a logical transition from the reality of *“newness of life”* to its implications. That is, in view of the fact that we live no longer for ourselves, but live unto the One who died for us and rose again, **a certain perspective is experienced.**

The word *“henceforth”* means *“from now on,”*^{NIV} or from this point forward, or from this time for the rest of our lives. **Not only has the direction of our lives changed (not unto ourselves, but unto Christ), but our entire view, or perspective, of life has changed.**

What follows is not an ambition, but a reality. It is a characteristic of the *“new man,”* or the *“new creation in Christ Jesus.”* **Just as the unregenerate person has certain traits, so the person who is begotten of God has specific attributes.** The particular trait that is now mentioned begins with being born again. It is, further, a virtue that, by its very nature, continues.

KNOWING NO MAN AFTER THE FLESH

“ . . . know we no man after the flesh . . . ” Other versions read, *“we regard no one according to the flesh,”*^{NKJV} *“we recognize no one according to the flesh,”*^{NASB} *“we regard no one from a worldly point of view,”*^{NIV} *“we regard no one from a human point of view,”*^{NRSV} *“stop evaluating Christians by what the world thinks about them or by what they seem to be like on the outside,”*^{LIVING} *“we really don’t know a person by merely looking at his physical body,”*^{IE} *“we know no one simply as a man,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“I do not estimate anybody by the standard of outward appearance,”*^{WILLIAMS} *“we estimate and regard no one from a [purely] human point of view [in terms of natural standards of value],”*^{AMPLIFIED} and *“our knowledge of men can no longer be based on their outward lives.”*^{PHILLIPS}

Some of the above translations are very weak, reflecting an academic slant rather than a spiritual one. The point is not judgment according to appearance, as some of them say, but judgment after the manner of men. The emphasis here is not WHAT is perceived but HOW it is perceived.

“No Man”

The work of regeneration is so thorough and effective that it impacts upon **the way** we see every person. No person is excluded from this renewed view. It includes saint and sinner, friend

seen as rising higher than their peers, or achieving things unique among mere mortals. Religiously, they might be seen as the leader of a particular movement, or a prolific author, or a particular kind of religious professional.

From a more Scriptural point of view, this means our peers are not *“known”* as male or female, bond or free, or Jew or Greek – which distinctions do not even exist in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). In Christ, people are not known for their nobility, their worldly wisdom, or their sphere of influence (1 Cor 1:26). *“Rich”*

The word “henceforth” means “from now on,” NIV or from this point forward, or from this time for the rest of our lives. Not only has the direction of our lives changed (not unto ourselves, but unto Christ), but our entire view, or

and foe, the world and the church.

It ought to be noted that this is the response of *“the new man”* – the part of us that is *“born of God.”* Strictly speaking, the reason the believer **thinks** differently is because, in regeneration, the stony heart is removed and a *“new heart”* is conferred (Ezek 11:19; 36:26).

Here, then, is the view that the *“new man,”* or the nature that is *“begotten of God,”* will **not** entertain.

“After the Flesh”

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view.”^{NRSV} There are two sides of redeemed humanity – the “Adam” side and the “Jesus” side. The “Adam” side is called *“the flesh”* (Rom 7:25), and includes a bodily frame, an unseen part, called *“the soul,”* and a way of thinking called *“the carnal mind”* (Rom 8:7).

To *“know”* someone – anyone – *“after the flesh,”* is to consider them without regard to Jesus Christ. From the lowest perspective they would be seen simply as a “human being.” From the highest fleshly advantage they would be

and “poor” are not valid distinctions within the household of faith, and those who live *“unto Him who died and rose again”* do **not** so regard men – any of them.

No person is more highly regarded because of what he was in the flesh before coming to Christ – whether king or pauper, scholar or ignorant. What is *“highly esteemed among men”* has **no** place whatsoever in our perception of men, for such things are *“an abomination in the sight of God”* (Luke 16:15).

One of the great deficiencies of religious institutionalism is the compelling desire to know man *“after the flesh.”* You do not have to go far to see this being practiced on an extensive level. Some are highly esteemed because of their affiliation with a particularly “successful” church – even though they themselves have had nothing whatsoever to do with that seeming “success.” Others are held in high regard because of the school they attended, or the degrees that they hold. Some may even be esteemed because of the earthly families to which they belong. Whatever may be said of this, and similar,

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

classifications, they have no place among the people of God. "Newness of life" does

not allow for such distinctions, and holding them is contrary to that life.

Grace will not work in an environment that gives honor to fleshly distinctions.

OUR FORMER PERCEPTION OF JESUS

^{16b} "... yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."

Because our perceptions of Christ are the most critical ones of all, Paul introduces how He is seen by those into whose hearts God has shined the light. As we should expect, he will speak from the viewpoint of faith.

THOUGH WE HAVE KNOWN CHRIST

"... yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh..." Other versions read, "Even though we have known

- ☛ "The carpenter" (Mark 6:3).
- ☛ "The son of Joseph" (Lk 3:23).
- ☛ "The Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt 21:11).
- ☛ "Rabbi" (John 1:38).
- ☛ "A Teacher sent from God" (John 3:2).
- ☛ A "man" whom even the winds and the sea obeyed (Matt 8:27).
- ☛ John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets (Matt 16:14).

heaven and His mission to save the world. These do not represent the way in which Jesus is to be known. None of them were associated with the remission of sins, reconciliation to God, peace with God, or being brought to God.

A number of purely fleshly views of Jesus remain among the people. For some, He is the resolution to human difficulties, a means to bring about union among the people, and the secret to harmonious homes. For others, He is the way out of, what men call, addictions and various forms of enslavement to sin. Still others see Him a means to health and wealth. To be sure, Jesus has power to work in all of these circumstances. Yet, that is **not** how He is to be "known." **All views "according to the flesh" leave man at the center of things, perceiving Christ as the means to the achievement of a better life in this world.**

Although we may have once viewed Christ in this manner, that view is no longer acceptable.

NO MORE

"... yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Other versions read, "yet not we know Him thus no more,"^{NKJV} "we do so no longer,"^{NIV} "we know Him no longer in that way,"^{NRSV} "we no longer have any such knowledge,"^{BBE} "we regard Him thus no longer,"^{ESV} "How differently I think about Him now,"^{NLT} "How differently I feel now,"^{LIVING} and "yet now [we have such knowledge of Him that] we know Him no longer [in terms of the flesh]."^{AMPLIFIED}

The real Christ is the means by which we are **brought to God** (1 Pet 3:18). He is the exclusive means of **obtaining the righteousness of God** (Phil 3:9). Those who believe on Him receive "**power to become the sons of God**" (John 1:12). He is not called to our side, but God has called us into His

A number of purely fleshly views of Jesus remain among the people. For some, He is the resolution to human difficulties, a means to bring about union among the people, and the secret to harmonious homes. For others, He is the way out of, what men call, addictions and various forms of enslavement to sin.

Christ according to the flesh,"^{NKJV} "Though we once regarded Christ in this way,"^{NIV} "even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,"^{NRSV} "even if we have had knowledge of Christ after the flesh,"^{BBE} "Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh,"^{ESV} "even if we were once familiar with Christ according to human standards,"^{NJB} "Once I mistakingly thought of Christ in this way, as though He were merely a human being"^{NLT} and "At one time we knew about Christ from a human point of view."^{IE}

When Jesus ministered on earth, Men viewed Him in a variety of ways that are aptly described as "after the flesh." Let me name a few of them.

- ☛ A miracle worker (Lk 23:8).
- ☛ An arbitrator of disputes (Lk 12:13).
- ☛ A Source of food for the flesh (John 6:26).
- ☛ One who would restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).
- ☛ "A prophet" (Matt 21:46).
- ☛ The Jewish "Messiah" who would tell all things to the people (John 4:25).

While there were elements of truth in most of these perceptions, they were "after the flesh," for they did not properly associate Jesus with the God of

fellowship (1 Cor 1:9). By Him we have “access” to God (Rom 5:2; Eph 3:12).

Jesus is no longer to be seen as the One who ministered in Galilee. Now we see Him as the One who “ever liveth to make intercession” for those who come to the Father “by Him” (Heb 7:25). He is not the Victim of men, even though that is how it appeared when He died. Now we see Him as “the blessed and only

Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Tim 6:15). **Those into whose hearts God has “shined the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” see Jesus as fundamentally related to God, and secondarily related to us.** His ministry

to us is primarily according to the will of God, and subsequently is the appointed means through which God supplies all of our “need.”

It is imperative that the church, which is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15), present a proper view of the Lord Jesus Christ – one that is **not** “after the flesh,” or causes people to think that is the focus of His heavenly ministry.

THE GRAND CONDITION

^{17a} **Therefore if any man be in Christ . . .**” Other versions read, “So if anyone is in Christ,”^{NRSV} “If then any be in Christ,”^{DOUAY} “So whoever is in Christ,”^{NAB} “What this means is that those who become Christians,”^{NLT} “If anybody is in union with Christ,”^{WILLIAMS} and “Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah).”^{AMPLIFIED}

While religious men are prone to assume people are “in Christ,” that circumstance is never assumed in Scripture. **In fact, this is the fundamental issue, and it is to be confirmed with proper evidence, not empty words.** Boiled down to its essence, the issue is not whether or not you are in the church, but if you are “in Christ.” It is being “in Christ” that puts you in the church, and not vice versa. Further, the point of entrance is not the issue, but whether or not that is the **present** condition: “if any man **BE** in Christ.”

From the highest view, being “in Christ” is the result of God’s own work. As it is written, “**But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**”^{NASB} (1 Cor 1:30). And again, “**And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 2:6).

There is a unanimity in Christ Jesus that produces a blending of spirits that cannot be realized anywhere else. It is written, “For as many of you as have been baptized into

Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus**” (Gal 3:27-28).

Ponder the blessed associations related to being “in Christ.”

hath anointed us, is God” (2 Cor 1:21).

- **LIBERTY.** “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage”

While religious men are prone to assume people are “in Christ,” that circumstance is never assumed in Scripture. In fact, this is the fundamental issue, and it is to be confirmed with proper evidence, not empty words.

- **NO CONDEMNATION.** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:1).

- **ONE BODY.** “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom 12:5).

- **SANCTIFICATION.** “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor 1:2).

- **ESTABLISHMENT.** “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and

(Gal 2:4).

- **ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 1:3).

These are not possible benefits to those who are in Christ Jesus, but present realities. The only thing to be established to the individual is whether or not one is “in Christ.” Is it as simple as confirming that you obeyed the Gospel, or were “baptized into Christ?” I suppose there is a sense in which this could be said – **but that is not the approach of the Spirit.** The real confirmation is **not** found in what men

have done, but in what God Himself has done. **That is the work that must be uncovered if ever a soul is going to have confidence before “the King**

over all the earth” (Psa 47:7). This is certainly not divorced from our obedience. Yet, it is **the Divine work** that is the issue here, and that is what must be

established. We must not allow men to divert our attention from this. Behold, now, the manner in which the Spirit reasons, and take it into your heart.

THE NEW CREATURE

^{17b} . . . **he is a new creature . . .**” Other versions read, “he is a new creation,”^{NKJV} “he is in a new world,”^{BBE} “become new persons. They are not the same anymore,”^{NLT} “becomes a brand new person,”^{LIVING} “he is the work of a new creation,”^{WILLIAMS} “he is a new creation (a new creature altogether),”^{AMPLIFIED} and “he becomes a new person altogether.”^{PHILLIPS}

Being “*in Christ*” is **not** confirmed by the mere adoption of a new manner of life. It is **not** the adoption of a new creed. It is **not** going through a ceremony, akin to the “*divers washings*” that were accomplished under the Law (Heb 9:10). **In all of human history, there has never been a creation like that which is accomplished “in Christ.”** In all of its grandeur and marvelous complexity, the creation of “*the worlds*” (Heb 1:2; 11:3) pales in the glory of the “*new creation*.”

Here is a work that is of another

in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph 1:10). It is also in accord with the Lord Jesus Himself, One who was from heaven, inhabiting a body upon the earth (1 Cor 15:47; Heb 10:5-10).

The “*new creation*” is what really matters. Therefore it is written, “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation*” (Gal 6:15). If “*a new creation*” cannot be found, nothing else matters. The most illustrious Jewish or Gentile backgrounds are of no value when standing before God. Jewish institutions and ceremonies count for nothing. Gentile schools and mega-churches count for nothing.

GLORIOUS NEWNESS

This is a “*new*” **kind** of creation – a new **order**, a new **type**. Ponder the remarkable scope of this newness.

• **NEWNESS OF LIFE** – A new kind of life that thrives in the heavenly

fellowshipping with Jesus. “*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph 4:24). “*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*” (Col 3:10).

• **A NEW HEART** – A new primary principle of motivation, purpose, and thought – a new personal identity. “*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh*” (Ezek 36:26).

• **A NEW SPIRIT** – A new inner man to which the Holy Spirit can bear witness, that we are the children of God. “*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh*” (Ezek 11:19).

• **A NEW NAME** – A new identity that blends with the heavenly order, being recognized by both the Lord and His holy angels. “*And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name*” (Isa 62:2).

• **A NEW BIRTH** – A new kind of generation in which we become the progeny of Jesus Himself, who had no fleshly offspring, yet is the “*everlasting Father*” (Isa 9:6). “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*” (1 Pet 1:23).

The person who is “*in Christ*” has an enlightened understanding, having been “*illuminated*” (Heb 6:4; 10:32). His judgment has been corrected so he can

In all of human history, there has never been a creation like that which is accomplished “in Christ.” In all of its grandeur and marvelous complexity, the creation of “the worlds” pales in the glory of the “new creation.”

order – a creation that is accomplished “*in Christ*.” It is written, “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Eph 2:10). This is creation that brings heaven and earth together. It is strict accord with the established purpose of God: “*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are*

realms and prepares us for glory. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Rom 6:4).

• **A NEW MAN** – A different kind of identity, invested with Divine qualities, and capable of

evaluate properly. His conscience has been purged (Heb 9:14; 10:22; 1 Pet 3:21), so that, for the first time, he can stand in the presence of God without a sense of condemnation.

This “*new creation*” is necessary because of the new order into which we have been transferred (Colo 1:13). We have a “*new covenant*” (Heb 12:24), and “*a new and living way*” that lead’s to God

Himself (Heb 10:20). The body of people comprising “*the church*” is a “*new man*” in which both Jew and Gentile are brought together (Eph 2:15).

If “*any man*” is in Christ Jesus, this is what he is – a “*new creation.*” **He is fundamentally the product of God’s own doing,** “*and it is marvelous in our eyes*” (Psa 118:23; Mk 12:11). This is not a goal toward which men are to

aim. Rather, this is what actually occurs in Christ Jesus. It ought to be apparent that it is imperative to get into Christ. However, the most important thing is to know that you **are** there **now**.

This is something that is not to be taken for granted, or approached as though the fulfillment of a routine was all there was to it. For this reason, the Spirit will now elaborate on what is involved in becoming a “*new creation.*”

DEFINING NEW CREATURESHIP

^{17c} . . . ***old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.***”

At this point, it will become apparent that a legal, or Law mind-set cannot process this kind of information. **It extends beyond the reach of Law, which knows nothing of newness or creation.** The words that follow do not describe rules, but realities that are found in the “*new creation.*” These conditions are found within those who are “*in Christ*” – all of them.

OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY

“ . . . *old things are passed away* . . . ” Other versions read, “*the old things passed away,*”^{NASB} “*the old has gone,*”^{NIV} “*everything old has passed away,*”^{NRSV} “*the old things have come to an end,*”^{BBE} “*the old order is gone,*”^{NJB} “*the old life is gone,*”^{NLT} “*the old things did pass away,*”^{YLT} “*the old state of things has passed away,*”^{WEYMOUTH} “*Old things have disappeared,*”^{ISV} “*the old condition has passed away,*”^{WILLIAMS} “*the old life has passed away,*”^{MONTGOMERY} “*the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away,*”^{AMPLIFIED} and “*the past is finished and gone.*”^{PHILLIPS}

What are “*old things?*” **In a nutshell, it is everything that has not been made “new.”** Paul has already told us that with the dawning of the New Covenant, the glory Old Covenant “*is done away*” (2 Cor 3:11). Its ordinances “*which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,*” have “*passed away*” (Heb 9:10). The guilt produced by the Law

has “*passed away*” (Rom 3:19). The covenant which promised life upon the basis of doing has “*passed away*” (Lev 18:5). Our “*old sins*” have “*passed away*” (2 Pet 1:9). Our former state of alienation (Eph 4:18) and enmity (Eph 2:16) have “*passed away.*”

Our former way of looking at life has “*passed away,*” together with knowing men “*after the flesh.*” Our former manner of life, or “*walk*” has “*passed away,*” and we no longer fashion our lives according to our “*former lusts*” (1 Pet 1:14). Our old approach to life has passed away, together with our manner of viewing the Word of God and the things of God.

In the Divine economy, when something new is created, the

and a new earth” come into prominence, the “*first heaven and the first earth*” will “*pass away*” (Rev 21:1).

Thus the “new creation” prepares us to live in newness now, and inhabit the new realm to come. Oldness is out of order in both domains. For this reason, old manners must not be found among the members of Christ’s household. Rather, we are to “**put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts**” (Eph 4:22). He is to be “*put off . . . with his deeds*” (Col 3:9).

BEHOLD

“ . . . *behold . . .* ” Other versions read, “*see,*”^{NRSV} “*lo,*”^{YLT} “*Listen,*”^{IE} and “*and-look!*”^{ISV}

Here is something we are to

Thus the “new creation” prepares us to live in newness now, and inhabit the new realm to come. Oldness is out of order in both domains. For this reason, old manners must not be found among the members of Christ’s household.

preceding has to go. Thus, when God “*created the heavens the earth,*” the darkness and chaos that preceded it “*passed away.*” When the “*New Covenant*” was inaugurated, the Old Covenant is described as “*ready to vanish away*” (Heb 8:13). When a “*new heavens*

“*behold,*” lifting up our eyes and taking in the precious view. This word – “**BEHOLD!**” – is a word that “**demands prompt attention.**”^{THAYER} The idea is that a condition has now taken place that requires immediate consideration. The power of the circumstance necessitates

In living for and laboring with God, it is imperative that we be correctly compelled, or driven – by Given O. Blakely

observing it, pondering it, and knowledgeably basking in its light. It will not have the intended effect upon us if it is ignored, or if we remain in ignorance of it. **The things that accompany the new creation are as real as the creation itself.**

When God “created the heavens and the earth” He filled them with good things. He filled the earth with grass, herbs, and trees, each having its seed in itself (Gen 1:12). He placed “lights in the firmament to divide the day from the night,” commanding them to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years” (Gen 1:14). He continued by placing “two great lights” in the heavens to rule the day and the night, and He “made the stars also” (Gen 1:16-18). Focusing upon “the waters,” the Lord called forth an abundance of “living creatures,” also filling the airy heavens “with fowl that could fly above the earth in the open firmament of the heaven.” He also created “great whales,” and every creature of the water, together with all manner of “winged fowl” (Gen 1:20-22). On the sixth day the Lord moved His attention to the earth, filling it with all manners of creatures including “cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth” (Gen 1:24-25). **EVERYTHING HAD BEEN MADE NEW!** That is the manner of the Lord when making new things.

Now the Lord calls upon us to “BEHOLD” the new creation – the one in which we ourselves participate in Christ Jesus.

ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW

“ . . . all things are become new.”

Other versions read, “behold, new things have come,”^{NASB} “the new has come,”^{NIV} “everything has become new,”^{NRSV} “they have truly become new,”^{BBE} “all things are made new,”^{DOUAY} “A new life has begun,”^{NLT} “become new have the all things,”^{YLT} “a new state of things has come into existence,”^{WEYMOUTH} “a new condition has come,”^{WILLIAMS} “the new is come,”^{MONTGOMERY} “the fresh and new has come,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “everything has become fresh and new.”^{PHILLIPS}

The “new creation” will not come one whit behind the old one! God has already told us that He is going to “make all things new” (Rev 21:5).

Right now, in the “newness of life,” we are introduced to this whole new order of things. Life itself becomes “new,” with new experiences, new affections, and new perceptions. We experience a **new** kind of peace that “passeth understanding” (Phil 4:7), a **new** kind of joy that is “unspeakable” (1 Pet 1:8), and a **new**

I AM HIS AND HE IS MIND

George W. Robinsion, 1876

1. Loved with everlasting love,
led by grace that love to know;
Gracious Spirit from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so!
O this full and perfect peace!
O this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.
2. Heav'n above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen;
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as I now know,
I am His, and He is mine.
Since I know, as I now know,
I am His, and He is mine.
3. Things that once were wild
alarms,
cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms,
pillowed on the loving breast.
O to lie forever here,
doubt and care and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear,
I am His, and He is mine.
While He whispers in my ear,
I am His, and He is mine.
4. His forever, only His;
Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss,
Christ can fill the loving heart!
Heav'n and earth may fade and flee,
firstborn light in gloom decline;
But while God and I shall be, I am
His,
and He is mine.
But while God and I shall be, I am
His,
and He is mine.

kind of knowledge “that passeth knowledge” (Eph 3:19). Creation is seen in a **new** light, as groaning in travail, in expectation of being liberated from

mortality when the sons of God are made known (Rom 8:21-22). “Behold, all things are become new!”

Now we view “the sufferings of this present time” in a **new** light, considering that they “are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18). Now that we are “created in Christ Jesus,” these abrasive circumstances are seen as our employees, “working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor 4:17). “Behold, all things are become new!”

Now, “though we see Him not,” we love the Lord Jesus earnestly and with all of our hearts, believing and rejoicing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8). Now we are in possession of a hope that reaches “within the veil” (Heb 6:19). Because we have a High Priest that ever lives, we have continual access to the Throne of grace “to obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Heb 4:15-16).

Now, for the first time, we see what this new life is all about. We are being changed from one increasing stage of glory to another by the Holy Spirit, being readied to put on immortality. In fact, God has “wrought,” or created us for this very purpose. The contemplation of this final change produces a deep yearning with us, moving us to desire to be “clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Cor 5:5). “Behold, all things are become new!”

A different perspective on everything is possessed, now that we are “in Christ Jesus.” We have a different view of heaven, the earth, life, and death. Our view of Jesus is different. We see Satan in a different way. The church is seen in a new light, together with our families, our jobs, and our possessions. “Behold, all things are become new!”

WHAT OF A RELIGION IN WHICH ALL THINGS HAVE NOT BECOME NEW?

What are we to think when we confront a religion of oldness, where men attempt to serve the Lord in “the oldness of the letter?” (Rom 7:6). **What if there is no freshness, and none of the**

traits of spiritual life – like a hunger and thirst for righteousness, pressing toward the mark, and running to obtain the prize? What if these things are absent, and only a “*form of godliness*” remains that “*denies the power thereof*?” (2 Tim 3:5). Who does not know that most serious disciples regularly confront such things? They are traits of the contemporary American church that are very troubling to tender and sensitive souls.

☛ First, there is no such thing as “*newness of life*” that conforms to the “*old*” ways of the world or the Old Covenant.

- ☛ Second, it is not possible for the “*new creation*” to lack newness.
- ☛ Third, it is impossible for a person to be “*in Christ*,” yet lack the things that bear testimony to that fact.
- ☛ Fourth, No individual can be “*in Christ*” yet live for self – the very thing from which the death of Christ delivers us.
- ☛ Fifth, if “*old things*” have not passed away, and “*all things*” have not become new, there is no evidence that new creatureship even exists. All claims to being in Christ remain

unsubstantiated, and may even be nothing more than lies.

- ☛ Sixth, if “*the love of Christ*” does not constrain, or compel people, it is only because it has not been perceived. Such a condition betrays a state of spiritual blindness – something depicting an alienated state, not one of reconciliation.
- ☛ Seventh, if people view their peers and the Lord Jesus after the manner of men, or according to the flesh, they evidence that their old life has not ended. If that is the case, it is only because a new life has not begun.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that we have dealt with a very weighty matter. Through the Holy Spirit, Paul has set before us the stark realities of life in Christ Jesus. We know this is the case because of the nature of his words. **They are all affirmations, and affirmations are assertions of what exists, not what ought to be.** The manner of the Old Covenant was the statement of requirements: “*Thou shalt*,” and “*Thou shalt not*.” But that is **not** the manner of the New Covenant. This is a “*better covenant established upon better promises*” (Heb 8:6). The reason for this condition is the thorough work of Jesus upon earth, and His continued work at the right hand of God.

Jesus **did**, in fact, “*put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Heb 9:26). He **did** “*make peace through the blood of His cross*” (Col 1:20), and through Him God “*reconciled the world unto Himself*” (2 Cor 5:18-20). Jesus **was** “*made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor 5:21). With unquestionable effectiveness, the Lord Jesus “*through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Heb 2:14). He thoroughly plundered “*principalities and powers, triumphing over them*” in His cross (Col 2:15). **These are all Kingdom realities – not human goals, but Divine accomplishments.**

It is upon the basis of these unparalleled achievements, and through our faith, that God, according to Second Corinthians has done the following.

- ☛ He has established us in Christ, and anointed us with His Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21).
- ☛ He has sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor 1:22).
- ☛ He always causes us to triumph in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 2:14).
- ☛ We are all being changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of God (2 Cor 3:18).
- ☛ He has shined into our hearts with the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6).
- ☛ He has wrought us for the purpose of putting on immortality, and inhabiting our house which is from heaven (2 Cor 5:5).

You see the solidity of all of these things. None of them are ambiguous or questionable. None are theoretical or philosophical. They reflect the very nature of the New Covenant, and the newness of life that is possessed in Christ.

Now, once more recall the firm statements that Paul has made in our text. They are all affirmations concerning which there can be no doubt.

- ☛ The love of Christ constraineth us.
- ☛ We judge that if One died for all, then all are dead.
- ☛ Jesus died that we would no longer live for ourselves.
- ☛ Jesus died that from now on, we would live for the One who died for us and rose again.
- ☛ From now on we know no man after the flesh.
- ☛ From now on we do not know Jesus after the flesh.
- ☛ If any person is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation.
- ☛ If any person is in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away.
- ☛ If any person is in Christ Jesus, all things have become new.

I hardly see how a stronger case can be made for life in Christ Jesus. Now, it is our business to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/15/2005. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The twenty-fifth lesson will cover verses eighteen through twenty-one of the fifth chapter: **"THE RECONCILIATION"** This is a most marvelous proclamation of the fact, extent, and means of our reconciliation to God. What took place in this grand work continues to challenge angelic hosts, noted for the power and wisdom. It is also a stumbling block to those who have hard hearts, and a great comfort to those who believe. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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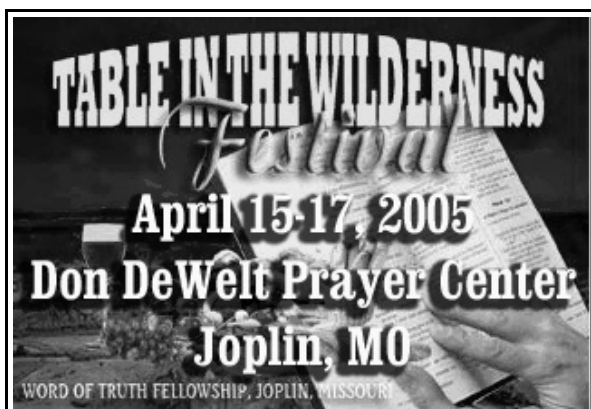
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