



THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Lesson Number 14



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 -----

THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE

“ 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” ^{KJV} (Col 3:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

When the people of God are threatened with erroneous teaching, what practical approaches are to be taken? How do the children of God protect themselves? How can they avoid deception and diversion from the Son of God? The solution is now set before us. It will not come in the form of rules and regulations, for the Spirit has already established that is not the manner of the kingdom. Man's way is to set up procedures, disciplines, and routines. The way of the Kingdom higher. **It is not a manner that is according to this world, or driven by the wisdom of men.**

The reasoning that follows is founded upon the very real changes that have been wrought within us in salvation. **It is who we are IN CHRIST that is the secret to fulfilling the requirements of spiritual life.** Ponder

how this has been emphasized in Colossians to this point. The Spirit has laid a solid groundwork for the teaching and admonition contained in chapters two and three.

- ✦ The **Gospel** has born fruit in them, “as it has in all the world” (1:5).
- ✦ The **Father** “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (1:12).
- ✦ “**God** has “delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of **His dear Son**” (1:13).
- ✦ In **Christ** we “have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins” (1:14).
- ✦ **God** has reconciled we “who

sometime were alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works” (1:21).

- ✦ **Christ** “in you is the hope of glory” (1:27).
- ✦ “Ye are complete in **Him**” (2:10).
- ✦ We have been “circumcised with the circumcision of **Christ** . . . in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh” (2:11-12).
- ✦ **God** has “quicken us together with **Him**, having forgiven you all trespasses” (2:13).
- ✦ The “handwriting of ordinances that was against us,” has been blotted out, being nailed to **Christ's** cross (2:14).
- ✦ Principalities and powers that once

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ IF YOU ARE RISEN WITH CHRIST (3:1a)
- ▶ SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE (3:1b)
- ▶ WHERE CHRIST SITS (3:1c)
- ▶ SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE (3:2a)
- ▶ DO NOT SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ON THE EARTH (3:2b)
- ▶ YOU ARE DEAD (3:3a)
- ▶ YOU LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD (3:3b)
- ▶ CHRIST IS OUR LIFE (3:4a)
- ▶ CHRIST WILL APPEAR (3:4b)
- ▶ WE WILL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY (3:4c)

held us captive have been “spoiled” by **Christ**, as **He** triumphed over them in **His** cross (2:15).

In view of these realities, and the completeness effected in Christ Jesus, we have solemnly been exhorted to do the following:

- ✦ Do not allow any man to judge you in respect to food and drink, feasts, new moons, or sabbaths (2:16-17), which are shadows of things to come. The

real substance is found in **Christ** alone.

- ✦ Do not allow any man to rob you of your reward by drawing you into self-imposed humility, and the worshiping of beings that are under **Christ** (2:18).

In drawing our attention to the thorough indispensability and adequacy of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit accents the essentiality of a connection with Him.

- ✦ Those who deliver unprofitable messages do so because they are not connected to the **Head** (2:19a).
- ✦ Nourishment is ministered by **Jesus** to the various members of the body at the point of their connection with **Him**, and with one another (2:19b).
- ✦ If we are dead with **Christ**, it is folly to be subject to ordinances originated by men (2:20-22).
- ✦ Fleshly regimens have a show of wisdom, emphasizing routine and severe discipline of the body. Yet, they cannot take away the desire to sin, nor produce a hatred of it (2:23).

WHOLLY RELIANT UPON JESUS

In coming to God, appropriating and maintaining

spiritual life, and growth, we are wholly reliant upon Jesus. By that I mean there must be a vital connection with Jesus through which Divine resources are ministered to us. That is why we are dead “**with Christ**” (Rom 6:8), were “**buried with Him**” (Rom 6:4), and are “**risen with Christ**” (Col 3:1). It is why we are “**joined to the Lord**” (1 Cor 6:17), have “**fellowship with Him**” (1 Cor 1:9), and **He** is “**in**” is (Col 1:27).

This indispensable identity is not a mere formality. It is a practical necessity. **Triumph over the flesh and the appropriation of Divine benefits cannot be realized independently of intimacy with the Lord Jesus.** An empty profession cannot compensate for a lack of fellowship with Christ. Disciplines, routines, and procedures, however rigorous, cannot bring spiritual life to us. They cannot improve spiritual life, or promote spiritual growth. **If that is what they appear to be doing, the appearance is only a simulation of life, and is not life itself.** There is no life apart from Jesus, who IS the life.

The Spirit will now reason with us on these matters, showing us where our focus must be. Our attention must not be riveted upon WAYS to accomplish the will of God, but on the will of God itself. Our hearts must not be turned to METHODS devised by men, but to the Way ordained by God – the Lord Jesus Christ.

IF YOU ARE RISEN WITH CHRIST

“^{3:1a} **If ye then be risen with Christ . . .**” Other versions read, “*If then you were raised with Christ,*”^{NKJV} “*If then you have been raised with Christ,*”^{NASB} “*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ,*”^{NIV} “*So if you have been raised with Christ,*”^{NRSV} and “*If you have a new life with Christ.*”^{BBE}

The Spirit reasons with us upon the basis of our association with the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are “*complete in Him,*” then there is no area of spiritual life that is not addressed in Him. There is no aspect of our identity with the Living God that is not satisfied

in Jesus – not a single one.

IF YE THEN

“*If ye then . . .*” From the standpoint of language, the word “*if*” is a “particle of conditionality” – a point upon which another statement is conditioned.

Some versions translate the word “since, then,” rather than “if.” The point, however, remains the same. The fulfillment of the exhortation depends upon whether the condition that follows exists. If it does, what is required **can** be done. If it does not exist, it **cannot** be

In Christ Jesus, there are spiritual causes and effects. The desired effects cannot be realized without the Divinely ordained causes.

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

done – not through any form of human effort, however rigorous it may be.

In Christ Jesus, there are spiritual

the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pet 1:17).

✦ **“If ye be reproached for the**

If God has, in fact, raised us, then we will be able to do what is now required of us. If we have been quickened by God, what is now enjoined upon us will be doable.

causes and effects. **The desired effects cannot be realized without the Divinely ordained causes.** Profitable results are contingent upon the presence of certain realities and factors. Some affirmations of this principle will serve to underscore its importance.

✦ **“ . . . if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom 8:13).**

✦ **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (1 Cor 15:1-2).**

✦ **“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:29).**

✦ **“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal 5:18).**

✦ **“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel . . .” (Col 1:22-23).**

✦ **“For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord” (1 Thess 3:8).**

✦ **“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons . . .” (Heb 12:7).**

✦ **“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass**

name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pet 4:14).

✦ **“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Pet 1:10).**

The point that follows, therefore, is something that must be discerned as applicable to us. It is not something to be taken for granted or assumed. The fulfillment of the exhortation that follows will depend upon “if-factor” here stated.

BE RISEN WITH CHRIST

“ . . . be risen with Christ . . . ”

The point from which the reasoning begins relates to our identity with Christ Jesus. The emphasis will be placed upon what the Lord Himself has done, with a particular reference to WHEN that action took place. **There is a precision in this language that lends itself to sound spiritual thought.** It forbids us to think of being in Christ only in terms of what we ourselves have done.

The word “risen” does not refer to something we did, but to the working of the Lord Himself. Although it is associated with our baptism, **“wherein also ye were risen with Him” (Col 2:12),** the accent is not upon our baptism, but upon what God did at that time.

God Himself Raised Us

God is the One who raised us. This is not something we accomplished. It is God who **“raised us up together** [with

Christ], **and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6).** Again it is written, **“ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col 2:12).** This resurrection is said to be **“in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom 6:5).**

Being “risen” is the same as being “quickened.” As it is written, **“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1).** And again, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph 2:5).** And again, **“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col 2:13).**

Those who have been “raised,” or “quickened” by God are said to now be “alive.” They are **“alive unto God” (Rom 6:11),** and **“alive from the dead” (Rom 6:13).**

The issue before us is simply this: Has God raised us? Has He quickened us? Have we been made alive? At the point the individual is interested enough to pursue the answer to that question, it will be found. **If God has, in fact, raised us, then we will be able to do what is now required of us.** If we have been quickened by God, what is now enjoined upon us will be doable. If we have been made alive, the word of Christ can dwell richly in us, and be joyously fulfilled by us. We are thus able to do the will of God.

God Raised Us With Christ

Just as surely as the dead man thrown into Elisha’s grave was raised to life when he touched the prophet’s bones (2 Kgs 13:21), so the person who is joined to Christ becomes alive unto God. From the standpoint of Divine purpose, God did not raise Jesus alone, but raised His spiritual body, the church, with Him. From the standpoint of human experience, when we were **“baptized into Christ,”** the result was spiritual life. Paul referred to this result when he said, **“Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20).**

Some people would be satisfied to

say, “If , then, you are baptized.” However, the Spirit says, “If ye then be risen with Christ.” This does not demean baptism. Rather, it gets to the heart of what occurs in real baptism. It addresses the matter of the faith that was expressed in baptism – “faith in the operation of God” (Col 2:12). **The Apostles recognize no act as being valid that**

did not result in the individual being joined to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor, indeed, did they represent being joined to the Lord independently of obedience to His Word.

Within the Christian community there is far too much assumption when it comes to being “saved,” being part of the

comes to the body of Christ, or being acceptable to God. **Sound doctrine presents the truth in such a manner as promotes introspection, or self examination.** It is only as we “judge ourselves” that godly conclusions can be reached, and the judgment of God avoided (1 Cor 11:31). The exhortation that follows assumes this action is being taken.

SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE

“ 3:1b . . . seek those things which are above . . . ”

Completeness in Christ (Col 2:10) does not assume **that** completeness has been appropriated. Nor, indeed, does it suggest there is nothing more to be done once a person is in Christ Jesus. **What God has provided must be obtained and maintained, else it will bring no advantage.** I do not believe this is perceived by the average “church member.” A lot of what I see taking place in the religious world appears to presume the people are united to the Lord, accepted by Him, and in good standing with Him. There is little being said that promotes a healthy examination of oneself – an examination in which grace is prominent and faith is essential.

There is altogether too little talk about eternal things, things in heavenly places, and realities located where Christ is seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Whatever explanation may be offered for this circumstance, it is not acceptable. Our text brings us to consider the real situation of those who are in Christ Jesus. Because of this, it does not fit into an institutional setting. Men will not be able to capitalize upon it, so that a religious empire can be built upon it, or an individual can obtain fame before the people of this world. What is now set before us has to do with life in Christ Jesus. It relates to salvation, redemption, reconciliation, and acceptance with God. It pertains to a preparation to stand before the Lord, and give an account for the deeds done in the body (2 Cor 5:10). This directly impacts upon living acceptably to God in this present world.

SEEK THOSE THINGS

“ . . . seek those things . . . ” Other versions read, “*keep seeking the things,*” ^{NASB} “*set your hearts on,*” ^{NIV} “*give your attention to,*” ^{BBE} “*you must look for,*” ^{NJB} and “*set your sights on.*” ^{NLT} From these various translations, which reflect the diverse nuances of the word used, we gain the following perspectives.

- ✦ This is **not** a one-time action, but is something that is to be done continually – “*keep seeking.*” ^{NASB}
- ✦ This is an inward matter, involving the expression of the real person – “*set your heart.*” ^{NIV}
- ✦ It requires focus, and is not something that may be done casually – “*give your attention to.*” ^{BBE}
- ✦ This is something that is imperative. It is not an option – “*you must look for.*” ^{NJB}

something that is expected of those risen with Christ. It is something for which new life is adapted, and whereby it is sustained. If the professing believer chooses to ignore this summons, it will be at eternal peril.

Second, when a person comes into Christ, he is not delivered a neat spiritual package that contains every required resource. Initially, the one who is born again is reconciled to God (Col 1:20), receives remission (Acts 10:43), has his name written in heaven (Heb 12:23), receives the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6), and possesses peace with God (Rom 5:1). **Not only are these NOT the whole of the matter, each of them must be sustained in a hostile, condemned, and passing world.** Moreover, resources outside of self and nature are required to maintain them.

Right here, the professed church has failed miserably. Its message has

There is altogether too little talk about eternal things, things in heavenly places, and realities located where Christ is seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

- ✦ There is an ultimate objective involved, and the individual is intent upon realizing it – “*set your sights on.*” ^{NLT}

First, let it be clear that this is

produced great masses of people who have little idea about the words of this text. **For the most part, particularly in the Western world, the approach of the common church to the Scriptures, assemblies, preaching, teaching,**

fellowship, prayer, and holiness betray a near-total absence of interest in the “*things of the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor 2:14).

Where there are tender and sensitive hearts, this kind of environment is like “*pricks*” in their eyes, and “*thorns*” in their sides (Num 33:55). Whether they choose to accept it or not, such an environment is altogether unsuitable for the culturing of spiritual life, preparation for the judgment, and getting ready to be forever with the Lord – and those are all things that MUST be done! The truth of

The above text continues by revealing what God does in response to men’s failure to receive the love of the truth. “*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2 Thess 2:12). **Whatever a person may think about human volition, without receiving the love of the truth, volition has no capacity to embrace the truth of God.**

Seeking presumes interest,

distinguished from the mundane affairs of life. “*The things of others*” are matters pertaining to other people, as distinguished from personal and selfish matters.

“*Things that are above*” are heavenly realities. “*Above*” refers to the domain of Divine power and government – heaven. When dwelling among men, Jesus said He came “*from above*” (John 3:34; 8:23). He said all power came “*from above*” (John 19:11). There is a “*Jerusalem*” that is “*from above*” (Gal 4:26). James affirmed that “*every good and perfect gift is from above*” (James 1:17). There is also a wisdom that is “*from above*” (James 3:17).

These “*things*” are not of this world, and have to do with living toward the Lord and walking in His favor and blessing. They are eternal, and do not fade away like “*the things*” associated with this world. They are “*above*” the world – outside of the domain of flesh and blood. “*Above*” involves superiority or preeminence as well as being separate from this “*present evil world*.”

“*Things that are above*” are not things that can be seen with the natural eye, or perceived with any other natural sense or ability. **Yet they can be perceived with the eye of faith.** It is said of those who have obtained an interest in these things, “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*” (2 Cor 4:17-18).

“*Things that are above*” are not theories, ideas, suppositions, or philosophies. They are not religious sayings, theological positions, or human interpretations. **These are realities that associated with the Lord Jesus Christ, and are therefore very real “substance.”** They sustain the soul, satisfy the heart, and strengthen our hands. They are required to keep the faith, run the race, finish the course, and receive God’s “*Well done!*” No child of God can do without “*the things that are above*.”

Whatever a person may think about human volition, without receiving the love of the truth, volition has no capacity to embrace the truth of God.

the matter is that many professed “*churches*” are nothing more than community clubs, where friend meets friend, and congenial, but earthly, associations are nurtured. Such surroundings do not require God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, or the Holy Spirit. They are not a realm in which holy angels minister, or a consciousness of heavenly realities is promoted.

The Role of Spiritual Appetite

The text with which we are confronted reveals the necessity of a spiritual appetite. Where this is lacking, a fundamental deficiency exists. This lack is of such magnitude, that it will play a significant role in the determination of one’s eternal destiny. The Lord will deal with such a deficiency when He comes. As it is written: “*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*” (2 Thess 2:8-10). Men WILL perish if they do not “*receive*” the love of the truth.

preference, an appetite, and a compelling desire to obtain what is sought for. If these are lacking, seeking is simply not possible – and where there is no seeking, there can be no obtaining!

WHICH ARE ABOVE

“*. . . which are above . . .*” Other versions read, “*the things of heaven*,”^{BBE} “*what is above*,”^{NAB} and “*the realities of heaven*.”^{NLT}

Speaking of natural resources that sustain life in this world, it is said of Joseph, “*Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew . . .*” (Deut 33:13). The are also “*the things of the flesh*” (Rom 8:5), “*the things of a man*” (1 Cor 2:11), “*the things of the temple*” (1 Cor 9:13), and “*the things of others*” (Phil 2:4). In each of these descriptions, reference is made to a body of “*things*” that belong to a specific order. The “*things of the flesh*” are matters pertaining to man’s temporal and fallen nature, as differentiated from what belongs to the “*new creation*.” “*The things of as man*” are things pertaining to men, as distinguished from angels and the beasts of the earth. “*The things of the temple*” related to the affairs of the temple, together with the sacrifices and service that were carried out there, as

WHERE CHRIST SITS

“^{1c} . . . where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

The Spirit does not leave us to speculation in identifying the location of the “*things that are above.*” He is not calling us to some form of subliminal activity, below the threshold of consciousness and apart from cognition. This is not a call to grope about in the dark, like the Eastern mystics, seeking for some soothing feeling or euphoria. This is not referring to some mystical experience in which the heart and mind are not involved. **Rather, this is an exhortation to consciously and perceptibly appropriate very real things located in a very real place.**

WHERE CHRIST SITTETH

“ . . . where Christ sitteth . . . ”

Other versions read, “*where Christ is, sitting,*”^{NKJV} and “*where Christ is seated.*”^{NIV}

The “*things*” we are to seek are to be found where Jesus is – **where He is presently sitting.** To obtain them, we must become Christ-conscious. **Our hearts and minds must be preoccupied with where HE is, NOT where we are!** If this preoccupation is not realized, we will not be able to safely navigate through this world. That is the reason for this word.

If we are “*complete*” in Christ, then everything essential to obtaining and maintaining God’s great salvation is to be found in Him – **and Him alone.** Therefore, where Christ “*IS*” becomes of critical importance. That is the place where needed resources can be found. **Our awareness of these resources, as well as our access to them, will be directly proportionate to our perception of Christ’s present position.**

The reference to Christ **sitting** is not one concerning an idle Savior. This is a reference to His kingship, for He is **seated on a throne.** This is a reigning position. Throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, there are repeated references to kings being seated on the throne (1 Kgs 1:13,17,20,24,,27,30,35,48; 3:6; 8:20,25; 2

Kgs 10:30; 15:12; 1 Chron 28:5; 2 Chron 6:16; Jer 13:13).

Daniel was given a vision of the “*Ancient of days*” sitting upon a throne (Dan 7:9). Zechariah prophesied of the Messiah as one who would “*sit and rule upon His throne,*” even being a “*priest upon His throne*” (Zech 6:13).

On the day of Pentecost Peter declared that God had fulfilled His promise to David, to raise up Christ to “*sit on His throne*” (Acts 2:30-31). In a stirring message to the seven churches in Asia, Jesus declared He had overcome, and was now sitting “*with My Father in His throne*” (Rev 3:21).

The words “*where Christ sitteth*” are equivalent to “*where Christ is reigning.*” **It is where He is presently interceding and mediating the New Covenant** (Heb 7:25; 8:6). It is the place

His right hand had purchased” (Psa 78:54). When referring to the triumph of the Lord, the Psalmist affirmed, “*His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory*” (Psa 98:1). When speaking of Divine intervention in the affairs of men, Isaiah said, “*The LORD hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast labored*” (Isa 62:8). When the Lord slew His enemies, He is said to have done it with His “*right hand*” (Lam 2:3-4).

This is the place from which the world is governed, saints are sustained, and enemies are subdued – the right hand of God. It is also where Jesus has been exalted – the place from which He is now governing all things. This is frequently declared.

This is the place from which the world is governed, saints are sustained, and enemies are subdued – the right hand of God. It is also where Jesus has been exalted – the place from which He is now governing all things. This

from which He is feeding and directing His sheep.

ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

“ . . . on the right hand of God.”

The “*right hand of God*” has great significance. Through Moses and the Prophets, the Lord taught us how to think of His “*right hand.*” It is a phrase that denotes His Sovereignty, His activity, and His will. Moses said, “*from His right hand went a fiery law for them*” (Deut 33:2). The Psalmist referred to the “*saving strength*” of God’s “*right hand*” (Psa 20:6). He also referred to the promised land as “*this mountain, which*

✚ **FROM THAT POSITION HE SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.** “*Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but He says Himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”* (Acts 2:33-35).

✚ **REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS COME FROM**

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THIS POSITION. *“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 5:31).

✚ **IT RELATES TO SALVATION AND FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION.** *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Rom 8:34).

✚ **IT IS FAR ABOVE EVERY OTHER FORM OF POWER.** *“Which He wrought in Christ, when*

heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb 8:1-2).

✚ **IT IS RELATED TO THE SUBDUING OF HIS ENEMIES.** *“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool”* (Heb 10:12-13).

✚ **IT IS RELATED TO FINISHING OUR FAITH.** *“Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before*

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom 8:34).

My Personal Experience

With the single exception of the teaching of my good father, now with the Lord, I was a devoted follower of Christ for many years before I ever heard a minister expound the mediatorship and intercession of Christ. Even then, there have been exceedingly few whom I recall developing this matter. When traveling among a great number of churches from 1992 through 1997, I asked over 160 different congregations if they recalled hearing sermons or teaching on several key subjects. One of those was **the present ministry of Jesus**. Of all of those congregations, I received not one single acknowledgment of any one of them ever having heard the subject expounded.

Where Christ Is Sitting

Our text is admonishing us to seek the things that are resident where Jesus is **at this present time**. He does not ask us to seek what was at the cross, or what occurred at the tomb, but what is resident where Jesus presently is seated in glory.

Christ’s Mediatorship

Our Lord’s present ministry is encompassed in the word *“Mediator.”* Part of the mediation involves His faithful intercession, which is in order that we might be saved. As it is written, *“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Heb 7:25).

The mediation of the Lord Jesus is the objective of His present reign. While the enemies of Jesus will openly and apparently be made subject to Him, that is not the purpose of His reign. His present objective is to bring all of the sons of God safely and triumphantly to glory (Heb 2:10). This is the focus of His present activity, with all other involvements being made subordinate to that aim – to *“bring us to God”* (1 Pet 3:18), presenting us *“faultless before the presence of His glory”* with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24).

It is imperative that we have some understanding of Christ Jesus *“the Mediator.”*

The present ministry of Jesus – His mediatorship and intercession – is also required for our salvation.

He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:21-22).

✚ **JESUS’ ENTHRONEMENT FOLLOWED THE PURGING OF OUR SINS.** *“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”* (Heb 1:3).

✚ **IT IS RELATED TO HIS HIGH PRIESTHOOD.** *“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the*

Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).

✚ **IT IS RELATED TO ALL OTHER POWERS BEING SUBJECT TO HIM.** *“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him”* (1 Pet 3:22).

The Place of Divine Working

The right hand of God is the place of Divine working – **effectual working**. It is the place from which Jesus is presently mediating the New Covenant. This mediatorship is of critical importance, and we cannot be saved without it. The death of Christ was necessary for our salvation. The resurrection of Christ was essential for our salvation. **The present ministry of Jesus – His mediatorship and intercession – is also required for our salvation.** Thus it is written, *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,*

✚ **ONLY ONE MEDIATOR.** *“For there is one God, and **one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus**”* (1 Tim 2:5). Jesus is the “Daysman” for which Job longed – someone who could stand between God and man, putting His hand upon both. No such person existed in Job’s day, yet he sensed the absolute need for such an one. *“Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both”* (Job 9:33). There is only one such Person, and it is the Lord Jesus Christ.

✚ **A MINISTERING MEDIATOR.** *“But now hath He obtained a **more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises**”* (Heb 8:6). Jesus has embarked upon a “ministry” that is more excellent than the One He fulfilled when upon earth – when He *“went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him”* (Acts 10:38). **As glorious as that earthly ministry was, the one in which He is presently engaged is more glorious.**

✚ **IN ORDER TO AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE.** *“And for this cause He is **the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance**”* (Heb 9:15). The promise of an “eternal inheritance” cannot be realized without the present mediation of the Lord Jesus.

✚ **THE 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). The “blood of His cross” (Col 1:20) did not obtain its power on the cross. It is what it testifies **after** the cross – now that Jesus is enthroned in glory – that is the issue. The blood of Cain cried out “condemnation,” testifying against Cain. That is why the Lord said to Cain, *“What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth*

unto me from the ground” (Gen 4:10). **Christ’s blood, however, cries out salvation, reconciliation, peace, forgiveness, and redemption.** And it is speaking from the right hand of God.

A Different Kind of Mediator

Jesus is not a mediator like Moses. The Law was *“ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,”* who was Moses (Gal 3:19). Initially, Moses conveyed the words and terms of the covenant, reading it *“in the audience of the people”* (Ex 24:7). One of his primary mediatorial functions was keeping the wrath of God from the people. He stood in their behalf, pleading that the

(Heb 8:10a).

✚ God’s laws are written in the heart (Heb 8:10b).

✚ All of the covenantal people know the Lord (Heb 8:11).

✚ God is merciful to their unrighteousnesses (Heb 8:12a).

✚ God remembers their sins and iniquities no more (Heb 8:12b).

Jesus is presently ministering these realities. Through His Holy Spirit He is writing God’s laws upon the hearts of His people, and putting them into their

However, Jesus is not that kind of Mediator and Intercessor. He is not merely keeping the wrath from the people. Rather, He is bringing the benefits of the covenant to the people, who themselves have been reconciled to God.

Lord NOT destroy them (Ex 32:10-14; Num 14:11-20; 16:20-22; 21:7; Deut 9:18-19). **In the case of Moses, he stood between a gracious God and a recalcitrant and disobedient people.**

However, Jesus is not that kind of Mediator and Intercessor. He is not merely keeping the wrath from the people. **Rather, He is bringing the benefits of the covenant to the people, who themselves have been reconciled to God.** His mediation and intercession are primarily in order to confer blessing and benefit upon those who are His brethren .

Things That Are Above

Therefore, things that are above are “things” Jesus is presently mediating.

The New Covenant Itself

In the case of the New Covenant itself, we are apprised of several of its key factors.

✚ God’s laws are put into the mind

minds. That is, He is making them of one accord with those laws, so that they can see the sense of them, love them, and fulfill *“the righteousness of the Law”* (Rom 8:4). He is expounding the Father to us – showing Him to us. One of His fundamental ministries is giving us *“an understanding, that we may know Him that is true”* (1 John 5:20). Through His own blood, He is also cleansing our conscience, convincing us that God is no longer holding our sins against us, but has rather extended His mercy to us. In His present ministry, Jesus is persuading us that God no longer remembers our sins and iniquities. He is mediating the New Covenant gloriously and effectively.

Some of the “Things”

The “things” to be sought are very real and very necessary. While time and space do not allow for an exhaustive listing of these “things,” a sampling of them will confirm their value and indispensability.

✚ The purging of the conscience (Heb

9:14).

- ✦ Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).
- ✦ Wisdom (James 3:17).
- ✦ An abounding hope (Rom 15:13; Heb 6:19).
- ✦ Christ's own peace (John 14:27).
- ✦ Christ's own joy (John 15:11).
- ✦ Grace and peace (Rom 1:7)

1:5).

- ✦ A better and an enduring substance (Heb 10:34).
- ✦ In inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that does not fade away (1 Pet 1:4).

The "things above" are very real, but they are not tangible. They are spiritual realities, belonging to the spiritual order. They include justification (Rom 4:25), sanctification (1 Cor 1:30), redemption (Eph 1:7), atonement (Rom

inheritance is not in this world, and therefore this world is not to be the center of our quest. Jesus spoke in strict harmony with this text when He said, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"* (Matt 6:19-20). We do not lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven by sending possessions from here to there. That is a very foolish notion, even though many speak as though that is what Jesus meant.

Note, the Spirit does not say to seek the things that are on the earth, but the things that are "above," where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Our inheritance is not in this world, and therefore this world is not to be the center of our quest.

Our Father is "in heaven" (Matt 6:9), Jesus is "in heaven" (Acts 1:11; 7:55), the Spirit has come down to us "from heaven" (1 Pet 1:12), and our inheritance is "in heaven" (1 Pet 1:4). It makes perfect sense, therefore, to seek the things that are "above" – in heaven, where Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand.

- ✦ The love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39).
- ✦ Peace and love with faith (Eph 6:23).
- ✦ Grace, mercy, and peace (1 Tim 1:2).
- ✦ An understanding of God (1 John 5:20).
- ✦ Understanding in all things (2 Tim 2:7).
- ✦ Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19)
- ✦ The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God (Eph 1:17).
- ✦ Your reward which is in heaven (Matt 5:12).
- ✦ Our "house which is from heaven" – our resurrection body (2 Cor 5:2).
- ✦ The hope laid up for us in heaven (Col

5:11), and reconciliation (2 Cor 5:128-19). There is "peace with God" (Rom 5:1), "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2), and "the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge" (Eph 3:19). They include the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of this great salvation, which is to be comprehended (Eph 3:18). The marvelous heavenly storehouse includes "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," as well as things of "virtue" and "praise" – all of which are to be thought upon (Phil 4:8). There is also "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" which are to be at the forefront of the things that we "seek" (Matt 6:33). Those who seek such things are very rare.

Note, the Spirit does not say to seek the things that are on the earth, but the things that are "above," where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Our

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE?

To seek the things that are above involves at least two things. Seeking these things is like a two-sided coin. Both sides are required for heavenly commerce.

- ✦ First, to seek to **appropriate** heavenly resources that are provided for those who live by faith, and do it now. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus includes Divine provisions for the journey to glory – like the manna and water Israel enjoyed en route to Canaan.
- ✦ Second, to seek to **finally obtain** the things God has "prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor 2:9-10). Ultimately, the present heavens and earth will pass away (2 Pet 3:10-12). It is the aim of faith to be able to obtain what survives that fiery conclusion.

SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE

"^{2a} Set your affection on things above . . ."

Living "godly in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:12) requires deliberation and

resolve. **It is imperative that a certain unquenchable appetite be developed**

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

for ***“the things above.”*** Although this is an exceedingly rare thing in the nominal church, there is no hope of salvation without it. I am deeply concerned about the state of any person or congregation that lacks an appetite for what is found where Jesus is presently enthroned. **If men do not want what Jesus is presently distributing, they simply will not receive it.** If they do not want what God has reserved in heaven for those who love Him, there is not the slightest chance that they will obtain those things. I acknowledge that this does have some startling ramifications. Nevertheless, it is the truth, and men must become acclimated to it if they are to forever dwell with the Lord.

In this world, men may go where they really do not want to go. But that is not the case when it comes to going to heaven, to dwell forever in the house of the Lord. It is said of Jesus, ***“who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”*** (Heb 12:2). That joy included being in the presence of His Father in heaven. Thus He was ***“received up into heaven”*** (Matt 16:19). Before leaving, He told His disciples that He would return and receive them to Himself, ***“that where I am, there ye may be also”*** (John 14:3). The words that followed presumed a longing among the elect for this to be experienced. If that longing is not present, this exhortation will not be viewed as being important.

SET YOUR AFFECTION

“Set your affection . . .” Other versions read, ***“Set your mind,”*** ^{NKJV/NASB} ***“set your minds,”*** ^{NIV/NRSV} ***“Mind the things,”*** ^{DOUAY} ***“Think of,”*** ^{NAB} and ***“Let your thoughts.”*** ^{NJB}

The word translated ***“affection”*** has more to do with intention and preference than actual activity. It is translated from the Greek word φρονεῖτε (fron-ni-ta), which means “have in mind, to have one’s mind controlled by, care for, be concerned about, think highly of.” ^{BARCLAY-NEWMAN} It includes the idea of “pondering upon, being intent upon, keep thinking about, having a certain attitude or frame of mind, and having a high regard, honor, and respect for.” ^{THAYER} The sense of the word, as used here, is that of **continually dwelling upon what we prefer.**

The three words ***“set your affection”*** are a translation of the single Greek word cited above. I prefer the word ***“affection”*** to ***“mind,”*** for it is a larger word – more closely related to ***“heart.”*** There is such a thing as unwanted thoughts or imaginations – ***“fiery darts”*** that are hurled at us by the wicked one (Eph 6:16). This text speaks of thoughts

taking away the key of knowledge (Lk 11:52).

The Modern Praise Movement

One of the great deficiencies of the modern praise movement is that it is not awakening a hunger and thirst for righteousness. It has not spawned an aggressive appetite for the things that are

The point of this text is that we are responsible for developing and culturing an appetite for “the things that are above.” We are to nurture a preference for them, making room in our hearts and minds so that both may be occupied by the consideration of these things.

that are focused because of one’s high regard for things ***“that are above.”*** That regard drives the will to earnestly seek for those realities.

The point of this text is that we are responsible for developing and culturing an appetite for ***“the things that are above.”*** **We are to nurture a preference for them, making room in our hearts and minds so that both may be occupied by the consideration of these things.** This postulates our exposure to ***“the things that are above”*** – i.e., hearing of them, considering them, and pondering them. No one will be able to set their affection on things above if they are not exposed to them. If one does not hear of these things, he can no more set his affection upon them than a person can believe who has never heard the Gospel (Rom 10:14).

The average fare that is being served up in the churches of our land does not whet the spiritual appetite. It does not confront people with the spiritual realities for which they are commissioned to develop an affection and preference. **Messages that do not assist people in placing their affection “on things above” are actually competing with the Lord Jesus, and obscuring His great salvation.** Many people must struggle to forget what they hear spouted from the pulpits of the land. Much of what is being said by religious professionals is actually

above. In fact, it has largely become an end of itself, even taking the place of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. It is too earthy – too close to the temporal zone from which faith seeks to escape. There are too many spiritual pygmies driving this movement. It is not producing spiritually minded people, or compelling anyone to earnestly want to be spiritually minded.

Spiritual Mindedness

The Holy Spirit informs us of the following: ***“to be spiritually minded is life and peace”*** (Rom 8:6). Such a mind-set is the result of setting one’s affection on ***“things above.”*** **Once that takes place, both heart and mind are reshaped.** New holy preferences are developed, and an effort extended to satisfy them.

Not A Law Approach

Note how this approach differs from that of the Law. The emphasis is not on doing, but on appetite, desires, and aspirations. Rather than emphasizing a rule or a procedure, the Spirit calls us to a desire, an affection, and a heavenly objective. He summons us to seek after something that is not a part of the worldly order. **This is not the manner of Law!**

In the four books pertaining to the Law (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), the word “seek,” in all of its varied forms, is mentioned nine times (Lev 13:36; 19:31; Num 15:39; 16:10; 24:1; Deut 12:5; 22:2; 23:6). Only one of them

Now there are unseen realities that are to occupy our attention. Under this covenant, it is a transgression NOT to seek for the things that Christ's redemption has procured for us.

has to do with seeking God or the things of God: *"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul"* (Deut 4:29). Even that verse was not dealing with the normal thrust of life. It was a promise relating to the time when they would be carried away captive into a strange land. In that strange land the Lord said, *"ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell"* (Deut 4:28). If, while in that condition, they would seek the Lord whole-heartedly, He would be found of them.

The Old Covenant was vastly inferior to the New, not only in what it emphasized, but in what it promised. It was not a Covenant that promoted

trafficking in heavenly places, because it enabled no one to be seated there. Under that introductory covenant things from heaven were said to be bread (manna), the verbal utterance of the Law itself (Ex 20:22), and rain (Deut 28:24). The peace they received was an earthly peace, where they were given rest from their enemies (Deut 12:10). That economy has now been replaced with a *"better covenant, which is established upon better promises"* (Heb 8:6).

Now there are unseen realities that are to occupy our attention. Under this covenant, it is a transgression NOT to seek for the things that Christ's redemption has procured for us.

ON THINGS ABOVE

"... on things above..." In holy emphasis, the Spirit again mentions *"things above."* These are the things to be sought. They are realities for which a hunger and affection are to be developed and maintained.

These are eternal things – things that cannot be shaken. When *"this present evil world"* has passed away, and there is *"no more seas"* – when time has rolled its last cycle, and we are consciously ushered into the eternal realm, into the presence of the Lord – **these are the things that will remain.** As it is written, *"And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain"* (Heb 12:27).

These are the things we are to seek **now**, doing so without delay. **They are the things upon which our affection, deliberate thoughts, and holy preferences, are to be placed.** Let it be clear in your mind, an *"eternal inheritance"* is reserved for a people ready to receive it. **That readiness includes developing a longing appetite for it now.**

DO NOT SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ON THE EARTH

"^{2b} ... not on things on the earth."

Because the flesh insists on emphasizing this world, and neglecting the world to come, an additional exhortation is given. We are in the domain where Belial competes against Christ. Darkness contends with light, and unrighteousness asserts itself against righteousness. **There is no accord whatsoever between what comes from heaven and what comes from earth.** As it is written, *"for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath*

said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor 6:14-16). **If an affection for the things of God is to be developed and maintained, there must be a corresponding forfeiture of a preference for the things of this world.** This is not an option. Any person who maintains an emphasis on this world, by that very emphasis, forfeits the things that come from heaven. We are, then, dealing with a matter of great sobriety.

NOT ON THINGS

"... not on things..."

There are two orders of *"things,"* or realities. Things above are eternal. Things in the world are temporal. Things above are pure. Things of the world are defiled. A similar attitude cannot be maintained toward both of these realms

simultaneously. Our *"affection"* cannot be placed upon both domains at the same time. Our thoughts cannot be centered on both realms concurrently. Those who say we can have the best of this world, and the best of the world to come, need to rethink what they are saying. In a sense, there is no such thing as *"the best of this world."* **The world, everything in it, and the lusts that attach men to it are all going to pass away** (1 John 2:17).

Solomon's Example

God has carved out a piece of earthly history in which this is confirmed. It is found in Solomon, a man unexcelled in wisdom *"under the sun."* He had, what men would call, the *"best of this world."* He himself testified, *"And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for*

my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor” (Eccl 2:10).

Technically, the things Solomon received were given to him by God Almighty. When the Lord asked Solomon what he wanted, he asked for wisdom to guide the people: *“Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?”* (2 Chron 1:10). The saying so pleased the Lord that He responded, *“And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like”* (2 Chron 1:12). Note, Solomon had not set his heart on these things, and that is why God gave them to him. **Yet, they gave him no advantage whatsoever in acquiring or keeping wisdom from the Lord.** In fact, he realized no ultimate satisfaction in the abundance of worldly goods that he possessed. Hear his own words. *“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun”* (Eccl 2:11).

Who is the person, then, who will set his affection on things on the earth. Not only has God told him NOT to do it, we have the testimony of one who lacked nothing the world has to offer. He said it was vain. Thus the truth of the matter is established by two witnesses. There

should be no doubt about the matter.

Mark it well: there are “things” for which you are not to develop an appetite. These are things for which you are not to culture a preference or a longing. Such yearnings cannot be dignified or sanctified. **God is not in any way honored by a mind that is focused upon this world.**

Wherever there is a mind that is drawn toward the earth, there is a forfeiture of heavenly things. I have noticed that when men aspire to some

world can make the transition into the world to come. The fashion of this world is *“passing away.”* Therefore, you must *“use the things of this world, as if not engrossed with them”*^{NIV} (1 Cor 7:31).

Lest we miss the subtlety of becoming attached to the things of this world, remember the setting of this text. It is that we are not to allow any person to judge us in matters regarding food, drink, or days. We are to forbid any person to rob us of our reward by imposing upon us self-developed humility and religious bodily disciplines (2:16-23). **All of those**

Hold loosely what you possess in this world. Be a good steward of it, but reconcile yourself to the fact that you will have to let it go. Nothing from this world can make the transition into the world to come.

earthly position, it is always the things of God that are forfeited. It is as though the world will not allow a person to maintain godly perspective while having a fundamental desire for something it has to offer.

ON THE EARTH

“ . . . on the earth. ”

The very idea of refusing to set our affection upon the things of this world presumes there is nothing of lasting value in it. **Whatever you obtain from it must at last be forfeited.** Therefore your heart cannot be set upon it.

Hold loosely what you possess in this world. Be a good steward of it, but reconcile yourself to the fact that you will have to let it go. **Nothing from this**

things are of this world, and cannot survive its demise. Therefore, they simply cannot be our focus.

After all is said and done, our religion must not have a worldly emphasis. The thrust of it cannot be worldly relationships and responsibilities, although they are all sanctified by our faith. However, faith will not allow a person to linger upon the consideration of things pertaining to this world. **The longer our vision rests upon temporal things, the more vague heavenly things will appear.** When we are focused on this world, there is no longer any place in our hearts and minds for the consideration of, and quest for, the things belonging to the heavenly order. This result cannot be avoided.

YOU ARE DEAD

“^{3a} For ye are dead . . . ”

The Spirit now begins to reason with us concerning this exhortation. Once we see the real circumstance of those who

are in Christ Jesus, it will all make perfect sense. What we have been asked to do is perfectly reasonable – namely, seek the things that are above, and set our affection upon them. Now the Spirit will

focus upon our own circumstance in Christ Jesus. **Once our real condition is perceived, we will be about seeking the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right**

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

hand of God. When we truly comprehend what happened when we were joined to Christ, we will at once take up the occupation of developing a strong spiritual appetite, setting our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth.

FOR YOU . . .

“. . . For ye . . .” This is a word to

world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” (Col 2:20). This is not a goal for Christians, but a very real condition that takes place when we are in Christ Jesus. It is conceivable that some who are actually dead to sin and the world do not yet realize that fact – at least not cognitively. That is why the text speaks as it does: *“For ye ARE dead!”*

worldly-mindedness.

That is precisely what happened when we were circumcised with *“the circumcision of Christ.”* From one point of view, the whole body of the sins of the flesh was separated from us – the essential *“us.”* From another point of view, **we** were separated from the sinful nature, thereby becoming *“dead”* to it.

No category of people within the body of Christ is exempt from this word. If the word seems too profound, then it is the business of the individual to come away from influences that cause it to be obscure

The idea here is that we died to ourselves, to sin, and to the world. **That is, we lost a primary interest in ourselves, a fundamental appetite for sin, and a prevailing interest in this world.** We became *“dead indeed unto sin,”* and are now to reckon, or reason, upon the basis of that fact. As it is written, *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom 6:11).

all of the church. It is not addressed only to the leaders, or to women, or to men, or to the young, the single, or the elderly. Men may develop extended messages for unique groups of believers, but the mass of Scripture is addressed all who are in Christ Jesus. **No category of people within the body of Christ is exempt from this word.** If the word seems too profound, then it is the business of the individual to come away from influences that cause it to be obscure. The mind of every believer is to be set on understanding what this means, for it will provide the incentive to obey the word of the Lord.

No one is *“alive unto God”* that is not *“dead to sin”* and *“dead to the rudiments of this world”* – NO ONE! A person cannot be in *“the kingdom of God’s dear Son”* without being *“translated out of the kingdom of darkness”* (Col 1:13).

The experience of this text is confessed by Paul. He explains what it means to *“be dead,”* in order that we might live toward Christ. *“I AM crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20).

ARE DEAD

“. . . are dead . . .” Other versions read, *“you died,”*^{NKJV} *“you have died,”*^{NASB} *“you life on earth is done,”*^{BBE} and *“for ye did die.”*^{YLT}

All Are Dead
There is a most arresting declaration made in Second Corinthians – one that is conducive to much contemplation: *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead”* (2 Cor 5:14). Other versions read, *“then all died,”*^{NKJV} *“therefore all died,”*^{NASB/NIV} *“therefore all have died,”*^{NRSV} *“then all have undergone death,”*^{BBE} and *“we have all died to the old life we used to live.”*^{NLT}

I want to emphasize that the death of reference is not a goal. **It is something that actually occurred when we were baptized into Christ.** At that point the *“old man”* was *“crucified with Christ.”* As it is written, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”* (Rom 6:6). The *“new man”* which is to be *“put on”* (Eph 4:24) is not on the cross! He is *“made free”* (John 8:32,36), and has been seated in the vast and unhindered realm of *“the heavenly places”* (Eph 2:6).

This is a reference to the change that occurred when we were baptized into Christ. We were *“buried with”* Christ *“in baptism”* (Col 2:12). The book of Romans affirms that we were *“baptized INTO His death”* – *“buried with Him by baptism INTO death”* (Rom 6:3-4). Again the Spirit affirms, *“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him”* (Rom 6:8).

The expression *“then were all dead,”* does not refer to our former state of being *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1). This text is speaking of our identity with Christ, for it is the prelude to godly expressions of life. *“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more”* (2 Cor 5:15-16). **In order to live toward the One who died for us, we must first die to self-centeredness and**

When our text says, *“ye are dead,”* it is referring to **the part of us that has been crucified**, which experience constitutes being *“dead to the Law by the body of Christ”* (Rom 7:4). Rules and regulations are, at the best, an appeal to the *“old man.”*

The Law Is Not for the Righteous

The Law was addressed to men in

Earlier in Colossians it was reasoned, *“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the*

the flesh, and was tailored for the ungodly and unrighteous. As it is written, *“Knowing this, that **the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust**”* (1 Tim 1:9-11).

This is not the manner of the New Covenant. **In Christ Jesus, LIFE has changed our whole situation.** We are not motivated by Law, but by the love of Christ, which is the constraining factor (2 Cor 5:14). When the love of Christ is truly perceived, it moves us to gladly do what the Lord requires of us. Those under the

Law ask, “What is it that I cannot do?” Those influenced by Divine love ask, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

THE CHURCH AND SIN

In view of these things, how can any person with an honest and good heart be tolerant of sin within the church? When sin is present among the people of God it is because someone is not *“dead with Christ.”* Sin is committed when men are alive to it, thereby contradicting the statement of our text: *“ye **are** dead.”*

It is our connection with Christ that has induced death to sin and the world. We can no longer tolerate a religion that nails our heads to the earth like Jael nailed Sisera’s head to the floor of her tent (Judges 4:21-22). For those who have died **with Christ**, sin is unreasonable. They know that fleshly regimens cannot take away the appetite for sin. Therefore they have no real value in the kingdom, even though they appear

to be wise. In Jesus there is a higher law that compels us.

THE PRINCIPLE OF AFFIRMATION

Do not miss the power of this text. The Spirit has made an **affirmation**: *“ye **ARE** dead.”* He does **not** say that we **ought** to be dead, but that we **are** dead. He does **not** declare that we **can** be dead, but that we **are** dead. This is a statement upon which faith can lay hold – and *“the just shall live by faith”* (Heb 10:38).

It is principle in the New Covenant that men are primarily motivated by the truth, for it is the truth that “makes” us free (John 8:32). Power comes to us on the wings of a message, not on the tablets of a law. The Gospel is essentially a message, not a system. It is an affirmation, not a procedural outline. Paul knows the Spirit will empower this word: *“ye **are** dead.”* He knows that when we realize the truth, it will move us.

YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD

“^{3b} . . . and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

In Christ, death is in order to life. We enter into a special kind of death **in order that** we might experience a special kind of life. As it is written, *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection”* (Rom 6:5). *“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live with Him**”* (Rom 6:8). *“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, **we shall also live with Him**”* (2 Tim 2:11). If there is not corresponding life with Christ – no sensitivity and commitment toward Him – then the person is not *“dead with Christ.”* God raises the dead – those who are *“dead with Christ.”* **It simply is not possible to be buried into Christ’s death and not be raised by the glory of the Father.**

It was impossible for death to keep its hold upon Jesus. This is a matter of Gospel affirmation. *“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of*

death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). Just so, **it is not possible for those who have died with Jesus to remain dead.** God raises them that they may *“walk in newness of life”* (Rom 6:4). That is why a sinning Christian is a walking contradiction. Such a person is blasphemy being lived out, for they are suggesting that God does not, in fact, raise the dead.

life.”^{NLT}

This is *“your life,”* but it has **been given to you.** As Jesus said, *“I am come that they might **have life**, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). God has given the Son to *“have life in Himself”* (John 5:26). That is, He can confer life. This is the life of which our text speaks. God the Father

God raises the dead – those who are “dead with Christ.” It simply is not possible to be buried into Christ’s death and not be raised by the glory of the Father.

YOUR LIFE

“ . . . and your life . . . ” Other versions read, *“you have a secret life,”^{BBE} “the live you have,”^{NJB} and “your real*

gives it (Rom 4:17), but He gives it through Christ Jesus. That is why it is said of the Son of God, *“that we might live **through Him**”* (1 John 4:9).

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

This is also the life that is “unto God.” As it is written, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:11). It is also “eternal life,” which Jesus Himself gives (John 10:28; 17:2).

“Your life,” “life more abundantly,” “eternal life” – they are all the same thing. **This is the only life that God recognizes.** Everything else is death. Of this life Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). This

characterized by many earthly possessions, abundant financial resources, and a life free from hardship and disease. **The devil is the author of this teaching.** Such prosperity is not the indication of Divine blessing, even though a few of the godly through the ages have been in such a condition (ex: Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Job).

Asaph’s Testimony

Asaph was once envious of the “prosperity of the wicked.” They appeared to have no struggles, and their “bodies were healthy and strong.” They were “free from the burdens common to man,” and were “not plagued by human ills.” Such prosperity moved them to wear

another order, and it does not blend with “this present evil world.”

A Hidden Life

The life given to those who are dead with Christ is hidden from the world. It is a secret life, and is sustained in the secret place of the wilderness, as portrayed in the book of the Revelation (Rev 12:6,14).

The life – “your life” – is “hid with Christ.” Wherever Christ is, that is where your life is. It is “hidden” there, inaccessible to the enemy of your soul. It cannot be touched by your peers who breathe out threatening against you. The principalities and powers against which you wrestle cannot touch this life. That is why it is written, “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18). This could not be true if your life was not “hidden in Christ.”

Your new life is as safe as Jesus is, for it is “hidden” in Him. There is no power that can take that life from Christ, where it is “hidden.” This is such a great mystery to some, that they imagine themselves never to be in danger. However, a person must “walk” in the “newness of life” to take advantage of it (Rom 6:4). Jesus gave us life, and He sustains our life. It is with Him – in His hand, so to speak.

IN GOD

“... in God.”

This is a glorious technicality that is declared for our comfort and assurance. Our life is hid in Christ, and Christ is “in God.” Speaking of this arrangement, Jesus said He was sitting in His Father’s throne. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (Rev 3:21).

This means that Jesus is reigning to sustain the life that He has given, which is hidden in Him. Who, then, is able to harm that life? Where is the person capable or wresting us out of Christ, who is in God?

The Affirmation of Jesus

The abundance that characterizes spiritual life does not pertain to this world. It is life of another order, and it does not blend with “this present evil world.”

is not, therefore, self life, but Divinely conferred life. Now, what may be said of this life.

IS HID WITH CHRIST

“... is hid with Christ...” Other versions read, “is hidden with Christ,” NKJV/NASB “now hidden with Christ,” NIV and “a secret life with Christ.” BBE

In Christ we are dead to one order, but alive to another. **Because these orders are incompatible, newness of life cannot be seen while within the environment from which we are delivered.**

“Your life” is not apparent to the flesh. It cannot be seen with the natural eye, or observed by those who are not of God. Others may see the fruit of the life, but they cannot see the life itself, for it is not of the natural order, and consequently does not belong to this world.

In recent years it has become quite fashionable in the United States to speak of “life more abundant” as a life

“pride like a necklace,” and “clothe themselves with violence.” Their hearts were “calloused,” “evil conceits” were in their minds, and they “scoffed” and spoke “with malice.” They were “always carefree, and increased “in wealth.” By comparison, Asaph appeared to have kept his heart pure and washed his hands of iniquity in vain. He said he was “plagued all day long.” The whole matter was “oppressive” to him when he tried to understand it. However, his entire perspective changed when he “went into the sanctuary of God.” Then he understood “the final destiny” of the prospering ones he had envied. They were really not living the good life at all. Instead, God had positioned them in “slippery places,” setting them up for destruction (Psa 73:3-19).

According to the doctrine of some theological sophists of our day, the people of whom Asaph was envious had abundant life. But this was not the case at all. **The abundance that characterizes spiritual life does not pertain to this world.** It is life of

This circumstance is what Jesus referred to when He said, *“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand”* (John 10:28-29).

Many professing Christians object to the use of these words of our Lord. The fundamental point of their theology is that we can fall away. Of course, that is, indeed, the truth. However, falling away is not the subject of these words of our Lord. These words are spoken concerning His sheep, whom, He affirms, hear His voice and follow Him. Furthermore, He knows them in a personal and effective way (John 10:27). **These are people who follow Jesus, abide in Him, trust Him, and are being sustained by Him. All such souls are refreshed to hear this word, and will not allow any man to take it from them.** Jesus said of them, *“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers”* (John

These are people who follow Jesus, abide in Him, trust Him, and are being sustained by Him. All such souls are refreshed to hear this word, and will not allow any man to take it from them.

10:5).

See, the lives of the sheep are in Christ’s hand – *“hid with Christ.”* And Christ is in His Father’s throne – *“in God.”* What adversary has access to Jesus? NONE! What enemy of the saints has access to God the Father? NONE! There is safety, security, nourishment, and tender care *“in Christ”* and *“in God”* – and that is where our lives are hidden!

We will not allow any man to take these things from us, binding us to laws about meats, drinks, feast days, new moons, and sabbaths. We will not submit to a series of humanly devised *“touch*

not,” “taste not,” and *“handle not’s.”* **We will not subject ourselves to those who encourage self-imposed humility, and trying to subdue the flesh by rules.** God has made us alive, and we will not return to the environs of death.

This is precisely why Paul said of such men, *“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you”* (Gal 2:5).

CHRIST IS OUR LIFE

“^{4a} When Christ, who is our life . . .”

When a person being moved along by the Holy Spirit speaks of life, he immediately brings Christ into the picture. This is not a parable or a hyperbole. What is here affirmed is exactly the case, and is precisely stated. Our spiritual life is not the result of our works, but of Christ’s indwelling presence. Our works, on the other hand, are the **result** of the life, for God has created us *“UNTO good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Eph 2:10).

CHRIST

“When Christ . . .”

“Jesus” is Christ’s human name, emphasizing His humanity, as well as His mission to *“save His people from their sins”* (Matt 1:21). There are 983 mentionings of *“Jesus”* in Matthew

through Revelation.

The appellation *“Christ”* refers to His office – the One charged with bringing many sons to glory, and all that is involved in that great work.

In Matthew through Revelation, the word *“Christ”* is used 555 times! Sixty of those times are found in the Gospels, eleven in Revelation, and thirty-one in the book of Acts. The remaining 453 times it is used in the Epistles (Romans through Jude).

- ✚ Romans – 67 times.
- ✚ First Corinthians – 65 times.
- ✚ Second Corinthians – 43 times
- ✚ Galatians – 39 times
- ✚ Ephesians – 45 times
- ✚ Philippians – 37 times
- ✚ Colossians – 26 times
- ✚ First Thessalonians – 14 times
- ✚ Second Thessalonians – 13 times
- ✚ First Timothy – 16 times

- ✚ Second Timothy – 15 times
- ✚ Titus – 4 times
- ✚ Philemon – 7 times
- ✚ Hebrews – 13 times
- ✚ James – 2 times
- ✚ First Peter – 20 times
- ✚ Second Peter – 8 times
- ✚ First John – 10 times
- ✚ Second John – 4 times
- ✚ Third John – none
- ✚ Jude – 5 times

The technical meaning of the word *“Christ”* is *“THE Anointed One.”* While Jesus of Nazareth was anointed *“with the Holy Spirit and power”* (Acts 10:38), this is not the heart of the meaning of *“Christ.”* **Doctrinally, “Christ” signifies that He is the solitary Person sent by God to accomplish His great salvation.** He is the one charged with taking away the sins of the world (John 1:29), reconciling the world to God (2 Cor 5:18), and making peace (Col 1:20). He alone was given the

commission to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:17-18). By Himself He purged our sins (Heb 1:3), destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14), and plundered hostile principalities and powers (Col 2:15). In all of these things, He operated alone, without any aid from any man. God sustained Him (Isa 42:1). Angels

effective. He stands absolutely by Himself above all things, the Father Himself being the only exception (1 Cor 15:27).

Let me state this as clearly as I know how. **Those who would teach us to live according to Law have only revealed they do not see Jesus as all**

Christ IS "our life." That is, without Him that is no life, as God counts life. Only death exists outside of Christ. That is why it is written, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"

ministered to Him (Mark 1:13). But when it came to the Divinely appointed mission He did it "by Himself." The sins of the world were laid on Him alone (Isa 53:6). Only His body bore our sins (1 Pet 2:24). He alone "tasted death for every man" (Heb 2:9).

He alone was exalted to the right hand of God (Eph 1:20). He alone was given a name that is above every name (Phil 2:9). He alone received all power in heaven and earth (Matt 28:18). He is the solitary Head over all principality and power (Col 2:10). He is the only Head of the church (Eph 1:22). He is the "one Mediator between God and man" (1 Tim 2:5). There is "none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Nothing can be added to Jesus to make Him more powerful. Nothing can be combined with Him to make Him more

sufficient. Their miserable doctrines have contradicted the affirmation that we are "complete in Him" (2:10). For them it is Christ AND something – some law, some regulation, some procedure – something that men do.

This is the "Christ" of reference – the one in whom our life is "hid." Presently, the only thing we know about Him is what we have been told by God, in "the record He has given of His Son" (1 John 5:10-11). He is the one Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms foretold (Luke 24:44).

WHO IS OUR LIFE

"... who is our life..."

This is another most unique statement. Christ IS "our life." **That is, without Him that is no life, as God counts life.** Only death exists outside of Christ. That is why it is written, "He that

hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Only the person who is in Christ, and in whom Christ dwells, is "alive unto God." **Only such an one can hear the Lord, perceive Him, obey Him, and respond to Him. All others are dead – dead in sin, and thus alienated from God.**

Jesus is the only one who can "give" eternal life, and that is something you must have before you leave this world! Christ said, "And I give unto them eternal life" (John 10:28). And how does He give this life? It is by dwelling within the individual. As He Himself said, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). Again, He called out to a dead church, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev 3:20). **That is the way He confers life, by Himself becoming our life.** Thus we may say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

As for our own life, we "are dead." **Those in Christ do not consider their own lives the hub of the universe.** Their will is not their own, but is submitted to the One who loved them and gave Himself for them. That is the manner of the kingdom, and there are no exceptions.

CHRIST WILL APPEAR

"^{4b} ... shall appear ..."

Presently our lives are hidden in Christ, who Himself is also hidden from the world. Before He returned to glory on a cloud, He said to His disciples, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). To this day,

those who are of the world have never again seen Jesus. When He rose from the dead, taking back His life, He appeared only to those who were chosen. As Peter declared, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from

the dead" (Acts 10:40-41).

Thus, God withdrew the testimony, leaving a message that declared Him – the Gospel, which is God's "power unto salvation" (Rom 1:16). Doubters and skeptics question Christ's reality, and particularly what He has accomplished and who He is. But their

day is coming to an end, and the Christ will be revealed to an assembled universe.

SHALL APPEAR

“ . . . shall appear . . . ” Other versions read “is revealed,”^{NASB} “shall be manifested,”^{ASV} “the coming of Christ,”^{BBE} and “is revealed to the whole world.”^{NLT}

God has determined a day – a precise day – when He is going to unveil His Son to the entire world. He will show Him for what He really is, and will hold nothing back. Jesus will not be obscured like He was when He walked among men. **The revelation will be so thorough that there will not be a single personality who will know who Jesus is.** Every mouth will be abruptly stopped. All questions will cease, and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is, indeed, Lord (Phil 2:10-11).

The Scriptures speak precisely about this manifestation. “*That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen*” (1 Tim 6:16).

Every aspect of Christ that will be revealed in that day

presently characterizes Jesus. Right now He is “*the blessed and ONLY Potentate,*” or Sovereign with all power. Now, at this present time He is the “*King of kings.*” He governs them all, turning their hearts like the rivers of water wherever He wills (Prov 21:1). He is now the “*Lord of lords.*” There is no power that is not subservient to Him. The devil has to ask permission to sift you, and even then, he cannot go further than you are able to bear (1 Cor 10:13). At this time, Jesus is the **ONLY** one in whom immortality is inherent, and who can give it to others. He is presently dwelling in celestial glory that cannot be accessed by any man, nor can any human eye behold Him, for He is glorified. All honor and power everlasting belong to Him, and that is to be recognized and confessed by all. Men can believe it now, and then be advantaged by His showing. But every one will see that showing, whether they want to or not. And, they will bow their knee to Him and confess Him, without any regard to their supposed free will.

“*The appearing*” – the **scheduled** appearing, is when Christ will no more be hidden. Holy men are charged and commissioned with this “*appearing*” in mind. “*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom*” (2 Tim 4:1). Those who are living by faith and walking in the Spirit “*love His appearing,*” and will thus experience the

consummate blessing at that time (2 Tim 4:8).

When Christ is “*our life*” here and now, grace teaches us “*that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:11-13). It is then that tested and tried faith will “*be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 1:7).

Jesus will appear in **ALL** of His glory, and therefore it will be impossible for Him **not** to be seen and acknowledged. Thus it is written, “*He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels*” (Luke 9:26). **He will come in His own glory, the glory of the Father, and the glory of the holy angels!** That is a lot of glory! The heavens and the earth will not be able to survive that magnificent display. As it is written, “*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them*” (Rev 20:11).

Now the Spirit summons us to consider that time – when the Son of God is unveiled, and seen in all of His resplendent glory. It is a glory that He presently has, but is hidden to men by the natural order.

WE WILL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY

“^{4c} . . . then shall ye also appear with Him in glory”

There is a certain burden associated with being in this world. When Jesus was here, He spoke of His death, referring to it as a baptism of suffering. He acknowledged that until His appointed death was accomplished He was straitened, or in a state of restriction. “*But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*” (Luke 12:50). Other versions read, “*But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until*

it is accomplished!” (Luke 12:50). “*how am I kept back till it is complete!*,”^{BBE} “*How great is My distress until it is accomplished,*”^{ESV} “*how I am grieved until it be ended,*”^{GENEVA} “*how great is my anguish until it is accomplished,*”^{NAB} “*and what constraint I am under until it is completed,*”^{NJB} and “*I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished.*”^{NLT}

The Divine nature has a desire to be seen and known. Jesus wanted to be seen as He really is, yet had to operate in a state of restriction and amidst a sea of ignorance. However, when He appears, He

will find joy in the admiration of those who have patiently waited for Him (2 Thess 1:10). Now the Spirit brings **us** into the picture, confirming that we will also experience great joy in that day.

THEN

“ . . . then . . . ”

“*Then*” is when Jesus “*shall appear.*” The point of reference is **not** the mythical rapture, so aggressively taught in many circles. It is **not** when things are turned around for us in the flesh. The “*then*” relates to Jesus primarily.

The Spirit makes clear that the attention of those in Christ is to be fixed upon things that are above – by Given O. Blakely

There is such a thing as the “then” mentality. “Then,” when Jesus comes, every faithful steward will receive praise from God (1 Cor 4:5). “Then,” that which is in part “will be done away” (1 Cor 13:10), and we will see the Lord “face to face” with no more obscurity (1 Cor 13:11). “Then” will be brought to pass the saying, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54). “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet the Lord,” being “changed” (1 Thess 4:17; 1 Cor 15:51-52).

But that is not all that will happen “then” – when the Lord “appears.” There will be a revelation of the sons as well.

SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR

“ . . . shall ye also appear . . . ”

Other versions read, “then you also will be revealed,” ^{NASB} “then ye also . . . be manifested,” ^{ASV} and “you will be seen.” ^{BBE}

What a blessed contemplation! NO more obscurity! Presently we are kings incognito. Many of Christ’s brethren are viewed as the “*offscouring of all things*” (1 Cor 4:13). Presently, the world does not know or recognize us, for they do not know the Lord. As it is written, “*the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not*” (1 John 3:1).

There is a certain of frustration that attends this condition. It is certainly bearable, but we are still straitened by it, just as Jesus was when He dwelt among us. We are cast in the same situation as young David. He was anointed king by Samuel, and the Holy Spirit came upon him (1 Sam 16:1,13). **Yet he did not occupy the throne for at least five years** (2 Sam 2:11). We are also in the same situation as Joseph before his exaltation. **God send him down into Egypt, yet he did not sit upon the**

throne for thirteen years (from seventeen – Gen 37:2 until thirty – Gen 41:46). But both men were finally revealed.

We will be fully known when Jesus appears. **As long as He is obscured to this world, we will be also.** However, at the very instant He is made known, we will be made known also. Praise the Lord!

WITH HIM

“ . . . with Him . . . ” **It is our association with Jesus that will cause us to be seen as we really are.** In fact, it is His glory that will transform us, like the glory of Sinai changed the skin of Moses’ face (2 Cor 3:13). As it is written, “*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). Our text is saying the very same thing.

It is our identity with Jesus in this world that assures our identity with Him when He returns. That is when the saints will appear as they really are. Simultaneously, all of the wicked will appear as they really are as well. Thus it is written, “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; WHEN He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day*” (2 Thess 1:7-10).

IN GLORY

“ . . . in glory”

The glory that causes the heavens and earth to pass away (Rev 20:11) **will be the means by which we are revealed.** The very same glory that causes the ungodly to call out for rocks and mountains to cover them (Rev 6:16) **will be occasion of our greatest joy and confidence.**

This revelation will be the ultimate fulfillment of God’s predetermined purpose – a purpose that has been revealed. “*For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified*” (Rom 8:29-30). That glorification will be fulfilled when at last we “*appear with Him in glory.*”

Those two verses constrain eleven references to Deity, thereby confirming the real nature of salvation. GOD is the one who foreknew. HE is the one who predestinated that the people be conformed to the image of HIS SON. He determined HIS SON would be the FIRSTBORN among many brethren. GOD called us. GOD justified us. And GOD will yet glorify us at Christ’s appearing.

The glory will be HIS glory, but it will change us, conforming us to Christ’s own image. Thus we will be “like Him.” That is why we will dwell forever with the Lord. That is why we will be fully qualified to be “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17).

CONCLUSION

God has hinged the totality of salvation upon His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything has been invested in Him, and Him **alone**. All of God’s fulness dwells in Him **alone**. The greatest commission was

delivered to Him **alone**. The greatest work was done by Him **alone**, which work He finished in the fulness of time. The most profound and effective death was wrought by Him **alone**. The greatest and most effective resurrection was

executed by Him **alone**, when He took back the life that He voluntarily laid down. The surpassing victory was accomplished by Him **alone** in defeating death, triumphing over the grave, destroying the devil, and plundering

principalities and powers. The most significant accomplishments were wrought by Him **alone** in making peace, reconciling the world, taking away the sins of the world, and opening up the way to heaven. He is the **only** one living in this world who did not sin, nor was guile found in His mouth. He is the **only** Mediator between God and man. He is the **only** one who ever lives to make intercession for those who come to God

through Him. He is the **only** who has all power in heaven and in earth.

No mortal man has any part in any of the things just mentioned. Jesus did them all **alone**. Now, what would lead any person to imagine that he is not "*complete*" in Christ Jesus? Who is the one who envisions the world can contribute anything at all to make a person more acceptable to God, more

qualified to serve Him, or more able to stand in His presence with joy? What institution can take His place, give what He gives, or bring us to God? Where can a religious system be found that can do for the soul what Jesus has been appointed to do, and is fully capable of doing? Let all men withdraw their presence and resources from those who compete with Jesus, representing Him as **part** of the solution to the human dilemma.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/6/2004. In this session, we will be covering verses 5-11 of the third chapter. The title of our lesson is, "**THINGS THAT ARE TO BE PUT OFF.**" When it comes to the Spirit's *APPLICATION* of the truth of God, or to the practical side of spiritual life, it is approached quite differently than is common in church circles. 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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A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

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