



THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Lesson Number 7



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, 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, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

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

WHAT JESUS HAS DONE

“ 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled, ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.” ^{KJV} (Colossians 1:20-22)

INTRODUCTION

The salvation of God is worthy of the most profound and extended consideration. There is nothing about it that is infantile or simplistic. **Anything requiring the purpose of God, the work of Jesus, the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of angels cannot be elemental and easy to be comprehended.**

Consider the manner in which the Lord refers to this salvation that is in Christ Jesus. These texts confirm the greatness of salvation, and the purpose that is being realized through it.

✦ **ALL FLESH WILL SEE.** “*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God*” (Luke 3:6). These very words challenge our thinking. Salvation is not only global in provision, but is

also tailored for global perception.

✦ **UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.** “*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth*” (Acts 13:47). The wake of salvation will reach the furthest extremities of the earth, stretching as far as the effects of sin.

✦ **THE TIME IN WHICH GOD SUCCORS.** “*For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Cor 6:2). Salvation not only has to do with coming out of

sin, but with staying out of sin. It has to do with nurturing and sustaining the believer while in a hostile realm.

✦ **APPOINTED TO OBTAIN.** “*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thess 5:9). Salvation is associated with Divine appointment. Although the nature and extent of this appointment may be the subject of disputation, the fact of it is to be believed.

✦ **CHOSEN TO.** “*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*” (2 Thess 2:13). The

OUTLINE

- ▶ JESUS MADE PEACE (1:20a)
- ▶ THE MEANS, THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS (1:20b)
- ▶ ALL THINGS RECONCILED BY CHRIST (1:20c)
- ▶ THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS IN HEAVEN (1:20d)
- ▶ OUR FORMER CONDITION (1:21a)
- ▶ RECONCILED NOW (1:21b)
- ▶ RECONCILED IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH (1:22a)
- ▶ PRESENTED HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE (1:22b)
- ▶ UNREPROVEABLE (1:22c)
- ▶ IN HIS SIGHT (1:22d)

salvation of God is implemented by Divinely chosen means. On God's part, it is through the separating power of the Holy Spirit. On man's part, it is through the belief of the truth.

- ✦ **WITH ETERNAL GLORY.** *"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory**"* (2 Tim 2:10). Salvation comes with more than forgiveness – more than cleansing. It also comes with *"eternal glory,"* and it is not completed until that glory is experienced in fulness.
- ✦ **BROUGHT BY GRACE.** *"For the grace of God that **bringeth salvation** hath appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11). Men cannot climb up to salvation, it has to be brought down to them. It cannot be brought within their grasp by humanly devised means, but can only come within our reach by the grace of God – something God alone gives and controls.
- ✦ **A GREAT SALVATION.** *"How shall we escape, if we neglect **so great salvation**; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him"* (Heb 2:3). Salvation is *"great"* – great in size or bulk. The word *"great"* includes the ideas of

important and mighty as well as immense in extent and provision. It also carries the idea of great age, stretching from *"before the foundation of the earth"* into eternity, when time shall be no more.

- ✦ **SALVATION WITH A CAPTAIN.** *"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the **Captain of their salvation** perfect through sufferings"* (Heb 2:10). Salvation, in all of its phases, requires a Captain, or Chief Leader. The *"sons"* must not only be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, they must be brought to God (1 Pet 3:18), and led to glory (Heb 2:10). That leading must take them through the *"wiles of the devil,"* all manner of temptation, times of ignorance and frustration, and all manner of testing.
- ✦ **ETERNAL SALVATION.** *"And being made perfect, He became the Author of **eternal salvation** unto all them that obey Him"* (Heb 5:9). Salvation can only be viewed properly within the context of eternity. The framework of *"this present evil world"* is too small to contain the concept or experience of salvation. After the present heavens and the earth have passed away, and the devil, his motley host, and all who followed him, have been cast into the lake of fire, we read of *"the saved of the nations"* (Rev 21:24). Indeed, this is an *"eternal salvation"* with *"eternal life"* (Tit 1:2), an *"eternal inheritance"* (Heb 9:15) and a *"reign"* that is *"for ever and ever"* (Rev 22:5).
- ✦ **WITH GREAT ACCOMPANIMENTS.** *"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and **things that accompany salvation**, though we thus speak"* (Heb 6:9). The salvation

of God has certain accompaniments – things that blend with it, and are the consequence of it. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25), the love of the brethren (1 Thess 4:9), the love of the truth (2 Thess 2:10), overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5), and much more company salvation. Where they are found, salvation is found, and where they are absent, salvation is absent.

- ✦ **THE SUBJECT OF PROPHET'S INQUIRY.** *"Of which salvation **the prophets have inquired and searched diligently**, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you"* (1 Pet 1:10). Holy prophets of God spoke of this salvation, and when they did it whetted their appetites and challenged their thinking. They sensed its largeness as well as its effectuality, and therefore probed into it, seeking to comprehend something of its nature and timing. Yet, they were told it was not for them to know such things (1 Pet 1:11-12).
- ✦ **READY TO BE REVEALED.** *"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto **salvation ready to be revealed** in the last time"* (1 Pet 1:5). The salvation of God is experienced in this world, but only in a first fruits sense (Rom 8:23). There remains grace that will be *"brought"* to us at *"the revelation of Christ"* (1 Pet 1:13). We have yet to experience *"The redemption of the body"* (Rom 8:23), seeing our Lord *"as He is,"* and being *"like Him"* (1 John 3:2).

How could a salvation like this, in any way, be characterized by childlike simplicity? The modern church has **not** done well in its representation of the salvation of God. It speaks of *"the salvation of the lost,"* as though that exhausted the concept of salvation. This is a completely erroneous concept of salvation, and is nowhere reflected in the Word of God.

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It ought to be noted that the word “salvation” is never mentioned together with the word “lost” or “sinners.” It is true, and it is to be proclaimed, that Christ “came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15). But even then, Paul added “of whom I AM (not “was”) chief” – that is, he himself was still in the process of being saved.

We believers are told, “now is

which “neglect” closes off the way of “escape.” Thus it is written, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Heb 2:3). **You cannot “neglect” what you have received in fulness.**

For this reason, and many others, the Holy Spirit spoke to believers

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OUR salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom 13:11). The day in which we live is also called “the day of salvation,” and is associated with “succor,” which is relief or nourishment, which is an aspect of our salvation (2 Cor 6:2). Now, as we do battle with the powers of darkness, we must put on the helmet of “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess 5:8). Obviously, the whole of salvation has not yet been experienced, else we would not require “the HOPE of salvation.”

This is a salvation that can be “neglected” by those who possess it,

frequently about the Lord Jesus, the purpose of His mission, His accomplishments, and His appointed return. Whatever is said of those in Christ Jesus, they are not permitted the seeming luxury of forgetting their Savior or neglecting “so great salvation.” That is one of the reasons for this passage.

The Message to the Churches

When John was on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus revealed Himself to him (Rev 1:10-17). John saw the glorified Christ. The very first thing He told John

was “Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev 1:17-18). In confirmation of the ongoing work of salvation, He then gave John a message to deliver to His churches in Asia (1:19-3:22). That message included an assessment of each church, exhortations, and promises. All but two of the churches received reprimands and a warning to repent. In the Revelation there is no word for sinners, and no correction for social or governmental leaders. It is exclusively a word to the churches – to those who have been given “ears to hear.”

If we knew nothing more than this, we should be able to readily conclude there is still a work going on in the churches – a work that is within the circumference of salvation. The work in them upon the earth is not yet completed.

This is precisely why Paul now affirms what the Lord has done. It all relates to salvation. You might call it the **salvation of the saved**, for all who are in Christ Jesus are in the process of being saved. The power that accomplishes that salvation comes through the Gospel, which is God’s “power unto salvation” (Rom 1:16).

Therefore, the good news about Jesus will now be declared. That Gospel must be proclaimed.

PEACE MADE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

^{41:20a} **And, having made peace** . . . Other versions read, “by making peace,”^{NIV} and “through peace made by.”^{GENEVA}

Having declared who the Lord Jesus Christ is, the Spirit now unfolds what God the Father has accomplished through Him – **for Jesus came to do God’s will** (Heb 10:9). The Father is the One who sent the Son into the world (1 John 4:14), and it is His will that the Son accomplished. It was, after all, “the pleasure of the Lord” that would prosper “in His hand” (Isa 53:10).

We should not expect the One who is “the Image of the invisible God,” to accomplish small and eternally inconsequential things. You may rest assured that the one who created all things, and who is the One for whom they were all created, will not engage in menial tasks, or devote Himself to works that have nothing to do with God’s eternal purpose. The One who is “before all things,” and by whom all things are sustained will not be devoted to mere temporal matters. We should not look for small and unimpressive things from the

One who is the “Head of the body, the Beginning,” and “the Firstborn from the dead,” to give Himself to trivia. The One who has preeminence in all things will not be associated with passing fads. **The One in whom the Father is pleased to have “all fulness dwell,” will surely devote Himself to some grand enterprise that will bring great glory to God, and be impressive to the vast array of heavenly hosts that surround the throne.**

Some versions place this clause (v 20) after the statement concerning

reconciliation: i.e., *“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”* NKJV/NASB/NIV These versions state the effect first (reconciliation), and the cause second (having made peace through the blood of His cross). The KJV merely states it chronologically, confirming that **the reconciliation resulted from the peace that was made through the blood of Christ’s cross.**

AND

“And . . . ” This word connects with the previous declaration of the Person and position of the Son of God. That is, **the works that follow are the result of who He is.** To put it another way, God sent Jesus into the world in the capacity of a Man in order to achieve the matters that follow. These are part of the purpose He was to achieve. **They are matters that are essential to salvation.** If men are to be rescued from the dilemma of sin, these are the things that **had** to be done. They are not optional. They are not matters that can be ignored, despised, neglected, or treated with disinterest. **We could not be saved without the accomplishment of these realities. They had to be done, and done effectively, timely, and to the thorough satisfaction of God.**

Two prevailing reasons can be cited for the Word becoming flesh, and all of the attending circumstances that resulted from it.

- ✚ In order to **qualify Him** to be the Savior of men.
- ✚ In order to **accomplish what was required** for men to be saved.

The things addressed in this text deal with the later – what was required for men to be saved. Without these accomplishments recovery from the fall – salvation – could never be realized.

HAVING MADE

“ . . . having made . . . ” The language here is very precise. The phrase *“having made peace”* actually comes from a single Greek word – εἰρηνοποιήσας. It means to make peace, or establish harmony. ^{THAYER} **Through Christ God has, in fact, established this**

harmony, or peace. It is already been established. No further work is required upon which to ground this peace. It has been *“made.”*

The phrase does not mean that the experience of the peace has been thoroughly realized, but that **the basis for it has been established.** In other words, this is an affirmation addressed to the believing heart. It is a statement faith can grasp, for we are ever saved *“by grace through faith”* (Eph 2:8), and **faith must have a word from God.**

PEACE

“ . . . peace . . . ” Peace is a large

promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12).

- ✚ *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”* (Rom 5:10).
- ✚ *“Because the carnal mind is **enmity against God:** for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”* (Rom 8:7).

There is no possible way this circumstance could be remedied by

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word, indeed. **The making of peace confirms that sin had introduced hostility between God and man.** Man’s lostness includes more than simply being apart from God. It also involves being at **enmity** with God, or at war with Him, as well as God being firmly set against man. I fear this picture has not faithfully been declared by the professing church. It is true that *“God so loved the world,”* yet sin introduced a situation that drove a wedge between man and God. This is stated in a number of different ways in Scripture.

- ✚ *“ . . . he that believeth not is **condemned already,** because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John 3:18).
- ✚ *“ . . . he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abideth on him”** (John 3:36).*
- ✚ *“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of*

man himself. The keeping of a code, or the fulfillment of a procedure, could not remove the enmity that sin created. The wrath of God cannot be lifted from man by a system of works, or by man fulfilling a routine. Something had to be done at a higher level. Peace had to be *“made,”* not negotiated. **A sound basis for peace had to be established – one that permitted God to be just in the justifying of sinners.**

The Proclamation of Ephesians

A parallel passage in Ephesians establishes the scope of this peace. Not only did sin create enmity between God and man, there was also hostility between Jew and Gentile, a division of peoples resulting from God making a covenant with Israel. The whole of this situation was resolved by God through Jesus Christ. Thus is it proclaimed, *“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might*

reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph 2:14-18).

Now, the One through whom the

that were nigh.”

✚ Twice in this Ephesian text, the condition of men is described as “enmity:” “Having abolished in His flesh **the enmity** . . . having slain **the enmity** thereby.” In the first instance, the “enmity” is identified as “the law of commandments contained

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peace was made, Himself becomes our peace, so that **if we have Jesus, we have peace with God**. Notice the complexity of the situation brought on by sin, and the thoroughness of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

✚ The peace has united Jew and Gentile in one body: “who hath made both one.”

✚ The Law, which was the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile, has been broken down. Christ has ended it as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4): “and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” That is, the Law as a covenant separated Jew and Gentile, for it was an agreement made solely with Israel.

✚ There could be no peace with God while the larger segment of humanity was without a covenant, having no access to God or promise from Him: “having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . having slain the enmity thereby.”

✚ Having made the peace, the Lord Jesus had to come and preach it, else we would never have known about it: “and came and **preached peace** to you which were afar off, and to them

in ordinances.” In the second, the enmity itself that was resident in fallen humanity was “put to death.”
NASB

✚ This “peace” resulted in men, through Christ, having access to the Father “by one Spirit.”

✚ This marvelous peace is described in these words: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are **made nigh by the blood of Christ**” (Eph 2:13).

The making of peace, therefore, involved the death of Christ. It also involved the removal of the hostility created by sin. There was also the removal, or abolishment, of the Law as a covenant, or means to righteousness.

The “peace” of reference involves deliverance from sin by which men had become God’s enemies. It also involves the freedom of the conscience which, when defiled, forbids us to come to God. It causes God to welcome those upon whom, His wrath once abode. The ground of it all is found in what occurred on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Much Is Made of this Peace

It is unfortunate that a strain of religion has risen in the land that does not make much of the peace God made through Christ. **This failure is directly**

traceable to the insipid views of sin and transgression that are being hawked by religious leaders. When sin is attributed to disease, social maladjustment, physiological disorders, and other such things, the peace made through Jesus no longer has any significance. However, when sin is seen as rebellion against God, creating hostility and enmity, and causing the wrath of God to rest upon sinners, the peace of reference is seen as precious. Notice that is said of this peace.

✚ God is on the initiative “give” peace (Rom 1:7).

✚ Being justified by faith, “we have peace with God” (Rom 5:1).

✚ The Gospel is called “the Gospel of peace” (Rom 10:15).

✚ The kingdom of God “IS” in peace (Rom 14:17).

✚ God can “fill” us with peace through our faith (Rom 15:13).

✚ This is a peace that “keeps” both heart and mind (Phil 4:7).

✚ The peace of God can “rule” in our hearts (Col 3:15).

✚ God can give His people peace “always by all means” (2 Thess 3:16).

This is not a mere psychological tranquility, which is nothing more than the absence of agitation. **This is a peace that sustains one in the very presence of God – a peace that even constrains one to come into the presence of God.**

The point of our text is that this peace was “made” – made by God in Christ Jesus. God could not make this peace by means of the Law. Nor, indeed, could it be created by simply overlooking the hostility that existed between fallen man and Himself. **Hostility cannot be eliminated by simply ignoring it.** Therefore, the means through which this peace was made will be powerfully declared, because it was effectively made to the glory of God..

THE NECESSITY OF THIS PEACE

It ought to be noted that “peace

with God” is absolutely essential. In fact, it is the confirmed result of being justified by faith. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom 5:1).

“Peace with God” results from no longer being His “enemies” – a status into which sin had thrust us. As it is written,

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom 5:10). In the state of nature, dominated by “the carnal mind,” we were at “enmity against God” (Rom 8:7). **That condition kept us from the Lord, raising up an impenetrable wall between us and**

God – a wall only God could remove.

Not only that, we had no desire come to Him, but were rather repulsed by His presence, drawing back from Him. Jesus “made peace” in order to correct that situation. Had He not “made peace,” we would have remained in that alienated condition.

THE MEANS – THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS

^{20b} *“... through the blood of His cross ...”* Nearly all versions read the same: *“the blood of His cross.”* The NIV and NIB read, *“through His blood, shed on the cross.”*

The required peace was not made by Jesus being born, but by Him dying. It was not the result of His life on earth, but His death upon the cross.

THE BLOOD

Under the Law the Lord established the significance of blood. *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”* (Lev 17:11). Because of the sanctity of the blood, and in anticipation of the sacrifice of Christ, the Law forbade men to eat blood. *“For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off”* (Lev 17:14).

In this text “the blood” encapsulates the voluntary and very literal death of the Lord Jesus. This was the laying down of His life, which the Father commanded Him to do (John 10:17-18). It was a substitutionary death, with its merits being realized by those whose own death counted for nothing. **This death resulted in the ultimate atonement for the soul**, being prefigured in the sacrifices offered under the Law (Lev 17:11). It was required because sin took life from man – both in the natural and in the spiritual. **In order for life to be restored to man, it**

must be taken from another, whose life was thoroughly acceptable to God – without sin or any form of defilement.

All of this was introduced in the various animal sacrifices that were offered under the Law. Because an atoning death required remarkable complexities, it could not be fully depicted in a single Levitical sacrifice. What was required was so extensive that many different kinds of sacrifices were required to reveal its nature. A brief review of these sacrifices of life will help us appreciate the thoroughness of Christ’s death. Here, I will look at only the creatures offered.

✦ **LAMB.** *“If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before*

birth was offered. The lamb forfeited the right to bring forth natural seed. Jesus fulfilled this figure in His death, being cut off prematurely, and having no earthly generation (Isa 53:8).

✦ **HE LAMB.** *“And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD”* (Lev 14:12). **Here was a lamb that had the potential of having progeny, yet that capacity was terminated when it was offered to God.** Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life of great earthly potential to God.

IN THIS TEXT “THE BLOOD” ENCAPSULATES THE VOLUNTRARY AND VERY LITERAL DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS. THIS WAS THE LAYING DOWN OF HIS LIFE, WHICH THE FATHER COMMANDED HIM TO DO

the LORD” (Lev 3:7). **Here was an offering depicting innocence and weakness.** The Lord fulfilled this type in being “crucified through weakness” (2 Cor 13:4), and being led as a Lamb, dumb to the slaughter (Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32).

✦ **FEMALE LAMB.** *“And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish”* (Lev 4:32). **Here the capacity to give**

✦ **BULLOCK.** *“If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering”* (Lev 4:3). **The offering of a young bullock was the offering of strength and vitality.** Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice to God in the strength of young manhood, thus fulfilling this figure.

‡ **HEIFER.** “This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke” (Num 19:2-17). **The heifer was one that had never been used for other purposes. Its sole utility pertained to the Lord.** Jesus fulfilled this figure in never being used to fulfill another person’s will, like the lost whom He came to save had done.

‡ **SLAIN GOAT.** “And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD” (Lev 3:12). **Goats were much like sheep, except they excelled in strength, living in higher places,** whereas sheep inhabited plains and valleys. Jesus fulfilled this type by sacrificing a life that was strong, and lived in the higher domains of godliness and accord with God.

‡ **LIVE GOAT.** “And when he hath

shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Lev 16:20-22). **The living goat could navigate in uninhabitable realms more safely than a sheep. It was strong and able to move about where weaker animals would succumb.** Jesus fulfilled this type by moving into a realm that could not be penetrated by any other man. There He presented His own blood, thereby making His death effective.

‡ **SLAIN BIRD.** “And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: and he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water: and he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times” (Lev 14:49-51). **The bird was more noted for beauty and dexterity than strength and servitude.** Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life of unexcelled beauty before God – a life that was lived freely and with

lived out in the heavenly places, soaring where others could not go.

‡ **TURTLEDOVE.** “And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering” (Lev 5:7). **The turtledove was a gentle and sensitive bird, most often domesticated. It is known for its migratory nature and timid disposition.** Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life that had been gentle and lowly – a life that often preferred lonely vigils with the Father in the higher and less agitated realms.

‡ **RAM.** “If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering” (Lev 5:15). **A ram obtained special value, being considered of greater worth than a sheep. When fattened, it was a favorite article of food.** Our Lord fulfilled this type by offering a life that was noted for strength – a life that was fully capable of overcoming adversaries. He was also a source of great nourishment and encouragement, as all of the disciples could attest.

‡ **BURNT OFFERINGS.** “And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him” (Lev 1:4). **These were offerings that were consumed, leaving no residue – the whole of it was offered to God.** The Savior fulfilled this type by being “made a curse for us,” tasting of death for every man, and being “made sin for us.”

These are not merely interesting observations. In the various sacrifices, the Savior was not only set forth as doing these things. **It was also confirmed that the status of humanity REQUIRED this kind of sacrifice –**

THESE ARE NOT MERELY INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS. IN THE VARIOUS SACRIFICES, THE SAVIOR WAS NOT ONLY SET FORTH AS DOING THESE THINGS. IT WAS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE STATUS OF HUMANITY REQUIRED THIS KIND OF SACRIFICE – THIS KIND OF DEATH – THIS KIND OF BLOOD!

made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both 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 goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he

great spiritual dexterity among men.

‡ **LIVE BIRD.** “But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.” (Lev 14:53). **The living bird could soar from an open field into the spacious heavens, moving about freely and without the restraints to which the beasts of the earth were subject.** Jesus fulfilled this type by offering a life that was without guile – a life that had been

this kind of death – this kind of blood!

Like the **lamb**, the life that was sacrificed for us HAD to be one that was innocent, and characterized by seeming weakness – a life that was allowed to be ravaged by others. Like the **female lamb**, it HAD to be a life that was capable of reproducing – not one like Abraham when he was as good as dead. Like the **he lamb**, it HAD to be a life with great potential for earthly progeny – like Adam in the beginning. Like the **bullock**, the life HAD to excel in strength, and be at the peak of that strength. Like the **red heifer**, the life COULD NOT have toiled in another purpose – the distracting yoke of sinful men COULD NOT have been upon him. Even as the **slain goat**, the life that was given MUST BE noted for strength and being able to navigate in high places. As the **live goat**, the sacrificed life MUST BE able to go where no other could go, presenting the atonement to God. Like the **slain bird**, the atoning life MUST BE one of unexcelled beauty and mobility. As the **living bird**, that life MUST BE able to soar from the open field into the majestic heavens. Even as the **turtledove**, the life MUST BE able to migrate into the heavens and have a disposition that did not crave worldly attention. Like the **ram**, the life MUST BE noted for greatness of value and nourishment for the soul. And, like the **burnt offering**, this life WILL NOT BE allowed to return to the form in which it was offered to God.

This is the kind of blood that had to be shed! No other blood could atone for sin. No other blood could reconcile. No other blood could bring satisfaction to God. This is the kind of complication that sin introduced – a complication that could only be resolved by the coupling of mercy and truth, and the wedding of righteousness and peace (Psa 85:10). **Only the shedding of Christ’s blood could bring about such things.** Only the willing forfeiture of His life could result in such effectual achievements.

There is nothing simplistic about the death of Christ Jesus – the shedding of His blood. That is precisely why various aspects of it were introduced through the Law over a period of 1,500 years.

This is the kind of death that was required for peace to be “made.” **Jesus did not die as a martyr, or a soldier on the battle field** – and His death should never be portrayed in a manner that leaves such an impression. His death is not like a man dying for his country.

In speaking to His disciples about their love for one another Jesus said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). He then told them they were actually His “**friends**” in prospect: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). Technically – and this is the sense of our text – Christ died for us “*when we were enemies*” (Rom 5:10). His death was necessitated by our enmity, not our friendship.

THE INVOLVEMENTS OF THE BLOOD

Ponder something of the involvements of the blood of Christ, for it reveals the magnitude of the peace made by it. Notice they are all powerful affirmations.

- ✚ **THE REMISSION OF SINS.** “For this is **My blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat 26:28).
- ✚ **THE NEW TESTAMENT.** “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, **This cup is the new testament in My blood**, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).
- ✚ **ETERNAL LIFE.** “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh **My blood**, hath

*the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which **He hath purchased with his own blood**” (Acts 20:28).*

- ✚ **PROPITIATION.** “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation **through faith in His blood**, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom 3:25).
- ✚ **JUSTIFICATION.** “Much more then, being now justified **by His blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom 5:9).
- ✚ **REDEMPTION AND FORGIVENESS.** “In whom we have redemption **through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7).
- ✚ **MADE NIGH.** “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh **by the blood of Christ**” (Eph 2:13).
- ✚ **PURGED CONSCIENCE.** “How much more shall **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14).
- ✚ **BOLDNESS TO ENTER.** “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest **by the blood of Jesus**” (Heb 10:19).

THIS IS THE KIND OF COMPLICATION THAT SIN INTRODUCED – A COMPLICATION THAT COULD ONLY BE RESOLVED BY THE COUPLING OF MERCY AND TRUTH, AND THE WEDDING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).

- ✚ **PURCHASE OF THE CHURCH.** “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over

- ✚ **SPEAKING BLOOD.** “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to **the blood of sprinkling**, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb 12:24).

- ✦ **SANCTIFICATION.** *“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people **with His own blood**, suffered without the gate”* (Heb 13:12).
- ✦ **ELECTION.** *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of **the blood of Jesus Christ**: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied”* (1 Pet 1:2)
- ✦ **REDEEMED FROM VAIN LIVING.** *“Forasmuch as ye know*

- ✦ **REDEEMED TO GOD.** *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God **by Thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”* (Rev 5:9).
- ✦ **LIVES CLEANSED.** *“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in **the blood of the***

The great works of Jesus prior to His crucifixion did not effect peace with God. His mighty miracles, gracious healings, and good that He accomplished did not bring peace between God and man. Those were acts of mercy and compassion, revealing the Divine nature. But they did not bring peace. It was the *“blood of His cross”* that *“made peace”* – that is, the blood that was shed there.

This was not the blood that fell to the ground in Gethsmane, when *“His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:44). That was not the blood that *“made peace.”* **It was not the blood that resulted from the scourging delivered by Pilate,** when *“he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified”*(Matt 27:24). **Nor, indeed, was it the blood that appeared when “the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head”**(John 19:1).

The Spirit is precise: peace was made *“through the blood of His cross.”* This blood came from the wounds immediately related to the cross, where Jesus was *“made a curse for us”* – on the tree (Gal 3:13). Specifically, the wounds were in His hands, feet, and side. When Jesus rose from the dead, He showed His disciples *“His hands and His feet”* (Luke 24:40). He also showed His *“side”* (John 20:20), later urging unbelieving Thomas to thrust his hand into the gapping wound left by the spear (John 20:27). John relates that after Jesus had already died, a soldier *“with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water”*(John19:34). The blood that came from these wounds is particularly the blood that *“made peace.”* That is the specific point made by Paul in Galatians 3:13: *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that **hangeth on a tree**”* (Gal 3:13). Peter makes the same association. *“Who his own self bare our sins in His own body **on the tree**, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed”* (1 Pet 2:24).

We were redeemed, and peace was made, at the particular point where our sins were laid upon Christ Jesus. It is when He *“bore our sins,”* and

IT IS NO WONDER THAT SPIRITUALLY MINDED PEOPLE MAKE MUCH OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST! GOD MAKES MUCH OF IT. BEFORE THE LIFE OF GOD COULD COME TO US, CHRIST HAD TO FORFEIT HIS LIFE, VOLUNTARILY LAYING IT DOWN. BEFORE WE COULD LIVE, HE HAD TO DIE.

*that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but **with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Pet 1:18-19).

- ✦ **CONTINUAL CLEANSING.** *“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son** cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).
- ✦ **PRESENT WITNESS.** *“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and **the blood**: and these three agree in one”* (1 John 5:8).
- ✦ **WASHED FROM OUR SINS.** *“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).

Lamb” (Rev 7:14).

- ✦ **OVERCOMING THE DEVIL.** *“And they overcame him by **the blood of the Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”* (Rev 12:11).

It is no wonder that spiritually minded people make much of the blood of Christ! God makes much of it. Before the life of God could come to us, Christ had to forfeit His life, voluntarily laying it down. Before we could live, He had to die.

HIS CROSS

When referring to Christ’s blood, the Spirit is careful to make proper associations – associations that reflect the purpose of God Himself. When Judas lamented that he had betrayed Jesus, he cried out, *“I have sinned in that I have betrayed **the innocent blood**”*(Matt 27:4). He was referring to Christ’s life on earth, not His death. **However, Christ’s life on earth is not what brought us peace** – it was the *“blood of His cross.”*

He was “*made sin for us*” that peace was forged and reconciliation was wrought. Let it be clear in your mind, Jesus did **not** bare the sins of humanity in the manger. He did not carry them in the Temple. They were not laid upon Him in the Garden. Nor, indeed, did He “*taste*” of death in Caiaphas’ palace (Matt 26:57-68), Pilate’s hall (John 18:28-19:11), or when being judged by Herod (Luke 23:7-11). It was through “*the blood of His cross*” that Jesus “*made peace*,” accomplishing atonement and reconciliation.

It Was “HIS Cross”

Jesus was not crucified on a Roman cross, as some thoughtlessly affirm. It was, in every sense, “*HIS cross*.” It belonged to Him by appointment. It belonged to Him by choice. It belonged to Him by purpose.

Just as every disciple has his own cross (Matt 10:38; 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:34; 14:27), so Jesus had “*His cross*” (Matt 27:32; Mk 15:21; John 19:17; Col 1:20; 2:14). Elsewhere it is called “*the cross of Christ*” (1 Cor 1:17; Gal 6:12; Phil 3:18). The point is not the cross itself, but the One to whom it belonged. It is not the material of the cross, but the accomplishments wrought upon and through it that are the real point.

A Technical Point

Right here, there is a technical point to be made. It is necessitated by the spiritually juvenile and surface view that is often taken of the accomplishments of Christ’s death. Although Peter refers specifically to what Jesus bore “*in His body on the tree*,” many associate his words relating to that occasion to some of the sufferings He endured before being crucified. I refer specifically to the words expressed by Isaiah and confirmed by Peter. “*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*” (Isa 53:5). “*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Pet 2:24).

The position is espoused that these are the stripes related to the scourging Jesus received before His crucifixion –

even though very little mention is made of it. It is written that Pilate “*had Jesus scourged*” (Matt 27:26; Mk 15:15; John 19:1). Prior to His betrayal, Jesus told His disciples that He would be scourged (Lk 18:33). **I do not believe the postulate that we were healed by this scourging, delivered prior to our Lord’s crucifixion, can be substantiated.** Nor, indeed, does the Holy Spirit associate our redemption, atonement for sin, reconciliation to God, or the making of peace with that malicious and hateful deed.

When Zechariah prophesied of Jesus being “*wounded*” in the house of His “*friends*,” and a consequent fountain being opened for sin and uncleanness, he affirmed it was **God** who initiated the

for us all” (Rom 8:32). He was “*the Lamb of God*,” not of Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, or the people (John 1:29,36). God is the one who delivered Him “*for our offences*” (Rom 4:25). The “*affliction*” through which peace was made came from God, not from men. Thus Isaiah prophesied, “*yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*” (Isa 53:4). God is the One who “*wounded*” Him, “*bruised*” Him, and “*chastened*” Him (Isa 53:5).

God did not take the scourging of Pilate and turn it into peace! He did not take the buffeting and spittle of men and convert it into peace. **What happened to Jesus in the courts of men is not the basis of our reconciliation, nor was it intended to atone for our sins.** That ought to be so apparent to us that no

I DO NOT BELIEVE THE POSTULATE THAT WE WERE HEALED BY THIS SCOURGING, DELIVERED PRIOR TO OUR LORD’S CRUCIFIXION, CAN BE SUBSTANTIATED.

wounding. “*Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones*” (Zech 13:1,7).

The **effectiveness** of Christ’s death is nowhere traced to what men did to Him. Those atrocities were endured by our blessed Lord, and pondering them produces sorrow in the sensitive of heart. **However, no inspired man has ever called upon us to consider the death of Christ from a purely human point of view.** The physical sufferings of Christ are not the point, even though they were stark realities. **It is what God did to Christ that is the real point, not what Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod did to Him!** It is God Himself who “*made Him to be sin for us*” (2 Cor 5:21). It is God Himself who “*laid upon Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isa 53:6). It is God Himself who “*made*” Him “*a curse for us*” (Gal 3:13). It is God Himself who “*spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up*

word need ever be said about it.

I realize this is disruptive to certain teachings that are extant in the professing church – but such teachings need to be disrupted! **Jesus did not die because of sickness, because sickness does alienate us from God, and is nowhere said to do so.** His death was not necessitated by illness, but by sin. The “*stripes*” by which we are healed resulted in our return “*unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls*” (1 Pet 2:25). All of that relates to peace being made through “*the blood of His cross*.”

The Christian community needs to be more demanding about the truth being preached! The Lord is a God of truth, and sanctifies us through the truth (John 17:17). We are saved through the love of the truth (2 Thess 2:10). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). **God has spoken clearly, concisely, and extensively, about Christ’s blood. It is our business to preach it.**

ALL THINGS RECONCILED BY CHRIST

^{20c} *... by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself ...*

The Spirit now unveils the magnitude of the salvation *“that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”* (2 Tim 2:10). We should not expect that something requiring an *“eternal purpose”* (Eph 3:11), the Word being *“made flesh”* (John 1:14), and Jesus laying down His life and taking it up again (John 10:17-18) to have small consequences. Something requiring the exaltation of Jesus above all things, and the subordination of everything in heaven and earth can be neither small nor simplistic. Whatever requires the continual involvement of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy angels, must be exceedingly large.

BY HIM

“... by Him ...” Other versions

AS SOON AS THE LORD JESUS RECEDES INTO THE BACKGROUND, ALL OF THE BENEFITS REALIZED IN HIM BEGIN TO DISAPPEAR. WHEN JESUS IS UPSTAGED, TAKING A SUBORDINATE POSITION TO ANYONE OR ANYTHING ELSE, IT IS AT THE EXPENSE ALL THAT COMES THROUGH HIM.

read *“through Him.”* ^{NASB/NIV} The *“Him”* of reference is *“the Man Christ Jesus,”* whom God has *“glorified”* (Acts 3:13) and *“exalted”* (Phil 2:9).

The Holy Spirit is very definitive in revealing that all of God’s dealings with us are through the Lord Jesus Christ. **No person has a direct relationship with the Father. It is all through the Son.** This further accentuates the extent to which sin has complicated the human condition. A brief review of Christ’s pivotal position in the entirety of salvation will serve to confirm this.

✚ **Grace and truth** came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

- ✚ **Peace** is preached by Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36).
- ✚ God will **judge** the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom 2:16).
- ✚ **Grace reigns through righteousness** unto eternal life by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:12).
- ✚ God will **raise us from the dead** by Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:14).
- ✚ God **reconciled** us to Himself by Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:18).
- ✚ God **predestinated us to adoption** to Himself by Jesus Christ (Eph 1:5).
- ✚ The **fruits of righteousness** are by Jesus Christ (Phil 1:11).

- ✚ Our **spiritual sacrifices** are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:5).
- ✚ We are **alive to God** through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:11).
- ✚ The gift of God is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23).
- ✚ We **thank God** through Jesus Christ (Rom 7:25).
- ✚ **God receives glory** through Jesus Christ (Rom 16:27).
- ✚ The **blessing of Abraham** has come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Gal 3:14).

- ✚ The **Holy Spirit is shed** on us abundantly through Jesus Christ (Tit 3:6).
- ✚ **God works in us** what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ (Heb 13:21).
- ✚ **Consolation** abounds in us by Christ (2 Cor 1:5).
- ✚ **God is given glory** through the church by Christ (Eph 3:21).
- ✚ God **supplies all of needs** according to His riches in glory by Christ (Phil 4:19).
- ✚ God has **called us to eternal glory** by Christ (1 Pet 5:10).
- ✚ We **come to God** by Christ (Heb 7:25).
- ✚ By Christ we **offer the sacrifice of praise** to God continually (Heb 13:15).
- ✚ By Christ we **believe in God** (1 Pet 1:21).
- ✚ We are **heirs of God** through Christ (Gal 4:7).
- ✚ God’s **kindness is toward us** through Christ (Eph 2:7).
- ✚ The **peace of God keeps** our hearts and minds through Christ (Phil 4:7).
- ✚ We can **do all things** through Christ (Phil 4:13).

There are twenty-seven pivotal aspects of salvation, and they are all accomplished in Christ, and in Him alone. No part of salvation can be realized independently of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is by Divine intent. **As soon as the Lord Jesus recedes into the background, all of the benefits realized in Him begin to disappear. When Jesus is upstaged, taking a subordinate position to anyone or anything else, it is at the expense all that comes through Him.**

I labor this point because it has been shrouded by modern day religious trends and teaching. **God simply does not have anything to give us that does not come through the exalted Christ!** This is precisely why we are “called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9). Note, the relationship is a “fellowship,” not a mere formal identity. Everything that is included in salvation is no more secure to us than the fellowship that we have with the Lord Jesus. If we are obtuse concerning Him, the blessings – all of them – are out of reach. **If we refuse to hear Him who is speaking from heaven, we become incapable of receiving what comes through Him.**

In my judgment, this is why Paul was so zealous to “win **Christ**,” and to “know **Him**, and the power of **His** resurrection, and the fellowship of **His** sufferings, being made conformable to **His** death” (Phil 3:10). He knew that was the **only** way to obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus “with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10).

You will be hard pressed to find this kind of mind-set in the average church, or even on an individual level. **That circumstance is indicative of a falling way (2 Thess 2:3), a departure from the faith, and the heeding of seducing spirits (1 Tim 4:1).**

Now, in strict keeping with the nature of salvation, reconciliation is said to be realized by Christ Jesus.

RECONCILE

“... to reconcile...” The word “reconcile” presumes the existence of hostility or enmity between the parties being reconciled. Where there is no reconciliation there can be no harmony or acceptance by either party. To reconcile involves moving a person from one state to another – from a state of antagonism to one of concord. It also carries the idea of restoring to favor and good will, those who had fallen under Divine displeasure.

Some limit reconciliation to an effect wrought upon man. Those espousing this opinion cannot see God’s attitude toward man changing. He is thus viewed as always loving toward man, with only man having any hostility toward

God. However, this is a wholly improper view of the matter. **God Himself was impacted by what Jesus did.** It is the Father who saw the travail of Christ’s soul and was “satisfied” (Isa 53:11). It must ever be remembered that God has forgiven us “for Christ’s sake” (Eph 4:32). **That is, were it not for Christ, God would not have forgiven us.**

Prior to being in Christ “the wrath of God” abode upon us, not the love of God (John 3:36). It is written, “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa 7:11). Those who do not believe on the Son are “condemned already” (John 3:18). Such utterances do not describe the attitude of men toward God, but of God

(Prov 6:19). The reconciliation accomplished through Christ Jesus addressed all of these circumstances.

The reconciling work of Christ has, in fact, changed the way God views those who “have now received the atonement” (Rom 5:11). That is one of the things being established by this text, and is pivotal to an understanding of the Gospel. God is kindly disposed to us because of Christ. **Apart from His Son, our person’s and nature are abrasive and offensive to Him.**

ALL THINGS

“... all things...” Whatever has been affected by sin must be impacted by

THE HOLINESS OF GOD WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO BE DRAWN TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE FUNDAMENTALLY UNLIKE HIMSELF. THAT IS PRECISELY WHY SOME WILL BE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE, FOREVER THRUST FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

toward men. The very fact that God is “longsuffering” toward us, and “not willing that any should perish,” reveals a certain impact that sin has had upon God Himself. Sin has not changed His nature, but it **has** changed how He views man. **The holiness of God will not permit Him to be drawn toward those who are fundamentally unlike Himself.** That is precisely why some will be cast into the lake of fire, forever thrust from the presence of the Lord.

The trite saying that God hates the sin but loves the sinner is not an inspired one. It was spawned in finite minds. Whatever people are trying to say by this clumsy expression needs to be iterated in a better way. It is categorically said of God, “the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth” (Psa 11:5). God is also said to abhor the covetous (Psa 10:3). There are people whom God considers His “enemies” (Psa 21:8; James 4:4). There were false shepherds God is said to have “loathed” (Zech 11:8). He is also declared to hate those who “sow discord among brethren”

the reconciliation as well. **There cannot be a lesser circumference to reconciliation than there is to transgression.** What Christ has done must reach as far as what Adam did. His work must be as extensive as that of the “first man.” The “gate” is strait, and “the way” is narrow “which leadeth unto life” – but it is not owing to any “ineffectiveness” found in either the gate or the “way.” **There is nothing about salvation that places a limit on the number of sinners it can transform.**

In confirmation of this, our text speaks in tones of staggering depth and scope: “**ALL things.**”

The word “all” means every one, thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, everyone, and everything collectively. ^{STRONG’S} The idea transmitted by the English word “things” is included in the word translated “all.”

This expression means that **Christ’s reconciliation is applicable to every domain impacted by sin, providing a sufficiency that will**

bring Divine approval and acceptance. It means that, because of Christ's death, there is provision for "all things" to be in harmony with the God of heaven. The reconciliation effected by Christ is, therefore, most excellently adapted to the dilemma caused by sin.

The expression "all things" will be more fully expounded in the next phrase.

HIMSELF

" . . . unto Himself . . . " **The reconciliation is with God because the alienation was from Him.** God was offended by the transgression, and thus it is He that is the objective of the reconciliation.

We are thus said to be "reconciled to God" (Rom 5:10), be "alive unto God" (Rom 6:11), and made "acceptable to God" (Rom 14:18). Those who believe are turned "to God" (1 Thess 1:9), draw nigh "unto God" (Heb 7:19), and "come unto God" by Christ (Heb 7:25). Christ is bringing us "to God" (1 Pet 3:18), and by the Spirit we have "access unto the Father" (Eph 2:18).

Here the whole of our salvation is traced back to God Himself. He is the One who reconciled us unto Himself by Christ Jesus. As it is written, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2

Cor 5:19).

This does not conflict with the statement that Christ Himself reconciled us to God: "And that He (Jesus) might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph 2:16). Jesus did this as God's exclusive representative. Therefore, from one point of view, it was actually God Himself who was reconciling us.

The purpose belonged to God the Father, and therefore God Himself reconciled us. The appointed means through which the reconciliation was accomplished was the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore He is said to have reconciled us to God.

THINGS IN EARTH AND THINGS IN HEAVEN

^{20d} " . . . by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Because man is prone to trace

From the very beginning the church has wrestled with the temptation to demote, as it was, the Lord Jesus, giving priority to other things. It is not uncommon to hear people assigning more preeminence

1:3).

It is as though the Spirit is assisting us to avoid focusing on the blessing instead of the Blessor, or on the work instead of the Worker, or upon the benefit rather than the Benefactor. The reconciliation has not been effected by us, but "by Him." It has not been made effectual by a procedure, but "by Him."

IT IS AS THOUGH THE SPIRIT IS ASSISTING US TO AVOID FOCUSING ON THE BLESSING INSTEAD OF THE BLESSOR, OR ON THE WORK INSTEAD OF THE WORKER, OR UPON THE BENEFIT RATHER THAN THE BENEFACTOR.

Sometimes people trace their reconciliation to a point in time, ascribing the cause to a certain ordained response. Without demeaning any act of obedience, or any response of faith, **the cause of salvation in all of its aspects is Christ Himself.** It is He that caused the obedience to be effective, and response to bring the blessing. If God Himself is so particular about the role of Jesus, what possible reason can be adduced for men not doing the same?

salvation to his own works, the Spirit labors a point which appears on the surface to be very obvious. Once men are reconciled to God, the devil goes to work to convince them the whole matter was of their own doing. **If he can ever bring men to think in such a way, a lesser value will be assigned to Christ by them than that which has been assigned to Him by God.** Further, if that ever happens, the "power" required to save the person is withdrawn, for that power can only come through Jesus Christ.

All of this may seem painlessly simplistic, but that is not at all the case.

to men, the church, a procedure, a work, or even to the Holy Spirit Himself, than to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this section of Colossians, the Spirit is laying down the foundation for sound spiritual thinking. He is establishing the borders of "spiritual understanding," and raising up the pillars of godly wisdom.

BY HIM I SAY

" . . . by Him, I say . . . " The "Him" is Jesus Christ. The One who is reconciling all things "by Him" is the Father - "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet

Also, the role of Jesus is to be stated: i.e., "I say." It is not to be taken for granted, as though once a person knew this it is locked into the memory, never to be forgotten. Some people who seem to understand that once we are saved we are not always saved, appear to think that once we have heard we have always heard, or once we have believed we have always believed. Such suppositions are not always

actually stated, yet are embraced by the mind. They are not true. **The reiteration of truth is as necessary as its iteration.**

The Spirit now elaborates on the “things” God has reconciled to Himself through Christ. He will limit the reconciliation to two domains: earth and heaven. He will not apply it to hell, or the lake of fire, or to things “*under the earth*” (Phil 2:10). **The reconciliation will not reach into the “power of the air,” which is occupied by Satanic forces.** It will not remedy that heavenly defection in which a host of angels “*left their own habitation,*” and therefore “*kept not their first estate*” (Jude 1:6). **The sin that is remedied by the reconciliation came through Adam** (Rom 5:12-19).

The Spirit does not assume that we know such things. Further, drawing this to the attention of our hearts will cause us to be the more thankful because we have been reconciled to God through Christ Jesus.

God has elsewhere stated that His purpose in Christ Jesus has to do with both heaven and earth, and the bringing of them together in a oneness that glorifies Him. “*Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him*” (Eph 1:10).

THINGS IN EARTH

“ . . . whether they be things in earth . . . ” The thoroughness of the reconciliation is seen in this expression. Men can correctly be lumped into one great group. They are all sinners, and have all come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23; 5:12). They can also be viewed as all coming from Adam (Acts 17:26). However, mankind can also be viewed by category – like Jew and Gentile, bond and free, and male and female (Gal 3:28). They can also be viewed by nation (Matt 28:18; Acts 2:5; 10:35). There are also categories like “*sons and daughters,*” and “*young men and old men*” (Acts 2:17). The phrase “*things in earth*” includes all of these categories. **The reconciliation**

wrought by God through Christ filters down to the finest detail of humanity.

The reconciliation reached backward as well as forward, bringing those who had already died in faith into full acceptance, as well as those who were not yet born. This aspect of the reconciliation must also be seen. Ponder these categories without being unduly distracted by them.

✦ **Those living before the Law.** Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah,

THE RECONCILIATION WILL NOT REACH INTO THE “POWER OF THE AIR,” WHICH IS OCCUPIED BY SATANIC FORCES. IT WILL NOT REMEDY THAT HEAVENLY DEFECTION IN WHICH A HOST OF ANGELS “LEFT THEIR OWN HABITATION,” AND THEREFORE “KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE” (JUDE 1:6). THE SIN THAT IS REMEDIED BY THE RECONCILIATION CAME THROUGH ADAM

Melchizedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.

✦ **Those living under the Law.** Moses, Aaron, Israel, David, the Prophets, etc.

✦ **Those living during the Law, but not under it as a covenant.** Nineveh, the Queen of Sheba, king Cyrus, etc.

✦ **Those living from John the Baptist until Pentecost.** Lazarus, the thief on the cross, etc.

✦ **Those living from Christ to the end of the world.**

✦ **Infants.** Those slain by the edict of Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, and by Herod when Jesus was born, as well as all premature and untimely deaths.

✦ **Creation.** The creation itself impacted is by the reconciliation of Christ. It too will be liberated from the bondage of corruption (Rom 8:19-22). That liberation is directly related to the reconciliation accomplished

through Jesus by the blood of His cross. Creation will be freed from mortality only when the sons of God are raised from the dead and made fully known.

Behold the magnificent scope of the reconciliation! Do not think of it only in relation to yourself, or your friends, nation, or even the church.

THINGS IN HEAVEN

“ . . . or things in heaven.” We learn from Scripture that sin caused certain effects in heaven as well as upon

earth. Here we are told “*things in heaven*” are “*reconciled*” through Christ’s blood. Hebrews 9:23 reveals that “*the heavenly things themselves*” were “*purified*” with “*better sacrifices*” – referring to the sacrifice of Christ. In this text, “*purified*” is equivalent to “*sanctified*” – not cleansed from corruption, but cleansed for use – like the book of the Law, the tabernacle, the altar, its furniture, and the various utensils employed in it (Ex 29:36; Lev 16:19; Num 31:20; Heb 9:19).

It is not that “*things in heaven*” were actually polluted by man’s sin, and that is not what is intended by our text or the one in Hebrews. **The situation created by sin is much like this: a “do not handle” tag was placed on heavenly things, rendering them inaccessible to man.** “*Things in heaven*” could not join together with fallen man, nor could they be contained within the natural creation.

These heavenly realities may now be the object of an optimistic quest by men, as the redeemed set their “*affection on things above,*” seeking them

wholeheartedly (Col 3:1-2). These are included in the *“things God has prepared for them that love Him”* (1 Cor 2:9), and, having been reconciled, they have now been revealed to us through the Spirit (1 Cor 2:10).

NOT YET FULLY REALIZED

The fulness of this marvelous reconciliation has not yet been realized. **Complete harmony between heaven and earth has not yet been experienced.** There still remains a part of us that cannot *“inherit the kingdom of God”* – flesh and blood (1 Cor 15:50).

There is also *“another law”* resident in us (Rom 7:23), and our *“members that are upon the earth”* (Col 3:5). There is *“the old man”* (Eph 4:22) as well.

However, the reconciliation has fully addressed this situation. Our bodies will yet be raised from the dead incorruptible. That resurrection is the *“redemption of the purchased possession”* (Eph 1:14), and is itself based upon the reconciliation God accomplished through the blood of Christ’s cross. We ourselves have been reconciled to God. **However, that is**

only the beginning of the work that will yet be accomplished because of the reconciliation Christ accomplished through the blood of His cross.

How magnificently large is this great salvation! It has height and depth and length and breadth (Eph 3:16-20). It is no wonder it is the object of angelic inquiry (1 Pet 1:12). It is no wonder that sensitive souls and purified hearts have a desire to comprehend it more completely and understand it more fully!

OUR FORMER CONDITION

“ 21a And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works . . . ”

The absolute need for reconciliation will now be expounded. These words are not addressed to those who are **not** reconciled, but to those who have experienced reconciliation to God – to those who have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

The redeemed must never

SOMETIME ALIENATED

“And you, that were sometime alienated . . . ” Other versions read *“once were alienated,”* ^{NKJV} *“formerly alienated,”* ^{NASB} *“Once you were alienated from God,”* ^{NIV} *“were once estranged,”* ^{NRSV} *“who were in the past cut off,”* ^{BBE} and *“in times past strangers”* ^{GENEVA}

The word *“alienated”* means to be shut out from one’s fellowship and intimacy. ^{THAYER} In the sense of our text, a person who is *“alienated”* is not allowed in the presence of God. **Their character and the**

through His grace, undertake to do something about our condition, it was absolutely hopeless. We were, in every sense of the word, had *“no hope, and were without God in the world”* (Eph 2:12).

Today, when theology has been watered down with the wisdom of this world, people speak casually about going to God for help in the time of trouble. Often those who are not believing on the Son are even counseled to pray and seek guidance from the Lord. **While we can certainly speak of the grace of God to the most wretched and hopeless of our race, it is not in order to the correction of their temporal dilemmas.** Our text is confirming that a change in our condition occurred at the point we were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into Christ’s kingdom. It did not occur when our social, marital, or economic status changed.

Jesus did not die to merely deliver men from day-to-day troubles, and solve domestic and social difficulties. Although He often grants His children grace in these areas, that is not the focus of salvation. The redemption accomplished by Christ has to do with moving us from the state of alienation to that of reconciliation. **He not only changed our persons, but our status as well.**

From A Moral Point of View

Speaking from a moral point of view, **some** of God’s people were formerly

IF GOD DID NOT, THROUGH HIS GRACE, UNDERTAKE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CONDITION, IT WAS ABSOLUTELY HOPELESS. WE WERE, IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD, HAD “NO HOPE, AND WERE WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD”

take their identity with God for granted. They do well to look *“to the hole of the pit from whence they were digged”* (Isa 51:1). Nothing about their past recommended them to God, and everything about it required His gracious intervention. **Where these stark realities are not kept in remembrance, serious liabilities are introduced.**

nature of God forbade them to approach to Him. They were to God what a Philistine was to the holy of holies. They had no right to God, His blessings, or His benefits. Ephesians 4:18 says we were *“alienated from the life of God.”* That is, not only were we *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1-2), but the separation between us and God could not be remedied by us. **If God did not,**

in a most despicable state. *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”* (1 Cor 6:11).

All of Us Were Alienated

The past lives of many of the saints were not so characterized. They never tasted the dregs of sin as some poor souls have done. However, every child of God was formerly in a state of alienation, even though their external lives may not have reflected that alienation. That alienation existed by virtue of their association with Adam, through whom death was passed upon them and reigned over them (Rom 6:12,14), and condemnation was passed upon them (Rom 5:16,18).

The fact that many believers were not rescued from a state of deep immortality does not recommend them to God. According to appearance, they may have had the innocent beauty of Jairus’ daughter. Notwithstanding, they were just as dead as Lazarus, in whom corruption was more evident.

It is good to trace our former state to a point common to all believers, lest we leave some thinking they were not so bad after all. All of us were *“alienated from God,”* ^{NIV} regardless of age or moral attainment. We were *“by nature children of wrath, even as others”* (Eph 2:3).

If any of us were spared from falling into the bottom of the pit, we must give thanks. But we must give more thanks that we were rescued from the state of alienation. That is the point of our text.

ENEMIES IN YOUR MIND

“ . . . and enemies in your mind. ”

Other versions read, *“hostile in mind,”* ^{NASB/NRSV} *“at war with God in your minds,”* ^{BBE} and *“of hostile intent.”* ^{NJB}

The word *“enemies”* means hated, hostile, opposing another, and adversary. ^{THAYER} Again, this might not have **appeared** to be our condition. Nevertheless, this is precisely what we were before we were delivered – *“enemies.”* We were not in agreement with God, were not seeking Him, and were not living for Him. Regardless of the level in which that condition existed, it was nevertheless a state of enmity against God, for the closer one is with the world, the more one is the enemy of God (James 4:4). As long as men insist upon comparing themselves with themselves, this status will not be acknowledged, and therefore the grace of God will not be sought.

trite, and of no consequence. How utterly foolish to speak in such a manner. The blood of Christ’s cross was required to rescue us from a state of disagreement and difference from God. How, then, can anyone be content to remain in such a deplorable state?

When *“enemies”* are *“reconciled to God”* (Rom 5:10), they are no longer enemies. Their thoughts and ways are no longer at variance with those of their *“God and Savior.”* The cry of their heart is, *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer”* (Psa 19:14). When contradicting thoughts come into their

WE MUST EVER REMEMBER THAT GOD IS SET AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE NOT LIKE HIMSELF. OUR TEXT STATES WE WERE “ENEMIES” IN OUR “MINDS.” WE DID NOT THINK LIKE GOD. WE DID NOT HAVE HIS VALUES OR HIS WAYS. WE DID NOT SEE THE WORLD AS HE SEES IT, TO SAY NOTHING OF OUR EVALUATION OF HIS SON.

We must ever remember that God is set against those who are not like Himself. Our text states we were *“enemies”* in our *“minds.”* We did not think like God. We did not have His values or His ways. We did not see the world as He sees it, to say nothing of our evaluation of His Son. **It is not easy for some people to receive the statement that those who do not think like God are His enemies.** However, whether this is palatable to them or not, it is the truth. This is why God indicted Israel so severely. *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD”* (Isa 55:8). Such people are referred to as *“wicked”* and *“unrighteous”* (Isa 55:7). **This is a state from which we are delivered in Christ, not one that is maintained.** If not delivered from this condition, condemnation is sure, regardless of any imagined moral accomplishments.

minds, they cast them down, bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 5:4-5). Thanks be unto God for delivering us from being *“enemies in our minds.”*

BY WICKED WORKS

“ . . . by wicked works . . . ” Other versions read, *“engaged in evil deeds,”* ^{NASB} *“because of your evil behavior,”* ^{NIV} *“doing evil deeds,”* ^{NRSV} *“in your evil works,”* ^{ASV} and *“through evil works.”* ^{BBE}

The idea here is that our deeds were the result of our thoughts. **We did wrong because we thought wrong.** Our minds were corrupt, and therefore so were our deeds. As rational beings, men do not sin instinctively – even though, outside of Christ, their primary nature is sinful. Their sin proceeds from their thoughts, for *“as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Prov 23:7). Evil words come from an evil heart (Matt 12:34).

If it is true that *“a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit”* (Matt 7:17), then corrupt minds produce *“evil deeds.”* Sin

I have often heard professing Christians confess their fundamental disagreement with God as though it were

**THE “SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION”
POSTULATES PURPOSEFUL THOUGHT, FOR
WITHOUT THOUGHT, THERE REALLY IS NO
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corrupted the mind like a virus corrupts whatever it invades. **This being the case, “evil deeds,” which are deeds that are not “wrought in God”**(John 3:21), **confirmed that we were, in fact, “enemies in our minds.”** God is greatly to be praise for delivering us from such a dreadful condition.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TEXT

The nature of salvation is implied in this text. This is a salvation that involves both heart and mind, where thoughts are processed and determinations are made. The Kingdom of

God is characterized by intelligence – lofty intelligence. Thus we read of “*the mind of Christ*” (1 Cor 2:16), and “*the mind of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:27). There is the “*renewing of the mind*”(Rom 12:2), and things to be thought upon (Phil 4:8).

The “*spirit of wisdom and revelation*” postulates purposeful thought, for **without thought, there really is no benefit to be gained from revelation** (Eph 1:17-19; Col 1:9-11). Men may boast of a religion being simple enough for a child to understand. But if such a thing is true, what will we do with

Epistles like Romans, Ephesians, Hebrews, and the likes. In fact, precisely what is there about the “*Apostles’ doctrine*” that is tailored for children? Are we not to “*be men*” in understanding? (1 Cor 14:20).

A religion that is based upon emotion, or is not challenging to, and productive in, the mind, contradicts the very idea of reconciliation with God. If the point of condemnation involves God NOT being in all of our thoughts (Psa 10:4), then reconciliation necessarily involves Him BEING in all of our thoughts. **Those cogitations will be reflected in our deeds, for thoughts and deeds are always in harmony with one another.** This is why Satan tempts men to imagine they can think one way and act another way. Such a notion is pure imagination and vanity. It is in contradiction of the Gospel of Christ, and there is no truth in it.

RECONCILED NOW

“^{21b} . . . yet now hath He reconciled . . .”

Salvation involves things so radically different from this present evil world, that **those who look only upon its surface are led to imagine the fulness of it is experienced in this world.** This erroneous conclusion is the mother of backsliding and flawed theology. However, the salvation is also of such magnitude that others are tempted to imagine it is all in the future, with no genuine participation taking place in this world. This attitude is the mother of discouragement and faintheartedness. It has also generated the view that our nature is not really changed, and thus believers must be governed by Law.

The Spirit will now establish that there is a very real participation in the reconciliation by those who are in Christ Jesus – and that it is taking place in “*this present evil world.*” There are very real benefits that are realized at this time, and in this world. Although they are not the fulness of the blessing, they are remarkably extensive and large. Paul

referred to this circumstance when he said godliness is “*profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*” (1 Tim 4:8).

NOW

“*. . . yet now . . .*” When the word “*now*” is employed in this kind of context, it does not merely refer to time, but to the effects of faith within time. **That is, faith brings heavenly realities to the one who is living in this world.**

Much is made of this “*NOW*” circumstance in Scripture. The particular Greek word that is translated “*now*” in this text is $\nu\upsilon\upsilon\lambda$ (nuni), which means “*now, at this very moment; precisely now, neither before nor after.*” ^{THAYER} It is not that the experience of “*NOW*” does not apply to the past, or will never apply to the future. Rather, **what is mentioned is taking place at this very moment.**

This is the posture of faith, for faith lives in the “*now,*” taking hold of what was accomplished by Jesus in the past, and also grasping what will yet be

revealed in the future. It is as though faith has two hands – one to lay hold of what was wrought in the past, and one to take hold of what is to come. Both are apprehended “*now,*” at this present moment.

The following texts employ this word in precisely the same manner as our text. They all speak of conditions that exist at this very moment, which is the sense of our text.

✚ **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD MADE KNOWN NOW.** “*But NOW the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets*” (Rom 3:21).

✚ **JUSTIFIED NOW.** “*Much more then, being NOW justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*” (Rom 5:9).

✚ **THE ATONEMENT RECEIVED NOW.** “*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have NOW*

received the atonement” (Rom 5:11).

✦ **FREE FROM SIN NOW.** “But **NOW** being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom 6:22).

✦ **DELIVERED FROM THE LAW NOW.** “But **NOW** we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom 7:6).

✦ **NOW THERE IS 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).

✦ **MADE NIGH NOW.** “But **NOW** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13).

✦ **WE ARE NOW LIGHT IN THE LORD.** “For ye were sometimes darkness, but **NOW** are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph 5:8).

✦ **WE ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD.** “Which in time past were not a people, but are **NOW** the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Pet 2:10).

✦ **WE HAVE NOW RETURNED TO THE SHEPHERD.** “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are **NOW** returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pet 2:25).

✦ **WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD NOW.** “Beloved, **NOW** are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know

that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

Here, then, is something that is presently being realized – something that has been effected by a work accomplished in the past.

HE HATH RECONCILED

“... hath He reconciled...” The

“now.” This is why they can have the eyes of their understanding opened (Eph 1:17-18), be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man (Eph 3:16), and “abound in hope” (Rom 15:13). This is why they can obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16). It is why they are being changed from one stage of glory to another by the Spirit of God (2 Cor 3:13). It is why they can grow up into Christ in all things (Eph

THIS MEANS WHAT WAS CARRIED OUT ON THE CROSS IS BEING HONORED BY GOD AT THIS VERY MOMENT. HERE IS SOMETHING THAT IS BOTH HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY AT THE SAME TIME. IT TOOK PLACE IN THE PAST, YET IS WORKING ITS EFFECTS RIGHT NOW.

wake of the tide of Christ’s blood has washed up on the shores of “NOW.” The blood of His cross has effected reconciliation with God at this present time. This means what was carried out on the cross is being honored by God at this very moment. Here is something that is both historical and contemporary at the same time. It took place in the past, yet is working its effects right now.

What Is Means to be Reconciled Now

To be reconciled “NOW” means that we have access to God “now” (Eph 3:12). It means we can come to the throne of grace “now” (Heb 4:16). It means God will bless us “now” (Eph 1:3). It means He will fill us with all joy and peace in believing “now” (Rom 15:13). He will hear us “now” (1 John 5:15). He will deliver us “now” and keep us from falling “now” (2 Cor 1:10; Jude 24).

The reason “the just” CAN “live by faith” is because they are reconciled

4:15), and shine as lights in the world (Phil 2:15). **It is because they ARE “now” reconciled to God because of the blood of Christ’s cross.**

We are not trying to be reconciled to God, we ARE reconciled to Him! We are not working to be reconciled to God, but are rejoicing because we ARE reconciled to Him.

This is one of the major differences between living under Law and living under grace. It accounts for the superiority of the New Covenant, and the better promises upon which it is founded.

Faith puts the “NOW RECONCILED” into religion, removing the tediousness of serving God, and causing the commandments to no longer be “grievous.” It is what makes the yoke “easy,” and the burden “light.” That is because faith has taken hold of reality. Now serving the Lord is joyful.

RECONCILED IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH

^{22a} ... in the body of His flesh through death...”

The Holy Spirit does not take for granted that either the means or significance of the atonement has been

grasped by the children of God. Sin has ravaged the minds of all men, so that the things of God cannot be easily grasped.

Every affirmation of truth is answered by flaming arrows of corrupt thought, hurled at us by the wicked one. These temptations do not always take the form of openly denying

“the body.” In distinction from His glorified body, it is said to be the body “of His flesh.”

The reconciliation was

whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet 2:24).

It is no wonder that the remembrance of Christ involves the communion, recollection, and discernment of His body! This is where the reconciliation was accomplished, and without it there could be no reconciliation with God!

THROUGH DEATH

“... through death ...”

The Spirit is even more specific in identifying the place and means whereby our reconciliation to God was effected.

AS GREAT AS CHRIST’S MIRACLES WERE, WE WERE NOT RECONCILED TO GOD BY THEM! AS NOBLE AND ABOVE REPROACH AS HIS YOUNG LIFE WAS, WE WERE NOT RECONCILED BY IT. HIS SAYINGS ABOUNDED WITH MATCHLESS WISDOM AND UNPARALLELED INSIGHTS, BUT WE WERE NOT RECONCILED BY THEM.

Our reconciliation was **not** through the body that was laid in a manger (Lk 2:7). It was not by the twelve year old body that reasoned with the doctors of the Law (Lk 2:46). Reconciliation was not realized through the body of Jesus when He was baptized (Matt 3:16-18), or when He was tempted in the wilderness (Lk 4:2). It did not take place in the body that “went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38).

As great as Christ’s miracles were, we were not reconciled to God by them! As noble and above reproach as His young life was, we were not reconciled by it. His sayings abounded with matchless wisdom and unparalleled insights, but we were not reconciled by them. Our reconciliation required more than a noble example of how to live. If men were to be reconciled to God, it would take more than words – even “words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Our reconciliation to God required death – not just A death, but the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were reconciled to God in the fleshly body of Christ WHEN He died. That is precisely why we are “baptized into His **death**” (Rom 6:4), and are being “made conformable to His **death**” (Phil 3:10). We are, in every sense of the world, “reconciled to God by the **death** of His Son” (Rom 5:10). It is why, in the Lord’s table, we “show the Lord’s **death** till He come” (1 Cor 11:26).

This is the ultimate revelation of Christ’s humility. For Him to enter the

what has been stated. Sometimes they are subtly designed to cause Divine iterations to be doubted, or possibly considered beyond comprehension. Sometimes the devil tempts us to put them on an intellectual shelf, and just not think or meditate upon them.

However, if we will “hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches,” He will not let us forget these sayings. He will, as it was, nail them into our conscience so that they become an integral part of our thought processes.

Thus, the Spirit now elaborates upon the reconciliation that we have “now.” **It is not enough to have the reconciliation. There is also a necessity to understand it.** Where there is not some measure of understanding of the “great salvation,” the benefits of it will not be retained, and a falling away will be inevitable. That is precisely why Paul prayed believers would receive “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” (Eph 1:17). It is why he prayed the Colossians would be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9). He is “now” providing for that filling.

THE BODY OF HIS FLESH

“... in the body of His flesh ...”

Other versions read, “in His fleshly body,”^{NASB} “by Christ’s physical body,”^{NIV} and “His own human body.”^{NLT}

The language is most precise. A specific part of Christ’s nature is defined:

accomplished “IN” the body of Christ’s flesh – not without it, but by means of that body.

✦ **This is the “body” to which Jesus referred when He said, “Take, eat, this is My body”** (Matt 26:26).

✦ **This is the body that is to be discerned, or comprehended at His table.** “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor 11:29).

✦ **It is the body by which we become dead to the Law.** “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ” (Rom 7:4).

✦ **It is the body with which we have communion.** “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16).

✦ **This is the body that was offered as a sacrifice to God.** “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10).

✦ **It is the body in which the Lord bore our sins.** “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by

world as a “Babe” required profound humility. In order for Him be “subject” to Mary and Joseph required humility (Lk 2:51). What marvelous humility was displayed in our Lord being in a state where He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Lk 2:52). In order to be tempted, He had to be humble (Heb 2:18; 4:15).

However, all of that was not the ultimate humility. It was death on the

cross that most thoroughly exhibited the humility of Jesus. Thus it is written, “*And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Phil 2:8).

That is what it took to bring God and man together – to reconcile us to God. If Christ’s death had not taken place, we would have forever been cut off from the “Father of

spirits” (Heb 12:9).

If we sin, we do have an Advocate the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One (1 John 2:1). However, His advocacy is effective because He died, bearing our sins in His body on the tree (1 Pet 2:24). **When we confess our sins, it is good – even necessary – to remember those sins required to death of the Lord Jesus.** That recollection will help us to take transgression seriously.

PRESENTED HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE

^{22b} . . . to present you holy and unblameable . . . ”

There is an objective served by our reconciliation – a Divine objective. It has to do with God’s “eternal purpose,” and therefore is not anchored in time. The **primary** objectives of this purpose are not fulfilled in this world, and they do not have to do with temporal things. **Every outworking of this purpose within this world is preparatory.**

All of this may appear rather evident, until you consider the nearly universal thrust of Western Christianity. **When reaching the lost, resolving domestic issues, and streamlining daily living are considered the hub of Divine purpose, reconciliation loses its significance.** There is an enormous amount of theological smoke that is being blown about these days. It clouds the real issues, obscures Divine intentions, and blinds men to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. It all sounds nice, and appears to be very helpful, yet much of what parades itself as being of Christ is actually more closely related to the Old Covenant than the New Covenant.

Human behavior was the thrust of the Old Covenant – “*DO and live*” (Lev 18:5; Gal 3:12). **But that is not the thrust, direction, or primary objective, of the New Covenant.** In Christ, the real issue has to do with AFTER the present heavens and earth pass away. It has to do with what will occur AFTER death, and AFTER the judgment. AFTER we see the Lord as He

is, then the fulness of the purpose of God will be made known AND realized.

This will be made most apparent in the following statements.

PRESENT YOU

“ . . . to present you . . . ” Most versions read the same way: “to present you.” Some more liberal versions read, “to bring you before Himself,” ^{NJB} “As a result, He has brought you into the very presence of God.” ^{NLT}

When Is the Intended Presentation?

The word “present” means to place beside or near, to set at hand, to present a person to another, and to bring into fellowship and intimacy.

of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:22). That, however, it not a presentation, but an invitation. Furthermore, our present access to God is by faith, and is not a true presentation.

In this world, WE “present” our bodies to God a “living sacrifice” (Rom 12:1). Our text, however, speaks of the Lord doing the presenting.

The presentation of our text has to do with our appearance before the Lord AFTER the end of the world. It is consistently represented in this manner in Scripture. The focus of reconciliation is an

WHEN REACHING THE LOST, RESOLVING DOMESTIC ISSUES, AND STREAMLINING DAILY LIVING ARE CONSIDERED THE HUB OF DIVINE PURPOSE, RECONCILIATION LOSES ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

^{THAYER} The issue here is **when** that presentation is intended to be made. The New Living Translation places the time in the now: “*He has brought you into the very presence of God.*”

It is true that now we may come into the presence of the Lord, drawing near “with a true heart in full assurance

eternal consummation – one that is satisfying to God and honoring of Christ.

✚ “*Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you*” (2 Cor 4:14).

✚ “*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to*

one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor 11:2).

✦ "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27).

✦ "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col 1:28).

✦ "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24).

This is speaking of a formal

life (1 Tim 6:12), running (1 Cor 9:22; Heb 12:1), wrestling (Eph 6:12), looking (Tit 2:13; 2 Pet 3:12), and waiting for His Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:10).

But the time will come when we will be "presented" to the Lord before an assembled universe. **Everything about salvation is calculated to prepare us for that moment, and nothing about the reconciliation wrought by Jesus detracts from it.**

Any approach to religion that fails to take this into account is void of the Spirit of God, and is therefore counterproductive to everything Jesus is doing. As strong as that may appear, it is not nearly strong enough.

HOLY

" . . . holy . . . " This is a characteristic of those who are to be

"mortified" (Col 3:5), lusts or desires that are to be "denied" (Tit 2:2:12), and the flesh to be "crucified" (Gal 5:24).

Our present condition, praise the Lord, is not our ultimate condition. The objective of our reconciliation to God is to be holy when we see the Lord "face to face" – when we no longer "know in part," but will know even as we are known (1 Cor 13:12).

The Implications of this Truth

There are several implications in this stated objective – that we may be presented to the Lord "holy."

First, **everything about salvation contributes to this objective.** Things pertaining to life and godliness have no utility in any other ultimate goal.

Second, **those who have been enlightened concerning salvation will see the need for being holy.** They will be able to associate the revelation of God with the purpose of God.

Third, **those who are reconciled to God and are living by faith will have a longing to be presented holy.** They will be discontent with imperfection and failings.

Fourth, **those who are laborers together with God** (1 Cor 3:9) **will also have this objective.** They will do their best, employing their gifts, in order to contribute to the objective of being holy when we stand before the Lord.

UNBLAMEABLE

" . . . and unblameable . . . " This may appear to be identical with being holy, but it is not. Being "holy" focuses upon character. Being "unblameable" emphasizes morality, or the expression of our persons. "Unblameable" means without blemish and faultless – free from faultiness. ^{THAYER} This is a condition in which there is no flaw, no imperfection, no defect, and no blemish – in ANY sense.

Elsewhere this condition is described as being "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:8). Our aim is to be this way now, in the world (Phil 2:15), and salvation is intended to assist us in meeting that objective. Being

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presentation, when the Lord Jesus receives His bride (Rev 21:2,9), and the Father Himself is joined with us (Rev 21:3). It all begins here, in this world, when we believe the record God has given us His Son, are baptized into His death, and are raised with Him to "walk in newness of life" (1 John 5:10; Rom 6:3-4). It continues in this world as we "live by faith," and "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord" (Rom 1:17; 2 Cor 7:1).

However, we have not yet been presented to the Lord. The work is still being completed. The Lord is finishing what He has begun, and performing the work until the day of Christ (Phil 1:6). We are still being "changed" (2 Cor 3:18), "renewed" (Eph 4:23), "conformed" (Rom 8:29), and perfected (1 Pet 5:10). We are still fighting and laying hold on eternal

presented. It is the aim of salvation to produce this result – make men holy.

The word "holy" means sacred, pure, and consecrated to God, and worthy of veneration. ^{STRONG'S THAYER} At the time of the presentation, the holiness will be intrinsic, with no part of the individual being excluded. In this world holiness is realized in our spirits, not in our total persons. There is a part of us that must be subordinated, and brought into subjection – a part that tends away from God rather than toward Him. Our bodies must be brought under subjection (1 Cor 9:27). There are imaginations to be cast down, and thoughts to be taken captive (2 Cor 10:4-5). Our minds must be "renewed" (Rom 12:2) because of the competitive influences to which it is subjected. We have "members" that are to be

unblameable begins in this world, but it is not culminated here. When we come into Christ, we begin without blame. However, the objective is that your *“your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thess 5:23).

The goal is to be characterized as

“blameless,” or *“unblameable”* at the time of presentation. Therefore it is written, *“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be **found of Him** in peace, without spot, and blameless”* (2 Pet 3:14).

Suffice it to say, it would radically alter the entire landscape of Christianity

if this purpose was perceived and heartily embraced by those who profess to be followers of Jesus. It would change the program and purpose of most churches, eliminate many of their leaders, and so change the disposition of their members that they would scarcely be recognized. Oh, that men would pursue holiness, without which no man will see the Lord!

UNREPROVEABLE

^{22c} *“... and unproveable ...”*

Here another aspect of the Divine objective – the reason for reconciliation. Being *“holy”* has to do with character. Being *“unblameable”* addresses the matter of our expression. **Being “unproveable” is dealing with Divine assessment.**

The word *“unproveable”* means not accused of doing anything wrong, irrefragable, one that cannot be called into account. STRONG'S/THAYER This, of course, assumes a time of judgment and Divine evaluation. The Word of God will not let us forget that what we think, say, and do, will be ultimately subjected to the open and apparent judgment of Almighty God.

✦ *“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of*

judgment” (Mat 12:36).

✦ *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Rom 14:12).

✦ *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God”* (1 Cor 4:5).

✦ *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (2 Cor 5:10).

Whether or not we will stand

before the Lord to give an account is not a question. This will happen, and there is no way to avoid it. As it is written, *“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb 9:27).

There is coming a time when the *“books”* will be *“opened,”* and the dead will be *“judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works”* (Rev 20:12). The only question that remains is the outcome of the time of judgment – whether or not we are found *“unproveable.”*

Believe me when I say, that day is not the time to be rebuked! **It is not the time you want to be reproved!** If the aim of the reconciliation is to make you *“unproveable”* in that day, then you must make that **your** objective in this world, and during this time.

IN HIS SIGHT

^{22d} *“... in His sight.”* Other versions read, *“before Him,”* ^{NASB} *“to bring you before Himself,”* ^{NJB} and *“into the very presence of God.”* ^{NLT}

OUR LIVES ARE AN OPEN BOOK

Those who are in Christ Jesus are reminded *“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, **known and read of all men**”* (2 Cor 3:2). It is even taught that God’s laborers are *“made a **spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men**”* (1 Cor 4:9). Redemption has not concealed the redeemed, but made them more apparent than they ever were before.

From the very beginning, those in Christ are taught by Scripture to consider how their manners appear to others. This is to be considered from a high point of view, and not with the intention of pleasing mere men.

✦ *“Let your light so shine **before men**, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matt 5:16).

✦ *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me **before men**, him will I confess also before my Father which is in*

*heaven. But whosoever shall deny me **before men**, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”* (Mat 10:32-33).

✦ *“Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also **in the sight of men**”* (2 Cor 8:21).

✦ *“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and **approved of men**”* (Rom 14:18).

✦ *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest **in the sight of all men**”* (Rom 12:17).

The works that form the basis of our salvation were accomplished by the “Man Christ Jesus” – by Given O. Blakely

✦ *"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, **give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully**" (1 Tim 5:14).*

✦ *"Having your conversation **honest among the Gentiles**: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:12).*

What will those who have difficulty meeting this requirement do when they hear of being *"holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight"* (Col 1:22)? What are appearances before men in comparison to appearing in God's sight?

THE WONDER OF SALVATION

Right here a very wonderful aspect of salvation is seen. The truth of the matter is that we all **will** appear before the Lord, standing in His sight. Even though **NOW** everything is *"naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"* (Heb 4:13), that stark reality sometimes eludes us. However, there is coming a day when we will be acutely aware that we are before Him, and so will the rest of assembled universe. This is an inevitable confrontation. There is no way to avoid it, postpone it, or cause it to be cancelled.

Behold the goodness of the Lord in this matter. He has made abundant provision for that very appearing to turn to our decided advantage. **If we avail ourselves of the reconciliation Jesus made through the blood of His cross, that will be our blessed and most profitable time!** We will never be more blessed than then! Our joy will rise to its most lofty peak, and our confidence will be its strongest. Here we experience a joy that is *"unspeakable and full of glory"* (1 Pet 1:8). Then – when we are *"in His sight"* to pass through His scrutiny – we will be *"glad also with exceeding joy"* (1 Pet 4:13). Then, we will have boldness – *"boldness in the day of judgment"* (1 John 4:17). It is possible to *"have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming"* (1 John 2:28).

God Is Able

And why is all of this so? For one thing, it is because God *"is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"* (Jude 1:24). He is not only *"able"* to do this, but has **revealed** that ability to us. It is, therefore, in order to fervently seek to appropriate that

In fact, without this purpose, there is no need for Jesus, no need for the Holy Spirit, and no need for the Word of God.

If our religion does not hold up in the day of judgment, there has been no point to it at all. If, when we stand before

REMOVE THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING PRESENTED "HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE AND UNREPROVEABLE IN HIS SIGHT," AND THERE IS NO REASON FOR SALVATION. IN SUCH A CASE, THERE IS NO REASON TO LIVE GODLY, RESIST THE DEVIL, OR CRUCIFY THE FLESH.

blessing.

The Purpose for the Reconciliation

As if this is not enough, there is another reason for this possibility, and it is the focus of our text. It is this, namely that salvation, or reconciliation, is **calculated to accomplish this benefit**. That is **WHY** we have been reconciled to God, and it is **WHY** Jesus is reigning at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us (Heb 7:25). It is **WHY** the massive hosts of angels have been marshaled to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:13-14). It is **WHY** we have been given the Holy Spirit, who helps our infirmities, interceding for us, and leading us in the mortification of the flesh (Rom 8:13,26-27). It is **WHY** there is *"grace to help in the time of need"* (Heb 4:16).

This is the ultimate reason for *"the whole armor of God"* (Eph 6:10). It is why we have been *"given all things that pertain to life and godliness"* (2 Pet 1:3). It is why we have *"access"* to God through the Spirit, and *"into this grace wherein we stand"* (Rom 5:2; Eph 3:2).

Remove the objective of being presented *"holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight,"* and there is no reason for salvation. **In such a case, there is no reason to live godly, resist the devil, or crucify the flesh.**

the Lord, we are ashamed, our life has been in vain, and we will obviously be of all the most miserable.

In order to fail the final test – the test of God's site, there are several things that must be done. The Gospel of Christ must be ignored. The Holy Spirit of God must be resisted, grieved, and quenched. The Word of God must be neglected and thrust from us. We must forget the day of judgment, and refuse to consider death. We must refuse to be taught by Jesus or guided by the Spirit. In order for a person who has come into Christ to revert to the old manner of life, he must forget he was purged from his old sins, listen to the devil, and refuse to set his affection on things above.

When, therefore, we see slothfulness, indifference, disobedience, and hardheartedness among those professing the name of Jesus, it has betrayed a most lamentable situation. Such have *"neglected"* God's *"great salvation,"* choosing to be deluded by the wicked one. How do I know this is the case? **Simply because everything about salvation – everything – is designed to prepare us to stand before God.** It is not possible to enter into eternity unprepared, without stubbornly refusing to receive what God has freely given in the Gospel, and resisting the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

We have been subjected to a marvelous proclamation of the accomplishments of Christ Jesus. They have been declared as the work of God Himself, for Jesus was fulfilling the Father's will in every facet of salvation.

Jesus. It is not the Gospel of the Spirit, the Gospel of the church, or the Gospel of good works. The thrust of the Good News is not what men should do, but what Jesus has done. The "power of God" is not found in an institution, but in the Gospel.

demanding our attention – like the collapse of the family, the removal of religion from daily life, the spread of sodomy, abortion, and the likes. All of these things are completely unacceptable, and are to be condemned. But they are not the foundational issue. As evil as these things are, they are not where the brightest light is to be shined.

WHEN THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST CAME, THEY DID NOT BRING A SOCIAL GOSPEL, NOR DID THEY FOCUS ON THE ILLS OF ROMAN SOCIETY.

Jesus made peace because God desired, and purposed, that peace should be made. God reconciled all things to Himself through Jesus because that is what He desired, and therefore that is what He willed, or purposed. Those who were formerly alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works have been reconciled because that is what God wanted. In the body of His flesh Jesus bore the sins of the world, laying down His life a ransom for many, then taking it up again. This He did in order that the reconciled ones might be presented to God holy, without blame, and without a single accusation against them. This is what the Father desired, and the Son, joining Him in that desire, heartily fulfilled the will of the Father.

God set before the Son the joy of a bride, the pleasure of having joint heirs, and many brethren. He promised to give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psa 2:8). When the Lord Jesus considered the greatness of it all, and the magnificent purpose for which He came into the world, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It was for "the joy that was set before Him" that He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2).

This is why Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Kingdom of God. It is why the Scriptures – all of them – testify of Him (John 5:39). It is why it pleased the Father that in Him should "all fulness dwell" (1:19). The Gospel pertains to

Everything was made by Him and for Him. These are the continual declarations of the Apostle's doctrine, in which the people of God are to continue.

How is it that Jesus is so easily upstaged in the modern church? How can other themes be presented as though they were the sum and substance of the Gospel? Why is it that religious careers, worldly wisdom, and passing fads and trends are getting so much attention? Why is "preaching the Word" being viewed as a secondary thing – a sort of auxiliary activity of the church? What reasons can be adduced for the prevailing ignorance concerning Christ Jesus that exists among professing believers?

Ah, these are merely rhetorical questions. The existence of these circumstances is no mystery. It is because neither the Lord Jesus nor the Gospel that proclaims Him is comprehended. The love of God has not been discerned, and thus other things have appeared to be more important.

This is precisely why this epistle was written. There were certain encroachments happening among the disciples that made days, seasons, and disciplines more important than Jesus. It was an intolerable situation, requiring that the hearts of the people be once again turned to the Captain of their salvation.

Now, in our time, and in our part of the world, it is time for the real people of God to stand up. There may be tremendous social issues that are

Do not think for a solitary moment that there were not social vices extant in the days of the Apostles. There were rulers like Herod, Pilate, and Caesar. There were goddesses of lust, where the base desires of people had been deified. Their were temple prostitutes and all manner of occultic, or curious, arts. The majority of the Roman citizenry was slaves, and the form of entertainment that was on the horizon involved fierce bloodshed. Taxation was out of hand, and laws were being passed against the free expression of Christians. Troubles like this did not begin with this generation.

When the Apostles of Christ came, they did not bring a social Gospel, nor did they focus on the ills of Roman society. They held up the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming and expounding Him with power. They knew that sin was reigning because of the ignorance of God, and that immorality was the result of the lack of sanctification. They knew if ever people were born again, sin would lose its dominancy, and people would be responsive to Divine directives.

Our day, however, is even more complicated than the first century. The Gospel has been preached, penetrating every segment of the world before the first century had entered its second half (Col 1:23). In our very country, the Gospel of Christ became a byword. Numerous revivals spread across the country, and morality was more advanced than in many other nations of the world. Some of us can remember when there was a far better spiritual climate than there is now. What has happened? Why is iniquity increasing and the wicked spreading themselves like a green bay tree? Why does the fabric of society seem to be tearing away at the seams?

In my judgment, the fault for these conditions may be laid at the feet of the professing church. Although it was Divinely appointed to be the custodian of the truth – the “*pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim 3:15), it chose to refrain from lifting up the “*banner*” given to it by its Head (Psa 60:4). It chose to emphasize other things, train specialists in other fields, and be more entertaining than informative. It elected to entertain rather than edify, and to please sinners rather than to convict them. It converted its schools to scholastics formats that were more pleasing to the world, and opened their doors to all manner of carnality.

The short of the story is that God has nowhere pledged to dwell with such a people. He has never committed to undergird the kind of efforts that are now prominent in many churches. God’s standards have been the same from the very first days of the church. “*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*” (2 Cor 6:18).

The book of Colossians, together with several other Epistles, are intended to shut the door to the intrusions of the

flesh. It is designed to readjust the focus of those who are in Christ Jesus, so that He is again seen as He really is. Solemnly we are told, “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him*” (Col 2:6). We initially “*received*” Him because we heard about Him. We received Him “*at the first*” because He became preeminent in our thinking. Herein is the secret to spiritual growth and recovery. This is the means whereby establishment will be realized, and the blessing of the Lord obtained. **The Lord Jesus must be seen as preeminent.** If He is not seen in this way, God will neither bless us nor be with us. Life is thus lived in vain.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/31/2003. In this session, we will be covering verses 23-25 of the first chapter. The title of our lesson is, “**THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SAINTS.**” The salvation of God not only includes the provision remission and an “eternal inheritance,” it also draws the saved into the process of salvation itself. Their spiritual stability is part of salvation, so that unstable souls are left with no convincing evidence of their participation in the salvation of God. 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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