

A Christian Worldview

Building the Kingdom

Book 3

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FOREWORD

These pages have been written by the teaching staff of First Baptist Church, Leander, TX. Their goal is to bring God's Word to life for you and to greatly increase your faith with the hope and confidence that there is more than we visibly see and that God is at work all around us.

Each chapter represents selected scriptures that our Bible Classes study each week and then I, as the pastor, preach in the pulpit. It gives our folks an insight into the value of the scriptures in maturing the believer's faith and gives each one deeper insight in the power of God's Word as faith is lived out daily.

I pray this book is too engaging to be easily put down. Prayerfully, it will remind you that God is real and active, and is truly the living hope he has placed before us.

Whether you are a seeker, skeptic or genuine believer, the pages written for you on each of the selected verses will remind the reader that God is closer than you think. And is available to the believer for every need.

Stay faithful to absorb the significance of every scripture. Stay faithful to engage every chapter. Stay faithful to allow God and His Spirit to lead you to all truth, and God Himself will etch His truth in your heart that you might live thereby to His glory.

Enjoy the journey!

Pastor Tim C. Moore

INTRODUCTION

There are many viewpoints of the world people are exposed to on a daily basis. But, which views should be "taken to heart" and which should be discarded? The truth is, each person must decide on his or her own path in which they take and the viewpoint that will structure their lives. Nevertheless, there must be a right way to live one's life.

The viewpoint of this book is the Christian Worldview. It is written from the perspective of knowledge of the truth as is available through the Word of God.

It is my prayer that you look at this study with an open mind and an open heart. What you decide, determines your place in eternity. From this writer's standpoint, following the Word of God is the only way to eternal salvation. Within that Word is the pathway given to us by God and salvation through Jesus Christ.

However, I cannot mandate your decision, nor will God. It is a decision that is totally up to you. Acceptance of God's Word includes the acceptance of His Son Jesus. You cannot have one without the other. *The Christian Worldview* series includes study from Creation to salvation to eternity. In this, you will have the information, the decision is yours.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6)."

Blessings!

Rick Hertless, DMin.

1 BUILDING THE WALL

By Rick Hertless

Nehemiah 2:1-10

And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before.

Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.” So I became dreadfully afraid, and said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?”

Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

1.1 THE BURDEN

Nehemiah made his request to the king in about 444 BC. Notice, the burden of Nehemiah was noticed by the king. He did not try to hide his sadness. Most likely, that is not to say he was seeking sympathy. It would be better to say that his burden went deep and he was troubled beyond what could be masked. The fact that the king recognized Nehemiah’s plight shows how close he was to the king.

First, it must be stated, Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king. While in the English language, this sounds like a glorified kitchen servant; it was far from that. The cupbearer's job was to protect the king. He would literally have been the most trusted of the king's servants. His responsibilities included security for the king's life, including tasting the food that was to be served to the king. An untrustworthy cupbearer could allow, or cause, the assassination of the king by poison. So, to say that he was extremely important and trusted by King Artaxerxes would be an understatement.

Second, Nehemiah put his life in danger by asking the king if he could go and build a wall of another kingdom. Verse 2 says, "So I became dreadfully afraid . . ." Why would he be afraid? After all, the king asked him what his trouble was.

In those days, a kingdom was not considered a kingdom if it did not have a protective wall. Jerusalem's wall was destroyed 150 years prior. Thus, its sovereignty was in question. Nehemiah literally asked if he could go and restore the sovereignty of Israel who, potentially, could be an adversary to Persia. Therefore, it would have been within the purview of the king to consider this request treason. Nevertheless, the king granted his request.

Nehemiah had a burden for Israel. He knew that it was his calling to see that Israel was reestablished as a sovereign nation as a testimony to the power of God.

Nehemiah could have stayed safely in the kingdom and worked at what was before him for the rest of his life. God would most likely not have chastised him for that. By reading the account of Nehemiah, it would seem that he was a godly influence for King Artaxerxes to see daily. However, I also know that God gave Nehemiah a vision for a reason, and had Nehemiah rejected that vision, God would have found someone else to accomplish it, but Nehemiah would have missed the blessing.

1.2 THE VISION

We do not know the specific timeline that was asked of the king by Nehemiah, but rest assured, I do not believe he told him it would be years. God gave Nehemiah the vision to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

What vision has God given you? Have you acted on it or simply decided to wait for “The Best Time?” What is the best time? There is a simple answer; the best time is now. Many often say, “We are not promised tomorrow. But the simple truth is, we are not promised more than the moment we live in.

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he (KJV).” God intends for us to continuously look forward to his plan for our lives. Most times, that includes following the vision of the leadership. God speaks to His “called” and they convey what He has told them. So long as it does not

go against the Word of God, it is up to the people to embrace the vision of leadership and begin to work.

I am well aware that most want to sit and do nothing, but that is not what we, as Christians, are called to do. God has a plan for us until the day we die. His plan is for us to serve Him with the talents and gifts He has given to each one of us.

God has given us a vision for the desire of His heart. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you your desire. God gave Nehemiah the burden and the vision to build the wall. But at no time did God expect Nehemiah to build it on his own. He knew that the vision must be given to Jerusalem, and if they were drawn into the burden and the vision, the wall would be built.

The burden has been shared, the vision cast; now is the time to act.

1.3 THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED

First Baptist Church of Leander was established in October of 1944.

The church started with a vision to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all who would listen. As the years progressed, First Baptist moved from their location on Highway 183 to Rural Route 2243 in Leander. The new sanctuary was built in 1967 with the expansion of the sanctuary, as well as the Family Life Center, in 1977.

I am told by the historians of the church that the Family Life Center was established with the idea of spreading the Gospel. The foundation

has been laid. The founders envisioned it and set FBC up for success. God has entrusted us with the task of completing the work.

1.4 “WHAT DO YOU REQUEST?”

The king asked Nehemiah, “What do you request?” God asks us the same question. But the real question is, “What are your requests based on?” Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” He does not say He will give you the lusts of your flesh. When your desires focus on God’s desires, He will give them to you. Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:14).” If you request anything in Jesus’ name, it must line up with the will of the Father. He is not our “Genie in the Lamp.”

Nehemiah’s request was made according to God’s will. It is God’s will for Israel to be established as a nation. So, It was no stretch to ask God to grant that request.

Likewise, it is God’s will to give the Gospel to a lost world. It is God’s will to make disciples of all Nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

God’s will be done. The question is, will we be the ones to do it? Make no mistake, God will accomplish His task. He wants to use us to do so as a blessing to us. He does not need us specifically; He can call another. But the fact is, His calling is before us. What are we going to do with it?

Notes

2 BUILDING IT QUICKLY

By Rick Hertless

Nehemiah 6:15-16

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

Have you ever had a task before you that seemed daunting; impossible? How did you approach the task? How did the process work?

A few years ago, our house was hit by a tornado. We lost my mom's house, our house, my granddaughter's apartment, all our cars and most of our belongings. Everything we had was spread over miles of landscape. I tell you this story not for sympathy or to play the victim. Rather, as a testimony to an all-powerful God who has my best interest at heart.

As I stood in my yard, looking over the devastation, the first thing I did was give Him praise. What? Praise for losing everything we had worked for nearly fifty years? No, praise because almost my entire family went through the storm. We were in the very houses that were utterly destroyed, but yet they were standing with me in a huddle. We were all able to survey the damage together. There was no hospitals or loss of life. It was simply a task that was laid before us to overcome.

Before you get too worried, I need to state that we were insured. Because of the economic times, we were underinsured on the house, but insured nevertheless. We also had the support of the entire community and a church that rose to the occasion. More than that, we were on God's side. He had everything under control. Still, the task before us seemed daunting. So, how did we approach the situation?

First, we had to clean up and salvage what we could. When all was said and done, we began to pick up one piece of trash at a time. We filled one load at a time, and one day we woke up and discovered the trash was gone.

Next, we had to plan how to build back. As I stated, we were underinsured, so I could not have a builder build back with the money we had. Furthermore, due to the economic times, I did not want to take out a loan. The payment would have been far too restricting on our monthly budget. So, I decided to build it myself. Fortunately, the Lord had trained me over the years for just such a time as this.

Therefore, I began to build. With the help of family, friends, and our church, we built one board at a time, one wallboard at a time; one section of electricity, one section of plumbing, then paint, then floors and a year later, we were in our house. God had everything under control. We simply began with what was in front of us. We did not try to jump ahead to the flooring before the walls were up. We simply took the task in stride, day-by-day. That is what Nehemiah did.

2.1 THE MIRACULOUS IS ACCOMPLISHED

The wall in Jerusalem had been down for 150 years. Many had tried to rebuild it to no avail. So, when Nehemiah took on the project and declared that Jerusalem wall would be rebuilt, he was laughed at and doubted. Nevertheless, he began the task of rebuilding the wall.

How did he do it? First, he organized the tribes and assigned one piece of the wall to each tribe. As the wall began to be built, his enemies began to believe that the wall could be built, so then, they got scared and then, angry. They tried everything they could to prevent the wall from being built.

They were politically attacked and physically confronted. They built with construction tools in one hand and weapons in the other. There was a task before them that must be accomplished and was ordained by God.

Strangely, for me, I considered my task in the same way. God allows the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. The weather falls on everyone. But God had a plan for my life and for my family. The task before us must be completed, so, we continued to work.

We have a choice before us each and every day. We can look at the day and not get out of bed, or, we can take a step, one step at a time, and accomplish the task before us. Everyone's tasks are different. For some, the main task might be just walking or breathing. But God has given us the tools to be able to handle every situation. The great news

is, He does not expect us to handle it on our own. He wants to walk before us and guide our steps.

So, how did Nehemiah accomplish a feat that had been before Israel for 150 years without success? He took one step at a time. He organized each of the tribes to build what was right before them. He did not expect the east tribes to help the west. He simply assigned each one to work with what is before them.

We accomplish the same things in our lives. After the storm, we could have simply given up and moved to another house or location or lived in a tent. But after considering everything, it did not seem to be the best move. I will state, however, there was a brief time in the beginning that I did not know which way to turn or where to start. That is where God came in. I simply relied on Him. He knew of our calamity. He was not insensitive to it. In fact, He already had the plan worked out. I simply had to wait on Him and allow Him to handle the details. We had a task, we knew what the task was, and we started working on the task.

Nehemiah was the same way. He allowed God to work. Remember from the previous lesson in Nehemiah chapter two it said:

Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the

place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"

Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah said he was afraid, but spoke to the king anyway. But before He gave his request to the king he prayed. I believe it is obvious, but I will state it anyway; Nehemiah did not leave the king and go to his chamber to pray. He did not place the king on hold and tell him that he would get back to him. He prayed in a split second to God.

God does not need our long prayers for Him to know our requests, desires, needs, or wants. If you commune with God daily, He knows you. But more importantly, you have relationship with Him.

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Paul is telling us to have a relationship with God by being ever attentive to His presence in our lives.

Perhaps, when you were a child, you might have thought your mom or dad, or both, must have some way of constantly watching to know everything that you have done. The truth is, if your parent was like that, it was because of the close relationship they had with you. They knew your moods and actions because you were around them every

day. It was like they could read your mind, but really, it was as simple as knowing you daily.

God is the same way. The difference is, He can actually see your mind and heart. He knows everything about you. Nevertheless, He wants to have a daily relationship with you for your own edification.

2.2 WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED?

Most listen to our story about the tornado and are amazed. But I cannot ever remember sharing our story without someone stating that we were “Blessed by God” or “Protected by God.” God gets the glory. The truth is, we recognize that we were protected by God as well. Furthermore, we know that God had His hand in the rebuilding process as well.

It was the same with Nehemiah. Did you get the last sentence of our Scripture? “**. . . they perceived that this work was done by our God.**”

Nehemiah was the vessel God used to achieve His purpose. Had Nehemiah said, “No,” God would have used someone else. Instead, Nehemiah accepted the challenge and was blessed by his being used by God. Much of his blessing is that we are still reading the account of Nehemiah approximately 2400 years later.

God wants to use you in a great and mighty way. What is your answer? Maybe you know God’s plan for you but you view it as insignificant. Maybe Nehemiah viewed his task the same way. Nevertheless, he

struck out and God used him mightily. God will use you also. Do not tell God that what you must do does not matter. If it did not matter, He would not have called you to it.

Notes

3 WHAT IS REGENERATION?

By Rick Hertless

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

God is looking for hearts that are longing for Him. He is not interested in those who are trying to “fool God.” There are many who believe they can simply appear to be good and be “good enough” to spend eternity with a sinless God. Unfortunately for them, they are only fooling themselves.

God will not be mocked. You cannot be a Christian on Sunday, only to go back to your debauchery on Monday. God is not looking for “Sunday Christians,” because there is no such thing. There are only Christians. The word Christian means “Christ-like.” Therefore, you cannot hope to be Christ-like if you are only willing to be like Christ one day a week. Christ is Christ every minute of every day.

3.1 WHO CAN CHANGE A SINNER’S HEART?

Regeneration requires a change. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word “regeneration” comes from the root word “regenerate” which means:

1. formed or created again
2. spiritually reborn or converted
3. restored to a better, higher, or more worthy state

Therefore, for regeneration to occur, it is necessary to be reborn, become a new person, a new creation. How is that possible?

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 says:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

As stated in the above Scripture, the sinner's heart can only be changed by the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus. One can only be regenerated by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Recently, I had talked to an individual who said he did not want to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. When I inquired further, he said, "I do not feel as though I am good enough to come to God." To his surprise my response was, "You are right! You are not good enough." I continued, "No one is." It is only through the blood sacrifice of Jesus that we can stand before God clean; sinless. Even though we are not

sinless within ourselves, God has made a way for us to commune with Him once again. That way is Jesus.

3.2 WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

In the Hebrew, the word for righteousness is שְׂדָקָה (Pronunciation - tsed-aw-kaw'). Its definition is:

1. justice, righteousness
 - a. righteousness (in government)
 - b. of judge, ruler, king
 - c. of law
 - d. of Davidic king Messiah
2. righteousness (of God's attribute)
3. righteousness (in a case or cause)
4. righteousness, truthfulness
5. righteousness (as ethically right)
6. righteousness (as vindicated), justification, salvation
 - a. of God
 - b. prosperity (of people)
7. righteous acts

There is no true righteousness, one of salvation, through the sacrifice of animals. Eternal salvation was bought only through the retroactive sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross for all who sought after God.

Therefore, those who were in the Old Testament, and sought after the heart of God, were saved through the blood sacrifice of Jesus. In other words, their hearts were right before God. They were truly seeking to please and serve God, even though the sacrifice for them was in the future.

The Hebrew definition has a broader connotation than that of Greek. In the Greek, righteousness was more of a relational word. It was a state of behavior.

With the advent of Jesus, the word “righteousness” could be defined in a much finer way.

The Greek word for righteousness is *dikaioσύνη* (Pronunciation - dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay) It is translated as meaning:

1. In the broader sense:
 - a. state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God
 - b. the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God
 - c. integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting
2. in a narrower sense, justice or the virtue which gives each his due

So, as you can see from the above definition, righteousness only comes through God. He is the only righteousness the world knows. However, He has made a way for “our” righteousness as well. His name is Jesus.

It is impossible to get righteous and then come to God. One must come to God and allow Him to make you righteous. The only way to truly come to God is to recognize your unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” God

wants us to come to Him and allow Him to fellowship us. He is a relational God.

3.3 CAN ANYONE BE SAVED BY HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Romans 3:10-23 says:

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none who understands; There is none who
seeks after God.

God is sinless. His Heaven is sinless. No one is good enough to be in Heaven. No one is good enough to be in the presence of God. That relationship was destroyed in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating of the tree of “The Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

Proverbs 20:9 says, “Who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?’” That, of course, is a rhetorical question. The answer? No one can make their heart clean. Your heart is cleansed before God only through the sacrifice of Jesus. Through Jesus, God sees our heart as clean.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, “For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”

3.4 SO, ONCE AGAIN, THE QUESTION IS, “WHAT IS REGENERATION?”

Regeneration is when God sees you as clean; white as snow. But you cannot be clean of your own accord. You cannot regenerate yourself.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 says:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Ephesians 4:24 tells us that we can put on the true righteousness and holiness through Jesus. Regeneration only comes through acceptance of Jesus Christ as **Lord and Savior**. Notice, regeneration does not come only through accepting Jesus as savior. The Devil knows that He is The Savior of the world to all who will accept Him. He is not savior for the Devil, because the Devil does not trust Him. The Devil trusts only in himself. Many today are guilty of the same thing. They believe that Jesus is “a savior” but they do not trust Him to be *their* Savior, *their* Lord.

Many believe He is a savior, but the new creation comes when one accepts Him as **Lord** of their life. One must allow Him to be in control,

no more paving one's own pathways with lustful desires, but allowing Him to guide their steps; that is true regeneration.

Notes

4 WHAT DID CHRIST UNDERTAKE IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE?

By Rick Hertless

Galatians 4:1-7

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

4.1 YOU WERE A CHILD

Galatians 4:1-2:

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

You once were a child. As an unbeliever you walked in the ways of the world; content to do so. 1 Corinthians 13:11 says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Galatians says that

we were once children; learning, watching, growing, until the time had come for us to take over the manor as heirs. As unbelievers we are trying to discover God. We are looking to find out the meaning of our lives and what we are here for. But when the time came, we discovered the Truth, who is Jesus Christ. Once we accepted Him, we became heirs to the kingdom.

Actually, like all of the verses of God's Word, Galatians is multifaceted. But, for the purpose of this discussion, we can see that God has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus.

4.2 WE WERE IN BONDAGE

Galatians 4:3 says, "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

Because we had not yet accepted the Lordship of Christ, we were in bondage. We did childish things and followed the world. Ours was a life in the flesh; in bondage to sin.

Galatians 4:4-5 says:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The "fullness of time" is, God allowing us to come to Him on our own. There is no coercion. Of course, God loves us and reveals Himself to us along the way, but He wants us to come to Him on our own. He does not want puppets or robots. He wants followers. Notice, I said

followers not “draggers.” God will not force you to come with Him. He will not drag you along against your will.

There are some who believe God has chosen from the beginning of time who will come to Him and they do not have a choice. Does it make sense to you that God would force someone against their will to live with Him for eternity. Does that sound like love? Or just captivity?!

God seeks those who will come to Him on their own. He seeks those who want to be with Him and love Him. If someone is made to obey, does that sound like truthful worship or a disdainful order? God seeks for His Heaven to be for those who want to be with Him for eternity. He created Mankind to be in relationship with Him, not as puppets.

4.2.1 God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law . . .

Jesus was born under the Law. He had to fulfill the Law. Before Him, no one had been able to fulfill the Law. Matthew 5:17 says, ““Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” In other words, Jesus lived under the Law, but not in bondage to it. He freely came to fulfill the Law. Why? So He could be the perfect sacrifice for man. Living under the Law and being able to live perfectly made Him the perfect sacrifice for our sin.

1 Corinthians 15:45 says, “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” Jesus, the last Adam, came to fulfill what the first Adam could not.

Adam was tempted to sin, and he did. Jesus was tempted to sin, but defeated sin, thus becoming the perfect sacrifice for all Mankind.

4.2.2 We are adopted

Adoption is a great scenario. God has chosen for us to be with Him through the legal process of adoption. Ok, this sounds like a direct contradiction to the previous paragraph. Did we choose God or did He choose us? The answer is, "Yes!"

We are discussing those who are of the age of accountability. In the adoption process, if one does not want to be adopted, he or she will not be; each must choose the other. The adoptive parents come to adopt a child, but if the child is belligerent and unwilling, most likely they will not be adopted.

It is the same with God. He waits for us to choose Him. He accepts all who choose Him, but He will not force anyone to come with Him if they do not desire to do so.

4.3 YOU ARE SONS

Galatians 4:6-7 says:

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Because you have chosen Jesus, you are now sons of God. Ladies, please do not think that this verse is excluding you, it is not. In the

case of heirship, the Jewish daughters received no inheritance. It went only to the sons. Therefore, what Paul is saying is that all of God's children receive the inheritance, both male and female.

Galatians 3:28-29 says:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The promise is that we are Sons of God.

If you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, your sonship starts now. He says that we can call Him "Abba. Father." Think of the most intimate way that you address your earthly father; God allows us to address Him in the same way. Ours is a relationship with God. Even though we must fear God with a healthy reverence, He allows us to come to Him in our most venerable moments and cry on His shoulder. He invites all of us to share in our experiences here on this earth with the King of kings and Lord of lords, both happy and sad, in struggle and in victory.

Notes

5 HOW COULD THE SON OF GOD SUFFER?

By Rick Hertless

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, Jesus is God and man at the same time. He stepped down from glory, not so He could know how we are feeling. Rather, so that we would know that He knows how we live. In other words, we know that He can be empathic to our daily lives because He has lived it. He is not some distant God who knows nothing about being mortal.

Make no mistake, this is not like the Greek myths of Hercules, who was half man and half God. Jesus is not a myth. He is reality and is fully man and fully God.

Why is that important? Because sin came into the world through a man. The only way sin can be atoned for is through a man. It must be

shown that a man can overcome sin and thus, become the sacrifice for the sin of all Mankind.

5.1 CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD TOOK ON FLESH AND BLOOD

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 says:

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Therefore, Christ had to become fully man to atone for the sins of man.

Romans 8:3-4:

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Hebrews 2:14:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that

is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

In order for Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice, He had to become man. Sin came into the world by a fleshly man, it took a man of flesh to atone for the sins of man.

Adam was tempted, but he succumbed. Jesus was tempted, but He was victorious. I have heard many preachers declare that Jesus could not sin. But if that were so, there would be no sacrifice for our sin. Sin had to be defeated. That only way that could come to fruition was to have a man of flesh defeat sin. However, according to Romans 8:3 above, the law could not accomplish atonement for sin because it relied on sinful man to carry out its righteousness.

Instead, there had to be one who could fulfill righteousness by perfectly obeying the law, which could be done only through a perfect man, who is Jesus.

5.2 WHAT IS MEANT BY ATONEMENT?

Mark 10:45:

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Acts 13:38-39:

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; “and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Atonement means:

- to penance
- amends
- punishment
- compensation
- penitent.

So, we are only forgiven through Christ receiving upon Himself the penalty for our sin.

Isaiah 53:6 says:

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for all Mankind. He accomplished what the Law could not.

5.3 HOW DID CHRIST SATISFY JUSTICE?

Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at

the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (emphasis mine).

So, Jesus became the propitiation (the satisfaction) for our sin. His sacrifice satisfied our sin. We are justified because of the blood sacrifice of Christ. That does not mean, however, that you can go on sinning. It means that your sins have been forgiven, IF YOU ARE IN CHRIST. If you are in Christ, you will not desire to continue to sin. If you love God, it will be your desire to please Him. That means, even though you may have a propensity for sin, you will strive to please God in everything you think say and do. Thus, your desire becomes to sin no more, not trying to justify your sin. Paul says in Romans 6:15, "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" The sacrifice of Jesus is not a license to sin; quite the contrary. It is an avenue to righteousness. It should be a pathway to become holy. If that is not your desire to be holy, it might be best if you would examine your salvation.

Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree) . . ." But again, with redemption comes repentance. Repentance is the recognition that we are imperfect beings who need the help of a Holy Spirit to guide us in the pathway of righteousness. Once you are regenerated, you will want to please God, the Father. The only way to truly do that, is to become like The Son.

Notes

6 WHAT DID GOD THE FATHER UNDERTAKE IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE?

By Glenn Beard

Romans 8:29-33

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

The truths in this passage are too numerous to discuss in a single lesson. So, I will concentrate on the question at hand, "What did God the Father Undertake in the Covenant of Grace?"

When I was in the Army I provided many briefings to leaders, Soldiers, and other groups. One technique I often used was to start the presentation by providing the BLUF or "the Bottom Line Up Front." So, BLUF is the answer to the question up front. For this lesson the BLUF

is: When God undertook the Covenant of Grace, He established a new compact with assurance, available to all through grace, provided by the perfect blood sacrifice of the Son of God.

Those who accept this sacrifice, repent, and surrender to God's Son as Lord, are no longer slaves to sin but have new life, eternal, under the grace bestowed by God's mercy and received by faith of each believer. Paul tells us in his letter to the church in Rome. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:34) (KJV)." The Blue Letter Bible App explains this new covenant:

The words, Covenant of grace, though not found in Scripture, are the correct expression of the truth it abundantly teaches, that the contrast between the two covenants is none other than that of law and grace. Of the New Covenant, grace is the great characteristic: "The law came in, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly (Rom 5:20-21)."

It is to bring the Romans away entirely from under the Old Covenant, and to teach them their place in the New, that Paul writes: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace (Rom 6:14)."

And he assures in them that if they believe this, and live in it, their experience would confirm God's promise: "Sin shall not have dominion over you (Rom 6:14)."

What the law could not do-give deliverance from the power of sin over us-grace would effect, The New Covenant was entirely a Covenant of grace.

(https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/murray_andrew/two/two14.cfm)

6.1 GOD JUSTIFIED AND SANCTIFIED THOSE WHO ACCEPT CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

Justification and sanctification are two concepts essential to the Christian faith and fundamental to orthodox Christian theology.

Justification is what we are positionally; sanctification is what we are becoming, practically.

Justification is a one-time event; it is the declaration of the imputation of righteousness by God when a believer repents and surrenders to Christ as Lord.

Sanctification, on the other hand, is an ongoing process that continues throughout the walk of a believer until glorification through death or Christ's return.

The Gospel Coalition asserts:

“Justification happens outside of you, you are declared righteous. Sanctification happens inside of you, you are made righteous. Justification is a one-time event, and sanctification is a continual process.” (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-the-difference-between-justification-and-sanctification>)

The first covenant was between God and the nation of Israel. The covenant was given to Moses to give to the people. God gave the Ten Commandments and other commands and ordinances, and the Israelites agreed to obey the laws laid down by I AM (Exodus 24:7). The first covenant was not given to everyone, and it was not meant to last forever. “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second (Hebrews 8:7).” The New

Covenant was accomplished by Christ. He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17).

6.2 WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

“Justification is the declaring of a person to be just or righteous. It is a legal term signifying acquittal . . .”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/justification>)

Justification is what God does to, or for, us when we surrender to Christ as our Lord and Savior; it happens outside of us; God declares us righteous. Justification is a single act; it is never deserved; it cannot be earned. It was bought by perfect sacrifice of Christ; only his blood can pay for our sins. Even though we were born in sin (Psalm 51:5), rebelled (Isaiah 63:10) and chose to sin (Romans 3:23) against a Holy God, Jesus gave up His place in glory and laid down his life that we might be vindicated through his actions on the cross.

Only through our faith in Him can we receive justification. Romans 5:1 tells us:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Justification provided in Christ guarantees a believer's position in eternity. Paul writes to the church in Corinth:

8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

-1 Corinthians 1:8-9-

Paul provides a more detailed explanation of justification in his letter to the church in Rome:

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

-Romans 3:23-25-

Likewise, Paul tells us, “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, (Romans 4:5).” He also demonstrates how justification is imparted. Even though we were all born sinners, through our faith, Jesus, the only one Who is able, imputes His righteousness upon us. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).”

6.3 WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION?

Sanctification is the continual process of being made holy. It is the progressive conformity of the one who has been justified into the image of their Savior through the work of the Holy Spirit. Like justification, sanctification is a work of grace through faith. And, sanctification is possible because of the finished work of Christ on our behalf . . . Sanctification happens inside of you, you are made righteous. (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-the-difference-between-justification-and-sanctification>)

Just as we are justified by grace through faith, this same grace sanctifies believers. However, sanctification is a continual process. “Sanctification then is the **gradual conformity** to the likeness of Christ. In other words, sanctification is the gradual process of becoming practically what we are positionally (righteous).”

(<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-the-difference-between-justification-and-sanctification>).” (Bold emphasis mine)

Paul writes to the Philippian believers: “. . . being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ . . . (Philippians 1:6).” The process of sanctification coincides with spiritual growth as a believer. His grace continues in the process of our sanctification. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification . . . (1 Thessalonians 4:3).”

After telling his disciples “. . . In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33b) . . .” Jesus

prayed, first for himself in preparation for His betrayal, trial, and execution.

Next, in spite of His knowing what He was about to endure, the Messiah prayed for His disciples. He prayed not that they would be taken out of this world, but that they would be protected from the evil one, and Jesus proclaimed to His Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (John 17:17)”

6.4 CONCLUSION

Because the first covenant was impossible for man, God the Father instituted the second and final covenant. This covenant was secured by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The New Covenant was made possible by the shed blood of our Savior who was the only One worthy and able to pay the price for our sin. Hebrews 10:9-10 says:

. . . then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Notes

7 FOR WHOM DID CHRIST OBEY AND SUFFER?

By Steve Young

John 10:7-10:

“Then Jesus said to them again,” Most assuredly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

7.1 WHO DID JESUS DIE FOR?

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

God also created everything else in the earth and on the earth, this included Adam and Eve.

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Adam’s responsibility was quite simple. Name all the animals, take care of the garden, and be obedient to God. We see that Adam was able to do everything except be obedient to Gods’ rules. As a result, sin entered Gods perfect world.

Romans 5:12: Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men . . .

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Now that sin has entered the world, we find ourselves in need of a savior. God loves us so much that He would rather send his only Son to die on our behalf than to live without us.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Think about that for a moment.

- GOD SO LOVED- Love is a verb, an action. Jesus was being given.
- THE WORLD- The entire created order, everyone, all of humanity, every people group.
- THAT HE GAVE- God intended for this to happen, Jesus knew it was going to happen.
- HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON- While we were still his enemy.
- THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE- Jesus put me first before his own desires and wants. Jesus has given everything.

John 3:17 -18:

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

Salvation is a free gift from God. However, not everyone will accept this free gift. Sadly, some will deny Christ. The good news is that Jesus died for you and me, we just have to accept his free gift of salvation.

7.2 WHO DID THE FATHER GIVE TO HIM?

John 10: 11 says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd who gave His life freely for us. Jesus reiterates that he is The Good Shepherd in John 10:14. He says, "I am the good shepherd and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."

It is believers that are referred to as the sheep and Jesus as the Shepherd. God has given us to Jesus so we can be cared for and loved by Him. And as a people easily led astray, we surely need that.

John 10:7-10 says:

Then Jesus said to them again," Most assuredly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd. He has a personal relationship with the sheep; His followers. We know His voice, and He is protective of us. He also calls Himself the door of the sheep. So, is He the

shepherd or the door? The sheep pens are made of stacked rocks with one section left open as an entrance and exit. After the shepherd rounds up the sheep and puts them in the pen for the night, he lies down and sleeps in that open spot. That way, the sheep cannot get out and the thieves cannot get in. The Shepherd is the door. The sheep have enemies – people who want to steal them, animals who want to eat them – but Jesus owns the sheep, He is personally invested in them. He is not a hired hand.

Jesus invites us to come to Him and experience true life, security, and abundant life. A life that is not just an existence, but a full and meaningful life.

John 10: 28-30:

“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. I and My Father are one.”

For us who belong to the Father, the single most comforting thing is that nothing can snatch us from His hand. There is absolutely nothing stronger than He – not even us! He says no one can do it. We are promised eternal life and eternal security in His hand. What He initiates, He will sustain, and He will fulfill.

7.3 CAN YOU OBEY WITHOUT TRUST?

John 14:23-24:

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

An airplane must have two wings to fly. Just like the airplane, trust and obedience go hand in hand in the Christian life. They are understood separately, but never are they detached from one another. Obedience to the commands of Jesus without trust in Him for the strength and ability will lead to frustration.

You cannot truly obey Jesus without trust. Obedience is a product of faith and, without faith it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

The one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you."

Hebrews 11 is known as the faith chapter. I encourage you to read and study it. These are great examples of men and women who, by faith, obeyed and trusted God as He led their lives.

Hebrews 11:6 says:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:1-3 says:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the words were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Faith is not a vague feeling centered on nothing; it is not vibes or positive energy. Faith has a definite object. Our Christian faith is faith in Christ. It is He whom our faith hopes for and is convinced of. The people in the Old Testament were saved by faith also. The early generations were commended because of their faith in Christ, even though they did not know His name. They knew YHWH, the one true God, and the Messiah who was, and is, God. The Messiah of the hope of the Old Testament was, and is, Jesus. Therefore, their faith in the coming Messiah made the sacrifice of Jesus retroactive.

If you cannot trust and obey Jesus, then I believe it would be beneficial to do some serious soul searching regarding your relationship with the Lord.

One of my favorite songs by Christian artist, Rich Mullins, is "Screen Door" which says "Faith without works, it just ain't happening, it's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine."

So, if we have faith, we trust, and in trusting, we must be obedient.

To recap

1. Adam sinned.
2. The wages of sin is death
3. There must be a sacrifice for sin
4. Jesus was our perfect sacrifice
5. Those who believe and confess will be saved.

The good news is, God the Father sent Jesus for all of us. Let's get out there and share this with the rest of the world!

Notes

8 WHAT KIND OF LIFE DID CHRIST LIVE ON EARTH?

By Steve Young

8.1 WAS JESUS PERFECT?

Hebrews 5:9 – “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey.”

Did Jesus really start his life as an imperfect person needing to be cleansed from sin? No, that does not fit with what the Bible says.

Hebrews 4:15 – “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

We were created to live with God, in His presence. The end goal was always for us to live with God in His presence.

Revelations 21:3:

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

For humans to reach that end and remain in God’s presence, we must be perfected. The first Adam needed to trust and obey God; he did not. Jesus our second Adam had to come into the world.

Born of a virgin, fathered by the Holy Spirit Jesus was like us in that he lived his human life full of faith and filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus

could have sinned, but did not. He chose what Adam did not; to be free from sin. And because he did, he reached humanity's goal.

Hebrews 5:9 – “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

I Peter 2:21-22 – “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’.”

Jesus was sinless and blameless. Had he not been, his final act of obedience would have lacked the necessity our sins required.

Hebrews 9:14-15 says:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God? And for this reason, He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Even though Jesus was sinless and blameless, he was, as a human, weak and susceptible to suffering. It is Jesus' example, he being like us, that inspires our race of faith, only so much better (Hebrews 11:1-40)!

Hebrews 12:1-2:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, let us run with endurance the race that is set

before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

8.2 IS THE LAW STILL IN EFFECT

Matthew 5:17-20:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled,”

Ceremonial Law pointed specifically to Israel’s worship using sacrifices. Its purpose was to point forward to Jesus Christ as our ultimate sacrificial lamb. These laws are no longer necessary since the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the principles behind them, to love and worship a holy God, still should apply to our lives. We need to remember that we still worship a holy God, so our attitudes should be as such. Several examples such as Abihu and Nadab, who did not respect the holiness of God, should serve as reminders to us today.

Leviticus 10:1-2:

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So, fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

We need to remember we still serve the same holy God. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Civil Law

applied to daily living in Israel. Our modern society and culture are very different from the Israelites back in the day when the original law was passed. It would be impossible today, as was in the past, to follow all the guidelines set up. However, the principles behind the commands should guide our conduct. Jesus demonstrated these principles by example.

Moral Law, such as the Ten Commandments, reveals the nature and will of God, and it still applies today. Jesus obeyed the moral law completely.

John 1:17, “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” The laws were given to us by God to help us to love God with all our heart and mind.

Matthew 22:37-38:

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The Pharisees were exacting in their attempts to follow their laws. Their weakness was that they were focused on outwardly obeying the laws without allowing God to change their attitudes/hearts. They looked good on the outside, but God judges the heart and sees where our real allegiance is focused.

Proverbs 21:2-3 says, “Everyway of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. To do righteousness and justice *is* more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.” We need a different kind of righteousness, not a more intense version of Pharisaical obedience which is just legal compliance. Our righteousness must come from what God does in us, not what we can do for ourselves. It needs to be God-centered, not self-centered. We need to seek approval from God and not from man. Our goal should be living by the principles of the law.

Psalms 51:10 says, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me.”

8.3 WHAT IS THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

The example of Christ reflects love by caring for the poor, the sick, and the distressed; His healing the blind and the lame and raising the dead back to life. He cast out demons and loved the unlovable. He welcomed the little children and showed forgiveness to the people. Even the ones who crucified him.

8.3.1 We are called to love as Christ loved us.

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus was also a servant. He washed the feet of the disciples, fed the hungry, visited the sick and dying, and spent time showing compassion to the lowly (Matthew 8:7-8 & 13, 14:19-20; Luke 19:5-7).

8.3.2 Christ also showed us humility.
He left heaven's glory. 2 Corinthians 8:9 says:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

8.3.3 He made himself of no reputation
Philippians 2:7:

But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, coming in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

8.3.4 He valued others above Himself
Philippians 2:3-4:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each other esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interest of others.

We could go on and on with adjective phrases that describe the many examples Jesus Christ set before us to follow. Jesus is the perfect example for us to follow; in good times and in times of trial.

When we respond following the examples of Christ, we show the world who Jesus is.

I Peter 2:21 says, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps.”

Notes

9 CAN YOU REPENT AND BELIEVE IN CHRIST BY YOUR OWN POWER?

By Glenn Beard

John 3:5-6

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

BLUF

Again, I will start with the Bottum Line Up Front (BLUF). The BLUF of the question, "Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power?" No, no one can repent and believe in Christ in his or her own power. We cannot be saved in the flesh; we can only be saved in the Spirit. "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).'"

To be born of the Spirit, the salvation of Christ must be first revealed to us by the Holy Spirit; ". . . these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit (2 Corinthians 2:10)." Ultimately, once Christ has been revealed to us, we can receive the Holy Spirit by asking Jesus to change our lives. Jesus tells us, "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given

to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Luke 10:9).”

9.1 CAN YOU BE SAVED IN THE FLESH?

John 3:5-6

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

When Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came by night to question Jesus, he clearly recognized that there was something different about this young Rabbi. When he addressed the Messiah, Nicodemus said, ““Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him (John 3:2b).”

Jesus explained to him that everyone must be born again to see the Kingdom of God. Clearly, Jesus was trying to make the Jewish ruler understand that salvation did not come from the actions of man in the flesh. On the contrary, He made it very clear that, in addition to the fleshly birth of water, each person must have a spiritual rebirth to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Nicodemus is perplexed and asked the Savior how this could be possible (John 3:9).

John 3:10-16

Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you,

We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus was preaching the New Covenant to the Jews of His time. He had begun teaching a new idea. The Jewish leaders of the time were following as in the admonition of the Lord in the book of Isaiah:

Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me (Isaiah 29:13).

Jesus was teaching the true way of salvation. He taught that salvation comes only through the Spirit; it cannot be earned by outward deeds of the flesh.

After the death and resurrection of our Savior, Paul continued to teach about the spiritual realm where salvation is obtained. He explains:

Roman 8:8-11

Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

. . . And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

. . . he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Jesus made it clear, and Paul taught also, that there is no way for anyone to be saved in the flesh; we must be saved in the Spirit.

9.2 HOW IS CHRIST REVEALED TO US?

Now that we understand that salvation can be attained only through Christ in the Spirit, let us now discuss how Christ is revealed to us. We cannot find Christ on our own. Our flesh is at odds with the Spirit of Christ and does not want what the Spirit wants. In his letter to the Galatians Paul explains the dilemma:

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want (Galatians 5:17).

However, Paul also shares the solution to this problem.

1 Cor 2:9-12

However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit . . .

. . . In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us. We are unable to find him on our own. However, when Christ has been revealed by the Spirit, we must only ask in faith to receive.

9.3 HOW CAN YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Luke 11:9-12

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?”

How can we receive the Holy Spirit? We must simply ask. Once Christ has been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, we have the ability to call upon the Lord. Paul tells us in his letter to the church in Rome:

Romans 10:8-10, 13

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

9.4 CONCLUSION

So, can we repent and believe in Christ in our own power? The answer is “No.” Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly tells us: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Likewise, we cannot be saved in the flesh. Salvation only comes through the Spirit of God. As revealed in Titus 3:5-6:

. . . not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Subsequently, we cannot discover Christ through our own efforts. The Holy Spirit must reveal Him to us. Jesus makes this clear saying, ““But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me (John 15:16).”

Finally, we can only receive the Holy Spirit by repenting and asking. Matthew 4:17 tells us that Jesus began to preach and tell the people to repent. Additionally, after He had taught His disciples how to pray and told them to ask to receive, seek to find, and knock for the door to be opened (Luke 11:1-11). Jesus then proclaimed; “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13)!”

Notes

10 HOW WERE GODLY PERSONS SAVED BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST?

By Glenn Beard

BLUF

The Bottom Line Up Front for the question “How were the Godly persons saved before the coming of Christ?” is: They were saved, as we are today, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).” They believed in the coming Messiah, demonstrated their faith, and presented representative sacrifices to God illustrative of the future sacrifice of Christ.

In his letter to the church of Rome, Paul declares, “What does Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3).”

10.1 BELIEVING IN THE COMING CHRIST

JOHN 8:54-56

Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.

Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” (Bold emphasis mine)

As we see in John 8 above, Abraham looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. However, even before the incarnate birth of our Lord, the Savior was introduced in the Garden of Eden. The serpent tempted Adam and Eve, and they sinned. Then, Elohim, the Triune God, cursed the tempter and introduced the “Seed” of the woman telling the serpent, “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15).” Over two millennia later Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was given a promise from that same “Seed,” and this promise is not subject to the law.

Galatians 3:16-17:

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.

And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

This promise, this covenant, applies to all who believe from the time of Abraham and his descendants until today. It is for all who have faith, as Abraham had faith.

Galatians 3:7-9

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”

So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Furthermore, from the very beginning Adam’s own son Able, by faith, offered an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. Enoch pleased God and did not experience death, and it is impossible to please God without faith. It was by faith Noah saved his household and “became heir to righteousness” when God destroyed the world. Like Abraham, the early patriarchs of Israel were saved by their faith. By faith Moses led his people out of bondage in Egypt. By faith Rahab, the harlot was saved from the fate of Jericho (Hebrews 11:1-31).

Hebrews 11:32-33, 39-40

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

39-40 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

10.2 HOW DID THEY SHOW THEIR FAITH?

In addition to having faith, the Godly men and women who were saved before the coming of Christ demonstrated their faith in their lives. These early believers showed their faith in various ways. Noah believed God and built the ark to save his family and land animals; Abraham offered his son Issac as sacrifice, knowing that God could raise him from death. Moses was saved by faith when he was hidden by his parents and rescued by Pharoah's daughter. Moses exhibited his faith choosing to suffer with the people of God. "By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. . . (Hebrews 11:28)." And Moses led them out of Egypt into the wilderness, again exemplifying his faith. Because of her faith, Rahab hid the spies in the city of Jericho and was saved (Hebrews 11). Because of his faith Joshua led the men of God around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and God utterly destroyed the city (Joshua).

Samson demonstrated his faith by destroying the temple and killing all the lords of the Philistines. Samuel showed his faith by anointing David as king, and by faith David faced and killed the giant with a sling and a stone showing his enemies the power of his God. Solomon

demonstrated his faith asking for wisdom and building the Temple to majesty of the Lord.

All of These:

. . . through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to fight the armies of the aliens. - Hebrews 11:33-34 -

The men of God in the Old Testament showed their faith in many ways. They exhibited bravery and followed God's leading, even when situations seemed hopeless. Another way they showed their faith was to sacrifice offerings to God.

10.3 WHAT DID THE SACRIFICES REPRESENT?

The first sacrifice to cover man's sin was actually made by God; he killed an animal to make a covering for Adam and Eve's nakedness. Before the ultimate sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, God established ways for His chosen people to demonstrate a temporary, inadequate atonement for their sins.

There were several types of sacrifices made by the Children of Israel, but the guilt offering is representative of Christ's sacrifice. However, these offerings were insufficient.

“None of the animals offered in these sacrifices could, in themselves, take away a person’s sin or truly pay the debt for sin. But by offering these sacrifices in faith, the people of the Old Testament demonstrated their faith in Christ, the superior, once-for-all sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (<https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-provision-of-sacrifice-in-the-old-testament>)

Only the blood of Christ can truly pay for man’s sins, but before His time, the men of God on this earth offered sacrifices as a demonstration of their faith that He would someday come to save them. From the acceptable sacrifice of Able, through the first Passover sacrifice through the Levitical sacrifices, men of God made these substitutional offerings to represent the future, perfect sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, sacrifice has always been a matter of the heart. But these animal sacrifices were solely insufficient. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins (Hebrews 10:4).”

Our God is a holy God, and He cannot look upon sin. We have all sinned and must pay the penalty of death (Romans 3:23, 6:23). There is only one Lamb that can truly pay for our sin and cover us with righteous. “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)!” The blood sacrifice of animals is an inadequate representation

of the sacrifice we must have in order to be saved from our sins. Only through His blood can we be redeemed and receive eternal life.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says:

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

10.4 CONCLUSION

Before the coming of Christ there were two ways to be saved. The first one was impossible, it was to follow the law to the very letter and never break a single aspect of it. The second way, as it is today, was to have faith in the Messiah and His atonement for sin. The forefather's faith was accounted for righteousness just as it is for us today. They demonstrated their faith through their heart actions, and they presented representative sacrifices in faith for the atonement of their sins. It was not because of their works; it was because of the work they did as a result of their faith.

It is the same today. It is not your works of righteousness that give you salvation. It is your faith and trust in God that God counts as righteousness. How is that faith activated? By believing in the One He has sent; Jesus Christ.

Notes

11 WHAT DOES CHRIST DO FOR HIS PEOPLE?

By Glenn Beard

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, **Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom.** . . (Bold emphasis mine)."

This passage is usually read or used in a sermon during the Christmas Season, but there is a great deal of information in these verses. It speaks of many characteristics of the Messiah. Most of us are taught throughout our lives that Jesus is Lord; He is our Savior; and He is our Redeemer. However, the Son of God has many roles for His Church. Some of the roles of our Lord Jesus Christ include Prophet, Priest, and King.

Jesus is often referred to as the King of kings, Prophet, and Priest. This may seem a little strange at first, but let us explore the function of each of three of these facets of our Lord.

His role as Prophet can be inferred from the phrase, ". . . His government and peace there will be no end." "Counselor" speaks of His role as an understanding, empathetic High Priest. Verse seven speaks to role as King, "Upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom."

11.1 HOW DOES HE WORK AS PROPHET?

Acts 3:22-23:

For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

Luke is quoting Moses from Deuteronomy the book written by Moses as his farewell messages to the new generation of Israel that is destined to enter the Promised Land. In this Old Testament passage, Moses introduces Jesus as a Prophet.

Luke expounds on the writings clarifying “. . . that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed.” Moses was appointed by God as a prophet to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt, but Jesus was appointed to be the Prophet that would save all people from the bondage of sin.

Lifeway.com says:

The role of the prophet in the life of God’s people was to serve as a spokesperson, or mediator, for God. Prophets communicated God’s will to the people, encouraged them in faithfulness and called them to repentance when they turned away from God. The first of Israel’s prophets was Moses, who gave the people the Law. . .

When Moses reached the end of his life, he told the Israelites that God would raise up another prophet like him from among the people. . . New Testament writers explicitly draw the

connection between this prophet that Moses promised and Jesus. Jesus fulfills the role of prophet in that He alone is the ultimate teacher. . . But Jesus. . . doesn't just communicate God's will. Jesus is. . . God's ultimate revelation of Himself.
[www.lifeway.com \(https://gospelproject.lifeway.com/jesus-prophet-video/\)](https://gospelproject.lifeway.com/jesus-prophet-video/)

The Son of God, the final Prophet, spoke the Father's words; He revealed the truth. Jesus tells us, in John 8:28, that His teachings are not His own, but they come from the One who sent Him. He foretold the future and the coming of the Holy Spirit who would give His disciples power and of their being witnesses throughout the earth (Acts 1:8).

Like the prophets before Him, He demonstrated His prophetic power by performing miracles (Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:40–45; Luke 8:42–48; John 6:16–21). However, God the Son differed significantly from the prophets of the Old Testament, including Moses. He prophesied His own death by crucifixion and His rising from the grave. He was the only Prophet that was able to prophesy and perform miracles by His own power because He is God; He is the “heir of all things.”

As the first chapter of Hebrews tell us:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. -Hebrews 1:1-3- NIV

Jesus was, and is, a prophet. In the past God spoke to men through the earthly prophets. In these “last days” He spoke through His Son, who lived on this earth and provided a way to cleanse the sins of man. He now sits at the right hand of the Father prepared to return to fulfill His remaining prophecies.

11.2 HOW DOES HE WORK AS A PRIEST?

According to Merriam-Webster, a priest is:

Someone who is **authorized** to perform the sacred rites of a religion especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God. (Bold emphasis mine) (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/priest>)

Jesus is the High Priest, the final Priest for all who believe in Him. He gives us direct access to the Father. Although He is our Mediator with the Father, He is able to empathize with us; He lived among us and was tempted as we are. But, unlike us, He overcame every temptation the evil one presented to Him.

Hebrews 4:14-16 says:

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith we profess**. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with

confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Bold emphasis mine)

Our “Great High Priest” is in Heaven with the Father; Jesus intercedes for us. Because of this, we can have absolute confidence that God hears us. We can draw near to His throne with assurance, knowing “. . . we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Priests of old had to offer animal sacrifice to atone for their own sins as well as the sins of the people, but Jesus became the perfect sacrifice and “. . . became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:9-10).” “. . . ‘king of peace,’ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually (Hebrews 7:2-3).”

11.3 HOW DOES HE WORK AS A KING?

One of the most recognized characteristics of what Christ does for us is, He reigns. He is the King of kings. Before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, preceding His trial and crucifixion, Jesus quoted Zachariah 9:9 announcing the fulfillment of prophecy, “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” Although he would be betrayed, dishonored, and given a criminal’s execution, Jesus would ultimately conquer the grave. He would overcome death to reign victoriously.

He came to this earth to live as a humble servant, but in the end, everyone will see, “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).” He has ascended to His throne and His reign will last forever. “. . .The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 11:15)! ”

11.4 CONCLUSION

What does Jesus do for His people? He is The Prophet; He communicates God’s will to His people, calling us to repentance, and encouraging us to be faithful. He is our Great High Priest; He intercedes for us and allows us to approach the “. . . Throne of Grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).” Finally, He is our King, the King of kings; leading us in battle and winning the victory.

Notes

12 CHRIST IS BETTER

By Rick Hertless

The Book of Hebrews

The book of Hebrews was written as a testament to the greatness of Jesus. It was written to the Jews who had not made up their mind as to whether Jesus was worth following.

Hebrews is a great and fascinating book. The main themes are “Jesus is Better” and “Perseverance of the Saints.” Encompassed within it are warnings of how we are to live as well as the reasons we should live our lives totally for Christ.

It is important to realize, this book was written to those who had not committed fully to Christ. They were “still on the fence” as to whether they should give their hearts solely to Christ.

The Jewish recipients of the letter were being persecuted. They had joined with Christians in the hopes of finding a better way. They had been persecuted by the Romans as Jews, but now, as would be Christians, they were persecuted by the Jews as well.

The Sanhedrin (a Jewish political sect) had declared persecution on all who would call themselves Christian. Their declaration was that Christianity professed another God other than Yahweh. Therefore, any Jew that followed Him was apostate and must be put to death under

the Law. The real reason for their opposition was their own political power and money, but that is a discussion for another time.

The Jews, the letter was written to, had an experience with Jesus and wanted to know more. They came into the Christian church to decide as to whether they should give their lives to Jesus. In short, was he worth dying for? The author of Hebrews is giving the reasons why He is.

The author goes on to write, Jesus is better than the Prophets (ch.1), better than the angels (ch.1), a better High Priest (ch.7), better King (ch.7), better than Aaron (ch.7), a better promise (ch.8), a better sacrifice (ch.9), and better than Moses (ch.3&11). We will address only three of these. They are all important, but I chose just a few to “wet your appetite” for further self-study.

12.1 BETTER PROPHET

Deuteronomy 18:15:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear . . .”

Prophecy always has a near/far connotation. Even though Joshua was never named an official prophet in the Bible, it would seem that he acted in office of Prophet. He spoke to Israel in the power of the Lord and led them to the Promised Land. Therefore, this was the “near” promise of a Prophet for Israel.

However, the “far” prophecy encompasses that of Jesus, who is a better prophet than Moses.

1 John 5:20:

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Jesus gives an understanding of God through the teachings or the Old Testament, as well as, the prophecies of events to come in the future. A prophet’s main function is to warn Believers of disaster that is coming or a judgement for lack of trust leading to disobedience. Amos 3:7 says, “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” Jesus revealed to us warnings of repentance and the dangers of rejecting God. His prophecies incorporated all mankind, not only the Jews. He is a better Prophet.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds . . .”

Jesus is a better Prophet.

12.2 BETTER PRIEST

Hebrews 4:14-16:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Psalm 110:4

The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Not much is stated about Melchizedek. He was both king and priest.

Genesis 14:18 says, “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.” He simply appeared to Abraham. There was no mention of his origin or where he went afterward. Some say that he was the preincarnate Jesus.

Whatever his role, he was an example, a Type, of Jesus. He was both king and priest just as Jesus is. The book of Hebrews talks extensively about his role as priest and king.

Jesus was a forever priest. Hebrews 7:24 says, “But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.”

12.3 BETTER KING

Psalm 2:6-9

“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”
“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’”

This is a direct prophecy of the coming King Jesus. The nations are the inheritance of Jesus; not merely the Jewish nations, but all the nations.

Matthew 28:18-20 says:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

To me, this is one of the most exciting verses in the Bible. Maybe you did not catch it so I will repeat it. Jesus said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go Therefore . . .” Jesus has been given authority and He gives us authority to do His will. To paraphrase the above verse it says, “I have been given authority and now I give it

to you.” We do not have to live in fear. We can live in the power of Jesus Christ and His authority. That does not mean you can use God as your Genie and get everything you want. It does, however, say that you have the authority to speak in the name of Jesus to proclaim His salvation to the lost.

1 Timothy 6:15 says:

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords . . .

He is the King of kings. **He is a better King.**

Hebrews 7:1-2 says:

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace . . .”

This verse is one of the main reasons Melchizedek is considered the preincarnate Christ. He is called, in this verse, “king of righteousness” and “king of peace.” Both are names used for Jesus.

Jesus is the only way. It is only through Jesus that one can be saved. The Hebrews were trying to accept the truth. They had already

discovered The Truth; He was Jesus. Now, they had to make the decision to make Him Lord of their life and allow Him to guide them in the way that He wanted them to go. All they could envision was persecution and hardship. They could not see the glory that was before them for eternity.

Today, we face the same conundrum. We can see Jesus in all Creation. We can see the mighty works of His hands. What are you choosing to do with the time He has given you? Is He your King?

Notes

13 WHY IS IMPORTANT THAT JESUS IS BETTER?

By Rick Hertless

As we learned previously, Hebrews was written to the Jews who had not decided whether to follow Jesus as Lord. We learned the Jesus is King, Prophet, and Priest. But why does that matter?

The Hebrews were considering apostatizing back to Judaism. Apostatizing simply means that they were going to forsake Christianity and return to Judaism. It was a rejection of Christ. There is an unpardonable sin. Hebrews 6:4-6 says:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

If the Jews who were considering coming to Christ after tasting the gifts that were available to them should fall away, there was no more sacrifice for their sin. The unpardonable sin is the total rejection of Christ.

Matthew 12:31-32 says:

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy

Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come . . .”

Therefore, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the rejection of Christ.

1John says that the Holy Spirit testifies as a witness to Christ. In other words, He points us to Christ.

1 John 5:5-6:

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

It is seen by the above Scripture that the main job of the Holy Spirit is to point us to Christ. He does this by guiding us away from sin and to Christ. When you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit is the one who leads you in the way of Jesus.

If you do not know Jesus as Lord, the Holy Spirit leads the unbeliever to Christ. In both cases, the Holy Spirit is pointing to Christ. He acts as, what the world would call, a conscience to guide us into what is right and what is wrong. The problem comes when the unbeliever continuously rejects the counsel of the Holy Spirit and then ultimately rejects Jesus as Lord and Savior.

That is why the book of Hebrews is so important. It is a witness to the greatness of Jesus rather than Judaism or anything else that points to a different salvation other than Christ.

13.1 AS KING, HE RULES AND DEFENDS

A popular verse for many today is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He is The Ruler. He is the one who leads us and fights our battles. A good king leads His troops into battle, unafraid to join with them in the fight.

Colossians 1:13-14 says,

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

The book of Revelation states it this way. Revelation 15:3:

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!

Jesus is our King!

13.2 AS PROPHET, HE ASSURES US AS TO WHAT IS TO COME

Job 11:7:

"Can you search out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?

John 6:67-69:

Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"
But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. "Also we have come to

believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

John 17:24-26

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

“O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

“And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Jesus is a better Prophet. He was with God from the beginning. In fact, according to John 1:1, He is God.

Jesus is a Better Prophet!

13.3 AS PRIEST, HE ABSOLVES OUR SIN

Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”

Romans 3:23-24, “. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . .”

There is not one just man on earth. Therefore, the only absolution for sin was the sacrifice of animals. But more than that, there was no

eternal “absolution.” It was only a pardon from day-to-day or week-to-week sin. The sacrifice had to continue in the life of unjust men.

The priest’s sins had to be absolved as well in the same way.

Therefore, unjust men were “standing in” for the sins of unjust men.

God had to send an eternal sacrifice to cover the sins of Man for eternity. There had to be a new High Priest.

Hebrews 10:14, “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”

There was only one who could fill the bill of a High Priest. He had to be blameless and sinless. Yet, how could that be? We have already read that there is no one without sin.

There was only one way. God Himself had to become the sacrifice for all Mankind. He, Himself, came out of Heaven in the form of a man to be the only perfect sacrifice. Jesus was tempted by Satan, but did not succumb to the temptation of the flesh. Jesus walked the earth as sinless man and became our eternal sacrifice.

He is a better High Priest!

13.4 JESUS IS THE WAY

There is no other way to be saved. It is only through the blood sacrifice of Jesus that we can be saved. And, the only way for that happen is to accept Him as Lord and Savior of your life. It is up to you. You can hear about Jesus. You can go to church every week. You can act like Jesus

and fool others. But what is in your heart? Do you love Jesus or is yours just an exercise in futility?

God wants you to give your life to Him. There are eternal consequences to your decision. What will be your decision?

Notes