

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

### INTRODUCTION

Lesson 1 of 37

### WHAT IS TRUTH?

When Jesus was being tried before Pilate, "Pilate saith unto Him, WHAT IS TRUTH?" (John 18:38)

Truth is ALWAYS found in the singular in Scripture. We never read of “truths” in the Bible – but only and always “truth.” In God’s Word, “truth” speaks of ultimate reality – spiritual substance. It is more than a series of statements that are “true,” although all statements of Scripture can be thus defined. Everything in the Word of God is true, and cannot be denied, doubted, or questioned without impunity. Truth itself is what supports Scripture. It is primarily related to the purpose and intents of God, which determine what He says to men.

The knowledge of THE TRUTH liberates men from the tyranny of the devil and sin. "And ye shall know THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free" (John 8:32). Knowing “A” truth will not make you free, but knowing “THE” truth will! Truth is more than a few Bible verses; it is the spiritual superstructure of Divine thought that supports the Bible verses! Scriptural verses, chapters, and books, are like bricks. They are not a structure of themselves, but fit into the structure OF TRUTH.

Spiritual understanding does not consist of harmonizing various texts of Scripture. Harmonization assumes the diversification of Scripture – like thoughts that appear to be contradictory of one another. That kind of contradiction, or seeming opposition, is not found in Scripture. TRUTH is not established by putting a series of verses together. Truth is something God reveals, not something man compiles.

Jesus came to make known the purpose of God to save humanity for Himself. Everything He said related to that purpose, and nothing was disassociated from it. When asked about truth by the despot Pilate, Jesus stated His mission. "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. TO THIS END was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto THE TRUTH. Every one that is of THE TRUTH heareth My voice" (John 18:37). Pilate was looking for novelties, but Jesus had none to give. He did not come to give interesting disquisitions, but to make known the mind of the Lord. Those with an appetite for God’s will, and a desire to participate in His eternal purpose have an ear for Jesus – “ears to hear” (Lk 8:8). They delight in His words, and sit at His feet.

There are two moral forces at work in the world: THE TRUTH and the lie. THE TRUTH comes from God and leads to heaven. The lie comes from Satan and leads to the lake of fire. God has

promised to destroy all enemies of THE TRUTH. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [back] THE TRUTH in unrighteousness" (Rom 1:18). Through wickedness, evil men impede the progress of TRUTH, holding it back, or restraining its dynamic influence upon human hearts. Ungodliness does not hold back "A" truth, like that of forgiveness, grace, or spiritual utility. It does obscure the perception of what the Lord is doing, as revealed in the Person of Christ, and the manifestation of God's eternal purpose. That condition, in turn, causes everything else to become distorted. THE TRUTH is not perceived by the harmonization of Scripture, but by the belief of Scripture.

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## AN OVERRIDING THEME

### Lesson 2 of 37

There is an overriding theme, or center-point, in Scripture. Everything contained therein finds meaning in that locus. From the subjective point view, the Person of Christ is the personification of that focus. That is why Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which TESTIFY OF ME. And ye will not come TO ME, that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40). From the standpoint of Divine objective, it is the "ETERNAL PURPOSE of God, to do His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL" (Eph 1:9-11). NOTHING IN SCRIPTURE IS UNRELATED TO GOD HIMSELF, HIS "ETERNAL PURPOSE," AND CHRIST JESUS.

When it comes to the salvation of God, there are also objectives to be realized by this great Divine enterprise. It is stated in at least three different ways. First, to CREATE A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD HIMSELF (Eph 2:20-22; 1 Cor 3:16-17). Second, to TAKE OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN NAME (Acts 15:14). Third, TO CREATE A WIFE FOR HIS SON (2 Cor 11:2; Rom 7:4; Eph 5:27; Rev 19:7; 21:2,9). In Apostolic writings, all words addressed to the churches are to have these Divine established purposes in mind, for that is why they were written. There is no point of Apostolic doctrine that is not driven by these objectives. Yet, in our time they are hardly known in the professing church.

The body of reality delineating Divine focus and objective is "THE TRUTH." It contains diversity, and yet is perfectly united. Of course, unity requires diversity, which includes the symmetrical components to be brought together – whether we are speaking of teaching, or people. THAT DIVERSITY, HOWEVER, IS THE WORK OF GOD, NOT OF MAN. If man creates diversity it is sinful, for it causes division.

No Divine utterance is at fundamental variance with another. A variety of subjects are addressed in the Word of God – salvation, justification, sanctification, spiritual gifts, the body of Christ, the purpose for the church, faith, etc. – but those subjects are never the heart of Scripture. They are not the established means of understanding Scripture. What is more, they may only be comprehended within the greater light and context of the Person of Christ and the purpose of God.

Paul prayed for the churches that such understanding would be realized by them (Eph 1:15-20; 3:16-20; Col 1:9-11). Peter spoke of this understanding as the day dawning, and the Day Star rising in the heart (1 Pet 1:19). As affirmed in the above texts, there are realities such as, “all wisdom,” “spiritual understanding” “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, knowing “the hope of His calling, and what [is] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." All of these require a mature understanding of Jesus Christ, and the purpose and salvation of God.

Scriptural statements can be properly understood ONLY in the context of the FOCUS of Scripture. Most talk about Scriptural “context” today is nothing more than childish chatter. It addresses “context” at the lowest level. All Scripture is within the greater context of God, Christ, the purpose of God, and the salvation of God. That is the context that sanctifies Scripture. While there is value to contextual considerations, they do not yield the optimum benefit. Some advantage may be realized by language studies, historical considerations, and sociological circumstances. However such advantages are only minimal, and will not yield “spiritual understanding.” In the hour of crisis and challenge you will find such an approach to Scripture to be sterile. And, when you require some advancement in the faith, or an enlargement of your grasp of truth, they will also prove to be impotent.

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Lesson 3 of 37

## THE CONSISTENCY OF THE TRUTH, #1

At this point, I want to show the consistency of this view of “truth” in God’s Word – one factual body of thought that is held together by Divine purpose. Remember, “TRUTH” IS ALWAYS DECLARED IN THE SINGULAR. Several references include the definite article with the word “truth,” i.e., “THE truth.” This language presupposes an interrelated body of reality; i.e., varying perspectives with a single focus or center. Thus, we do not read of “a truth,” “some truth,” “part of the truth,” or “any truth,” etc. Truth can no more be divided than God the Father, or the Christ, His Son. The Lord our God is “One,” and so is truth – all of which is revealed by God! Men cannot stumble upon the truth, or contribute to it. No aspect of “the truth” stands alone, or by itself. In English, “truth” is defined as "Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been; or shall be” (Webster 1913).

Behold how the Spirit speaks of “THE TRUTH” – a vast body of revealed spiritual realities.

1. "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh THE TRUTH in his heart." (Psa 15:2)
2. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of THE TRUTH. Selah." (Psa 60:4)
3. "Buy THE TRUTH, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." (Prov 23:23)
4. "For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and THE TRUTH OF THE LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa 117:2).
5. "And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH upon the earth." (Jer 9:3)
6. "And ye shall KNOW THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free." (John 8:32)
7. "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through THE TRUTH." (John 17:19)
8. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not OBEY THE TRUTH, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath," (Rom 2:8)
9. "And ye shall KNOW THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free." (John 8:32)
10. "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified THROUGH THE TRUTH." (John 17:19)
11. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth IN THE TRUTH," (1 Cor 13:6)
12. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey THE TRUTH?" (Gal 5:7)
13. "But speaking THE TRUTH in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Eph 4:15).
14. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of THE TRUTH, that they might be saved." (2 Thess 2:10)
15. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of THE TRUTH." (2 Thess 2:13)
16. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of THE TRUTH." (1 Tim 2:4)
17. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of THE TRUTH." (1 Tim 3:15)
18. "Who concerning THE TRUTH have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim 2:18)
19. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of THE TRUTH;" (2 Tim 2:25)
20. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying THE TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet 1:22)

What God reveals can never become false, or be eradicated. Because it has to do with Divine purpose, in the body of “truth,” there is often one aspect of truth that yields to a more glorious aspect. For example, the “first covenant” yields to the “new covenant,” which has a greater glory (2 Cor 3:7-10). The seventh day Sabbath” yields to the greater sabbath of rest into which believers enter (Heb 4:1-3). The Ceremonial Law (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) yields to living by faith (Heb 10:38), and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,26). Therefore, lifeless

regimentation yields to presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1-2).

Consider the Law itself. It has not been abrogated, but is, instead, written on the heart and put into the mind of a believer: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb 8:10). Instead of the righteousness that is of the Law being expunged, it is now fulfilled in those who are in Christ Jesus: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:4).

Think on these things.

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## THE CONSISTENCY OF THE TRUTH, #2

I am speaking of “truth” as a unified composite, or complex, of spiritual reality – revealed reality that pertains to life and godliness. That revelation is contained in Scripture, and discerned by “spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9). So far as what can be known of the truth, it is limited to “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” which is apprehended “through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet 1:3).

Ponder the wide swath of thought that is taken in by the words “THE TRUTH.” There is diversity in areas like subject-matter, exhortation, rebuke, meditation, etc. Yet all of the statements of Scripture blend together in the larger container of God, Christ, and “eternal purpose.” “THE TRUTH” does not center in your personal experience, and it must not be addressed as though it did. Consider the following statements.

21. Compared with the manner of our former unregenerate state, we “have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS” (Eph 4:10-21). Notice, the context of “the truth” is “Jesus,” not human circumstance.

22. Concerning those who are not saved: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH that they might be saved" (2 Thess 2:10). It was not a particular statement that is true, yet not loved, but the entire body of the truth itself. To be able to “love the truth” is an ability that is given to men by God.

23. Believing involves the entire spectrum of truth. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH" (2 Thess 2:13). Believing includes one’s attitude toward the truth, as well as receiving and acting upon it.

24. There is an AREA of knowledge – what we know – that relates to all truth, not merely an imagined segment of it. “. . . God, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH." (1 Tim 2:4). This does not refer to something that is true, or a favorite statement that is true, but THE TRUTH in its entirety. Therefore we read of “increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10).

25. The church – the body of the redeemed – is responsible for maintaining and promoting the truth as it pertains to the pillars of spiritual thought. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH." (1 Tim 3:15). There have been vast periods of history when the church as a whole was not faithful in this regard. We are presently living in one of those periods.

26. When doctrinal error is promulgated and accepted, people have swerved out of the path of truth. "Who CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim 2:18). Notice that leaving truth results in an overthrow of faith.

27. Men are responsible for “acknowledging" the truth – recognizing, knowing, and admitting it. In fact, this is one of the keys to recovery from sin: “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH" (2 Tim 2:25). The person who refuses to recognize and acknowledge the truth cannot recover from sin.

28. Personal purity is contingent on obeying the truth – i.e., not in any way living in contradiction of truth – which centers in the Person and purpose of God. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING THE TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet 1:22).

29. Truth must be translated into living. It cannot be locked up in the Book. That is, what God has purposed can be lived out, or DONE, by the person who believes. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and DO NOT THE TRUTH" (1 John 1:6). No one is able to accurately discern or articulate the unspeakable damage that has resulted from professed “Christian” lives that are at variance with the truth of God.

Under grossly flawed leadership, the nominal church is not able to sail upon the vast sea of truth. It has chosen to locate in marshy places, and spiritually stagnated ponds of human perspective. Let us be clear about this, life lived in this manner cannot please God, and, consequently, cannot enable anyone to have hope – the hope by which we are “saved” (Rom 8:24-25).

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## “THE TRUTH OF”

“The truth” is like a large book with many chapters that delineate both the scope and value of truth itself. Some of these are found in the expression, “THE TRUTH OF.” These are exceedingly large considerations, and they must not be viewed as common, or things to be neglected. Remember, “truth” is not a statement, involves the summation of all inspired statements. It is not a container of some revelation, but the domain of all revelation.

**THE TRUTH OF GOD.** "Who changed THE TRUTH OF GOD into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 14:8). “THE TRUTH OF GOD” is a precise, or accurate, revelation of Him, His nature, and His purpose. It is what enables men to see Him as separate and high above all created things and all human ideas. “THE TRUTH OF GOD” outlaws all human opinions and speculations about Him. It is what God desires to be known of Himself. It is wrong for any person to remain ignorant of what God has revealed about Himself – so wrong, that those who do not know Him "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess 1:9).

**THE TRUTH OF THE LORD.** "For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and THE TRUTH OF THE LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa 117:2). “The Lord “is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:6). There is nothing He does not rule, and over which He does not dominate and preside. There is no “will” or “purpose” that is contrary to His will and purpose that He will not ultimately cast down. His will is the ONLY “free will.” Every other “will” is subservient to Him – whether it is perceived or not. It is said of Him, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24). All evolutionists and purveyors of humanly created and contradicting ideas and plans will give an account for them to Him, doing it before an assembled universe.

**THE TRUTH OF CHRIST.** "As THE TRUTH OF CHRIST is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia" (2 Cor 11:10). There is one Person appropriately called “THE Christ” (Matt 16:16; 1 John 2:22; 5:1)– the one and only One appointed by God to be the total answer to the sin problem. Those who attempt to address sin and transgression as though it was nothing more than a habit, or a disease, have, in fact, denied the Christ.

**THE TRUTH OF SALVATION.** "But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in THE TRUTH OF THY SALVATION" (Psa 69:13). “Salvation” is such a large matter that only God could create it, and manage it. It is more than the correction of human behavior, or the optimization of domestic or personal living. Salvation involves complete exoneration from the guilt of sin (Acts 13:39); personal victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5); conformity to the image of God’s Son (Rom 8:29-30; 2 Cor 3:18); being given God’s Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8); being “made partakers of Christ” (Heb 3:14); being “made partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4) being given “all spiritual blessings” (Eph 1:3); and “all things pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3); unhindered access to God (Rom 5:2; Eph 1:18; 3:12); an “eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15); and making those who were sinners “kings and priests unto God” (Rev 1:6). It is simply wrong for men to attempt to hobble to glory, and limp through life as though salvation was not a reality

THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL" (Col 1:5; Gal 2:5,14; Col 1:5). The Gospel is infinitely more than, "God loves you!" In fact, that expression is found a single time in, and only in, more modern versions of Scripture: "'Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, BECAUSE THE LORD YOUR GOD LOVES YOU" (Deut 23:5). Even then, it accounted for what God did NOT allow to take place. However, being loved by the Lord is a very real experience in Christ Jesus (John 14:21,23). The Gospel is the announcement, or proclamation, of what God has accomplished in Christ Jesus. His Son has absolutely defeated the devil (Heb 2:14, evil principalities and powers (Col 2:15, and even death itself (1 Cor 15:54; 2 Tim 1:10). Experientially, death is described as "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:26). THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL announces these marvelous accomplishments and provisions.

ALL THE TRUTH SHOWN TO YOU. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of ALL THE TRUTH WHICH THOU HAST SHOW unto Thy servant" (Gen 32:10). Now that Jesus is exalted in heaven, seated upon the throne, and reigning over all, He is teaching truth to His people. Of this it is written, "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been TAUGHT BY HIM, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:20-21). And again, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath GIVEN US AN UNDERSTANDING, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20). If you lived to be as old as Methuselah (969), you would not live a single day without being enabled to perceive some fresh insight. It simply is not right for any professing "Christian" to have a small cache of truth in their heart and mind.

THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAS BEEN REVEALED. "I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him THE TRUTH OF ALL THIS. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things" (Dan 7:16). What has been revealed is intended to be understood. In Christ, it is not enough to merely see the outline of truth. There now is such a thing as God giving "unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what [is] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power," (Eph 1:17-19). There is the reality of being "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:18-19). There is such a thing as being "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col 1:9), and knowing "all things" (1 John 2:20). What a marvelous spectrum is found in "THE TRUTH."

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Lesson 6 of 37

THE CONSISTENCY OF THE TRUTH, #3

When I use the expression “the consistency of the truth,” I am using the word “consistency” according to its standard definition: “A standing together; a being fixed in union, as the parts of a body; that state of a body, in which its component parts remain fixed.” Something that is consistent is also diverse in its various components. These differences are harmonious, but differ in such things as “breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:18).

Additionally, there is a segment of truth that is referred to as “first principles,” and “milk” (Heb 6:12), as compared with “the deep things of God” (1 Cor 12:10). These are different, but harmonious.

There is also a condition in the believer himself that determines how much of the truth can be discerned. This is referred to as “understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart” (1 Kings 4:29). There are also varying degrees of perception (Gal 2:9; 1 John 3:16), spiritual understanding (Col 1:9), wisdom (Eph 1:17; Col 1:9; Col 2:3), and discernment (1 Cor 11:29; 12:10; Heb 5:14).

Concerning TRUTH, the various expressions of it – from the “first principles” or “to the deep things of God” – all fit together and are harmonious, working together. THAT IS CONSISTENCY. Concerning those who have received the love of the truth, whether “little children,” “young men,” or “fathers” (1 John 2:12-14), together they are harmonious, and can work together for the glory of God. THAT IS CONSISTENCY. The mature believers, referred to as “fathers,” have had the experience of being both “little children,” and “young men.” The “young men” have had the experience of being “little children.” That is one reason why they can all dwell, and work together. There are some single things that unite them: "There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and IN YOU ALL." (Eph 4:4-6). THAT IS CONSISTENCY.

Now, with all of those things in mind, ponder the following that are NOT compatible with TRUTH, and cannot be merged with it, or enable one to dwell either among believers or with God. These are INCONSISTENCIES.

SAYING WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD, WHILE WALKING IN DARKNESS. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and DO NOT THE TRUTH" (1 John 1:6). As abrasive as that may appear, it is true. One cannot follow Jesus and walk in darkness, or gross ignorance. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). If a person is stumbling through life, falling into sin, blundering, and constantly caught in Satan's snare, it is because they are not following Jesus. THAT IS INCONSISTENCY. Even though a novice does not know much, he is still consistent with the more mature and, on that level, will not walk in darkness. Those who stumble and fall, do so because their lives are inconsistent with the lives of other true believers.

LIVING IN THE FLESH VERSUS LIVING IN THE SPIRIT. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh CANNOT please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:6-9). Living in the flesh is living with only natural resources, or attempting to live without the direction of the Holy Spirit. Such

a life is INCONSISTENT with true spiritual life. Such people may appear to fit into the professing church, but they do not fit into the body of Christ – where there is always consistency – living by faith, and walking in the Spirit. Those who are living in the flesh have introduced inconsistency, disharmony, and division. They are a disruption to the church, for they cannot possibly, in that condition, fit into it.

CLAIMING TO KNOW JESUS, YET NOT KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM" (1 John 2:4). One who is not keeping, retaining, and not letting loose of, the commandments of Christ, does not know the Lord. Period! His life is INCONSISTENT with the Lord, and with those who are following Him. Such a person cannot be involved in the work of the Lord. He would be like a cog of iron in an engine. Although it is not fashionable to talk about this, there is more of it extant in the nominal church than one dares to imagine.

OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS "IN THE TRUTH." "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I LOVE IN THE TRUTH; and not I only, but also all they that have KNOWN THE TRUTH" (2 John 1:1). "The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I LOVE IN THE TRUTH" (3 John 1:1). This is a love that results from discerned consistency. The harmony that is created by a common faith and hope, erupts in loving one "in the truth."

A GOOD REPORT FROM THE TRUTH. "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and OF THE TRUTH ITSELF: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true" (3 John 1:12). Any person who claims to be a "Christian," yet who is living outside the perimeter of the truth, has introduced inconsistency. If what Jesus and Apostolic doctrine describe as being a true believer cannot be said of an individual, that individual cannot possibly be in Christ. Their moral and spiritual condition is inconsistent with the truth, and with those who are walking in the truth.

The important thing is not that we are able to flawlessly identify such people. It is, however, the role of all preachers and teachers to inform the people of THE TRUTH concerning the identity of the people of God, and their unwavering consistency with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and one another. The people are also to be warned of the danger of being at a variance with the Lord.

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 7 of 37

#### WHAT IS TRUTH?

"Pilate saith unto him, WHAT IS TRUTH? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." (John 18:38)

Pilate challenged Jesus with the question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). In answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou a king?" Jesus had just said to him, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end

was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. Every one that is of THE TRUTH heareth My voice" (John 18:37).

"What is truth?" A weighty question, indeed! Yet, in Pilate's case, it was not asked in the proper spirit. That is why Jesus did not answer it to Pilate's satisfaction. "Truth" has to do with God and His exalted Son, and God's great salvation. In Scripture, things unrelated to those priorities are never called "truth."

In the kingdom of God, the Son of God, the ultimate Bearer of the truth, is the critical factor, together with our love for the truth itself. It does not currently appear that this is known among the professed Christian masses. They seem to be ignorant that Jesus did, in fact, come to "bear witness to the truth."

These days, a dominating interest in "truth," as Jesus used the term, is not very fashionable. In fact, in the current "church" climate, it is exceedingly difficult to detect someone who is "of the truth," or has received "the love of the truth" (2 Thess 2:10-12), rejoices in the truth (1 Cor 13:6), or is "walking in the truth" (3 John 1:3). This is because the nominal church, for the most part, is not trafficking in truth. People had rather hear of contemporary "issues" than "truth," as represented in the Scriptures.

In Scripture, "truth" is mentioned 223 times, and "THE truth" 87 times. When we confront professing Christians that are fundamentally unacquainted that truth, it is because of their failure to love the truth. If that status does not change, God Himself will see to it "that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess 2:10-11). Whether men wish to admit it or not, there is no room in Jesus that is provided for those who do not love the truth. Furthermore, God has created men so they will inevitably pursue what they love. That is ingrained in every living person having the ability to reason.

In Scripture, you do not read about "THE TRUTH OF" some facet of legitimate science, or of government, or of the family, or of education . . . etc. The common idea of, and demand for, "contemporary," or "relevant" issues is dangerously flawed. It assumes an ongoing adjustment of revealed and very real priorities: i.e., "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt 6:33), God's "face" (Psa 27:8), "glory, and honor, and immortality" (Rom 2:7), "those things that are above" (Col 3:1), i.e. Those who do not "seek" such things are living with the unwarranted assumption that this world is the preeminent one. They know little or nothing concerning "the world to come" (Matt 12:32; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Heb 2:5). The notion that "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" are not the priorities in the quest of men, is nothing more than the belief of a lie. In "things pertaining to God," priorities are not adjusted, and this world is never to be considered as primary!

All of this is related to our subject, "The inter-relational aspects of truth." The truth of God presupposes certain priorities, and addresses them with consistency. Resources are uncovered by truth that allow the believer to gain the advantage in life. The real enemy is precisely defined, together with the cursed realm, and basic personal deficiencies. There is no need to guess, surmise, or philosophize in these matters!

Those who choose to major on “things that are seen,” or “the fashion of this world,” are not content with the presuppositions of Scripture. They had rather listen to the assessments and diagnoses of those confused by earthly circumstance, than to the “great King over all the earth” (Psa 47:1). To them, psychiatry, sociology, and other related “sciences falsely so called” (1 Tim 6:20) have valid input for the development of a basic and valid understanding. But this is not true. God has invalidated the “wisdom of this world” at its apex, rendering it impotent in matters essential to “life and godliness” (1 Cor 1:20; 2:6; 3:19).

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 8 of 37

## THE POVERTY OF THE WORLD’S WISDOM

When we speak of “truth,” we correctly assume the poverty of the world’s wisdom. It (the wisdom of the world) is incapable of diagnosing genuine human need, or discovering the remedy so sorely needed. God has assessed the collective wisdom of the world, particularly as it regards an association with Himself, and successfully passing from this world, and entering the realm where there is no death. “The wisdom of this world” is its best thinking, its most seemingly productive fruit, and what is considered to be man’s best scholarship and assessment. It does not speak of the “song of drunkards” (Psa 69:12), or the idle thoughts of the foolish, but of the loftiest form of natural human thought. It even includes the wisdom of natural men in its purest and most extensive demonstration, as in Adam, the father of all human genius (Gen 1:27-28; 2:19-20,23-24).

Hear the Divine assessment of this world’s wisdom – a wisdom that is only applicable in “this present evil world.”

**GOD HAS MADE WORLDLY WISDOM FOOLISH.** "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor 1:20)

**REAL PREACHING AND TEACHING DOES NOT EMPLOY WORLDLY WISDOM.** "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." (1 Cor 2:6)

**THE THOUGHTS OF THE WORLDLY WISE ARE VAIN.** "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." (1 Cor 3:19-20)

**WORLDLY WISDOM IS INFERIOR WISDOM.** There is such a thing as "fleshly wisdom," and it is shown to be vastly inferior to “the grace of God” (2 Cor 1:12).

**GOD DOES NOT EMPLOY OR RESPECT THE WORLD’S WISDOM.** "Behold, He put no trust in His servants; and His angels He charged with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses

of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?" (Job 4:18-19). "He respecteth not any that are wise of heart." (Job 37:24)

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov 16:25)

**PAUL DID NOT EMPLOY WORLDLY WISDOM.** "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4). "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor 2:6-7)

**TO GOD, WORLDLY WISDOM IS FOOLISHNESS.** "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." (1 Cor 3:19-20)

**WORLDLY WISDOM WILL RUIN BELIEVERS.** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col 2:8)

Conversely, truth originates with, and leads to, the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." For this reason, it is completely adequate for the human condition.

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 9 of 37

#### THE VERSATILITY OF LOVE

Love is versatile because it blends so well with the eternal order. It reflects the very character of God, and adapts men for Divine use and fellowship. Love, it is revealed, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH" (1 Cor 13:6). Other versions read, "rejoices with the truth" (NIV), "has joy in what is true" (BBE), "takes its delight in the truth" (CJB), "is happy with the truth" (GWN), "is full of joy when the truth is spoken" (NIRV), finds its joy in "the truth" (NJB), "rejoices whenever the truth wins out" (NLT), and "rejoices when right and truths prevail" (Amplified). Some translators have taken, in my estimation, unwarranted liberty in translating this statement. Here, "truth" is to be taken as Jesus and the Apostles' used the word. It is the body of revealed and eternal realities – things that have to do with God and Christ, as well as "the world to come" (Matt 12:32; Heb 2:5; 6:5).

Almost without exception, men deal with this with this text concerning "love" (1 Cor 13:4-8) as though it dealt exclusively with the believers' attitude toward other men. But here is something that has nothing to do with men – "rejoices in the truth!" Is there anyone naive enough to think that a person outside of Christ would look at the modern church and conclude that love – their love –

“rejoices in the truth?” Is the testimony borne by those identified as “Christians” that they love God “with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind, and with all their strength” (Mark 12:30). Is that how we can explain the fact that most “churches” meet once a week, and then only in the morning, and for a brief period? Is that the explanation for the lack of popularity of midweek services, or the near-total cessation of revival meetings, is the abysmal level of a knowledge of the Scriptures? How can there possibly be rejoicing in the truth where there is little demand to hear it?— or if it is being presented, a relatively small number being present to hear it.

In its essence is THE TRUTH about God or man? Is it a revelation of what God wills, or what man wills? Does it major on how men conduct themselves in this world, or how they prepare for the world to come?

When the city of Samaria heard Philip preach Christ to them, and witnessed the miracles he did, “there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). They were rejoicing in the truth. When Philip opened up the Scriptures to an Ethiopian eunuch, and baptized him, “he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). He was rejoicing in the truth. When the Holy Spirit sent out men from the church at Antioch, and they delivered letters to them concerning the truth of God, it is written, “Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation” (Acts 15:31). They were rejoicing in the truth.

When the heart has been ravished by the marvelous love of God, a strong appetite for the will of the Lord is created. When that appetite is addressed by a declaration of the truth, there is great joy because what is loved is being given. This is because it is God Himself who gives men “the love of the truth” (2 Thess 2:10). And when that love is received, it always, and without exception “rejoices in the truth.”

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom. 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 10 of 37

#### THE FUTILITY OF OPPOSING THE TRUTH

“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” (2 Cor 13:8).

Other versions read, “Because we are able to do nothing against what is true, but only for it” (BBE), “We have no power to resist the truth; only to further the truth” (NJB); “For we can do nothing against the Truth [not serve any party or personal interest], but only for the Truth [which is the Gospel]” (Amplified).

This text has been viewed in various ways by men. Some see it as referring to the intention of the apostle, i.e., he was determined not to do or say anything that was against the truth. However, no mortal is capable of perfectly carrying out such an intention, else there would be no such thing as apostasy. Others see it as meaning the apostles, because they were chosen and commissioned by

Christ Himself, were, by virtue of that circumstance, incapable doing anything that opposed the truth. However, that cannot be true, for Paul rebuked Peter for doing that very thing (Gal 2:11-14).

I see this text in a different way – namely that any effort to deny or neutralize the truth is a FUTILE one. The truth cannot be successfully opposed. Speaking of this very kind of opposition, Jesus said to His critics, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not MY WORDS, hath one that judgeth him: THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:48-49). There you have it. Truth cannot be denied or opposed, for it will judge the ones who attempt such folly.

The truth will triumph over all opposition! If men do not see it happen here in this world, they will see it on the day of judgment. At the day of judgment no person from any segment of time who has opposed, or sought to neutralize the truth will be overlooked. The very truth they have opposed will judge them – and it will not be with mercy. There is such a thing as "judgment without mercy" – "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). And again, "When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore He that made them WILL NOT HAVE MERCY on them, and He that formed them will show them NO FAVOR" (Isa 27:11). Truth will triumph!

Once truth is related to the exalted Christ and the Father's determined purpose, the futility of opposing will be clearly seen. This is the meaning of Paul's confession, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." This is another way of saying the purpose of God cannot be thwarted. The only thing human foolishness and obstinacy will do is exclude the guilty party from involvement in the will of the Lord: but it will not inhibit or thwart the ultimate "determinate counsel" of God.

This is something the modern church must come to understand. Christendom is filled with teachings that oppose the truth, contradict the truth, and ignore the truth. Entire Christian sects have been founded on distorted doctrine. Daily the electronic media presents individuals that declare things that oppose the truth. There are a staggering number of written treatises that postulate things that is "against the truth." No person can pretend they are not there, or ignore them, for God does not do so. True ministers, teachers, or preachers must be able to say with Paul, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have RENOUNCED the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor 4:1-2).

And why is all of this so? Because "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor 13:8). If men do not see this while they are in this world, to their eternal humiliation, they will see it on the day of judgment. As it is written, "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest OVERCOME when Thou art judged." (Rom 3:4).

THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 11 of 37

## OBEYING THE TRUTH

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal 5:7).

Other versions read, “Who hindered you from obeying the truth?” (NKJV), “Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?” (NIV), "who prevented you from obeying the truth?" (NRSV), “who was the cause of your not giving ear to what is true?” (BBE), “who has stopped you from following the truth?” (CJB), “Who stopped you from being influenced by the truth?” (GWN), “Who has held you back from following the truth?” (NLT), and “Who has interfered in (hindered and stopped you from) your heeding and following the Truth?” (Amplified).

Like all who are “baptized into Christ” (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27), those in the “churches of Galatia” had a good start. There is no such thing as being “added to the church” (Acts 2:47), or “added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14), and having a bad or slow start. As confirmed by this text, where there are retrogression, spiritual stagnation, and retardation, or failing to advance in Christ, someone has caused it – some influence outside of the defectors themselves! Such causes are consistently represented as false teachers and erroneous gospels. In other words, the people had been subjected to a preached message that differed from, and was by no means harmonious with, the Gospel of Christ. In Scripture, to my knowledge, where there is a failure to grow, this is always the case.

1. In the churches of Galatia, it was “another gospel” (Gal 5:6-7).
2. Those who troubled the Galatians were those who would “pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:7).
3. In the Corinthian church it was also “another gospel” (2 Cor 11:4).
4. Some had entered the Corinthian church who were teaching “there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor 15:12).
5. The danger in Colossae was one of being subjected to "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col 2:8).
6. Jude traced the backward motion of those to whom he wrote to "certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:4).
7. Paul wrote of Hymanenaeus and Philetus who "concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim 2:18).
8. Paul also traced a coming apostasy that would be induced by false teaching. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim 4:1).

There is a remarkable consistency in apostolic tracing of backsliding and retrogression to false doctrine – the result being that men stop obeying the truth. Ignoring this consistent manner of teaching, the modern church has become strangely tolerant of false teaching and the propagation of the traditions of men. The glorified Christ upbraided a particular church because some of its members held "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev 2:15).

False doctrine is not to be opposed merely because it is wrong. That would be reason enough to oppose it. However, it also has effects, causing people to cease to obey the truth. It is mandatory that the professed churches of our day take a stand against erroneous teaching, and forbid it to be promulgated in their assembly. Jesus opposed false teaching (Matt 15:2-6; Mk 7:8-9,13; Rev 2:14-15). Paul opposed it (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6; 2 Tim 2:17-18; Tit 1:11; Heb 13:9). Peter opposed it (2 Pet 2:1-21). Jude opposed it (Jude 1:8-16).

Obeying the truth has to do with conforming our lives to the thrust of the heavenly kingdom. It involves infinitely more than doing a few things "right." The Galatians, by seeking to be justified by the Law, fell out of harmony with Divine intent. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not OBEY THE TRUTH?" (Gal 5:7). Although they may have kept themselves from immorality, they were NOT obeying the truth. Obedience, in its fuller context, has to do with living by faith (Heb 10:38) and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,26). This spiritual posture addresses all of the details of individual and corporate life.

Allow me to reaffirm that all backsliding, defection, retrogression, and falling away, is owing to believing a false message. It may appear as though it was caused by maintaining worldly connections, going places that are not conducive to faith, etc. But behind those actions, a false message was believed – something that allowed the person to maintain associations that are clearly condemned by the Lord (2 Cor 5:14-7:1). When Paul confronted a church that had gone backward, he always traced it to what someone had taught them.

Peter spoke of the effects of obeying the truth upon our soul – the rational and emotional part of our being. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING THE TRUTH through the Spirit UNTO unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet 1:22).

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

" . . . the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5,14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 12 of 37

## LOVING THE TRUTH

Under the Law God said to Israel, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts . . . LOVE THE TRUTH and peace." (Zech 8:19). The church is commanded to speak the truth with this in mind: "But speaking the truth IN LOVE, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Eph 4:15). While this is ordinarily viewed as a word concerning how the truth is spoken – in a loving way – it does not appear that is the proper meaning. Growth up into Christ in all things is NOT determined by the manner in which the truth is spoken. That is not what gives the truth its power. It is one's love for God, Christ, and the truth itself that gives power when the truth is spoken.

It is our love of the truth itself, and our love for both God and Christ that underpins speaking the truth. This is made clear in the Scriptures. The saints are known for receiving "the love of the truth"

(2 Thess 2:10-12). "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess 2:10-12). It simply is not possible to be saved if the truth is not loved. It is "the love of the truth" that compels one to speak it.

## OUR PRIMARY LOVE IS DIRECTED TOWARD GOD AND CHRIST

There is no such thing as a person not loving the brethren, yet loving God. Nor, indeed, is it possible to love God and, at the same time, not love the brethren. Exhorting the saints to "speak the truth in love" has to do with speaking the truth because IT is loved – and it is loved because the individual loves both God and Christ.

### LOVING GOD

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that LOVE GOD, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom 8:28)

"But if any man LOVE GOD, the same is known of Him." (1 Cor 8:3)

"If a man say, I LOVE GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he LOVE GOD whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20)

"By this we know that we love the children of God, WHEN WE LOVE GOD, and keep His commandments." (1 John 5:2)

### LOVING CHRIST

"If ye LOVE ME, keep My commandments." (John 14:15)

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man LOVE ME, HE WILL keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23)

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." (1 Cor 16:22)

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Eph 6:24)

It simply is not possible to love God, while not loving His people, or desiring their advancement in Christ. Nor, indeed, is it possible to love God and love Christ, yet not "speak the truth in love."

The truth itself must be loved before salvation can be realized. It is not possible to love the truth, yet willingly remain deficient in the knowledge of that truth. Such a deficiency is neither willing nor preferred, and will be zealously addressed by those in Christ Jesus. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED" (2 Thess 2:10).

A hearty appetite for "the truth" is seen in the Psalmic statement, "O, how love I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day" (Psa 119:97). It also is revealed in Paul's confession, "With my mind, I myself serve the Law of God" (Rom 7:25). This condition of heart is also described by the solemn warning of the Apostle. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess 2:12).

It is not uncommon for people to reject the truth because they do not think it was spoken in love.

This is a wholly improper assessment. It is an alibi for living in contradiction of the truth. It is uncomely to entertain views of speaking the truth that are conditioned on purely fleshly assessments. Nor, indeed, can we afford to have shallow and unproductive views of the impact of loving God and His Son upon the soul. It is plainly written, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

Again, speaking the truth in love is speaking it because truth is loved, God is loved, and Christ is loved.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 13 of 37

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TO THE TRUTH

The following texts provide a thumbnail sketch of the relationship of the church to the truth itself – not an aspect of the truth, but the body of the truth. By “church,” I mean the aggregate of all true believers, whether on a city, state, country, or global scale. These relationships assume a commitment to the Person of Christ and the purpose of God. They do NOT include people who are NOT working out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-13), or those who are NOT perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1). Simply stated, Jesus has made no room in the “church” He is building (Matt 16:18) for those who are uncommitted to Him, or are basically of this world.

The church is responsible for maintaining the body of revealed truth – not maintaining the truth itself, which requires no maintenance – but maintaining THE AWARENESS of the truth of God, and ensuring that it is not forgotten by the society in which they find themselves. Wherever there is a society that has a total ignorance of the Truth of God, the church has failed in its duty. In the early days of the church, even wicked king Agrippa knew about the truth. When being tried before him, Paul said, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently . . . For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (Acts 26:2-3, 26-27). The one ruling over the Jews who was NOT a Jew, knew of their manners, and what they taught. He was also aware of the ministry of Christ, and of its impact upon the people following Him.

Because of the nature of true spiritual life, God expects the church to be known for what it believes and practices. Its light is to be shining so all can see. Whether the citizens a country or city receive it or not, the church is a declared custodian of the truth, and it is to be about making it known by both proclamation and living.

This includes the announcement of Divine perspective and priorities. Paul wrote to young Timothy, “If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, WHICH IS the church of the living God, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH” (1 Tim 3:15). The church Jesus is building is not a resolution center, but a truth-proclamation centre – “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Other versions read, “pillar and support” (NASB), “pillar and foundation” (NIV), “pillar and bulwark” (NRSV), “pillar and base” (BBE), “pillar and buttress” (ESV), “backbone and support” (CEB). As Albert Barnes has well said, the church is to preserve the truth, “keep it pure, to defend it, and to transmit it to future times; and that, therefore, everyone to whom the administration of the affairs of the church was intrusted, should engage in this duty with a deep conviction of his responsibility.” The church is not the place to develop religious careers. It is not an entertainment center. It is the “pillar and ground of the truth.”

Theological error occurs when the whole picture is obscured and the Divine emphasis is lost. Hymenaeus and Philetus provide an example of the impact of this loss. “Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim 2:18). When the truth does not find a dwelling place in our hearts, self deception is inevitable. The loss of spiritual perspective is the prelude to spiritual ruin. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth,” and such errors are not to be found within it. Yet, in our time there is such a conglomeration of heretical and false teaching within the professed church that it is mind-boggling. Just as surely as Jesus taught that stewards were going to give an account for how they handled what they were given (Lk 16:2), so every church will give an account to God for how it handled the truth.

As “the pillar and ground of the truth,” what God has revealed in words is to be strictly maintained, with no effort to mingle it with the traditions of men. Its members are to live that truth out before men, confirming what the truth does when it is ingested by men and women.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 14 of 37

## WALKING IN THE TRUTH

"For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou WALKEST IN THE TRUTH" (3 John 3).

This brief epistle was addressed to Gaius, whom, John wrote, “I love in the truth” (3 John 1:1). “Gaius” was a common Roman name, and we are not sure of this man’s identity – other than the fact that he walked, or lived, “in the truth.” There was a man named “Gaius” who was among Paul’s “companions in travel” (Acts 19:29). He was from Derbe (Acts 20:4), in the same region in which Timothy lived (Acts 16:1). This could be the man to whom John wrote.

If there was only one thing a person could say about you, would it not be cause for rejoicing that you were known for “walking in the truth?”

What does it mean to “walk in the truth?” In the Word of God, a person’s manner of living is referred to as a “walk.” Some of its uses are as follows:

1. "WALK in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." (Rom 4:12)
2. "We also should WALK in newness of life" (Rom 6:4).
3. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who WALK not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:1).
4. "Let us WALK honestly, as in the day" (Rom 13:13).
5. "For we WALK by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7).
6. "This I say then, WALK in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16).
7. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also WALK in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25).
8. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should WALK in them" (Eph 2:10).
9. "WALK worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph 4:1).
10. "And WALK in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph 5:2).
11. "WALK as children of light" (Eph 5:8).
12. "WALK worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10).
13. "WALK in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col 4:5).
14. "That ye would WALK worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess 2:12).
15. "But if we WALK in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Our life is depicted as a “walk” – leaving one place to going to another – journeying toward the time when we will leave this world, and making progress in pleasing the Lord and advancing toward Him.

The objective of every believer is to live in agreement with THE TRUTH of God – to eliminate all known variance between our perspective and that of our God. THE TRUTH is an environment in which we can live and have our being. There, we are in accord with God, and there we experience righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13).

It is possible to be commended by THE TRUTH itself. This occurs when the thrust of revelation describes our own manner of living. John said in this letter to Gaius, "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of THE TRUTH itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true" (3 John 12). How blessed is the individual who lives in harmony with the Divine agenda!

One other thing. This is not a forced walk, such as existed under the Law. It is said of life under the Law that Jesus took part of flesh and blood, “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2:14-15).

Walking in the truth is not after that order. This is owing to the fact that Jesus took away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and we have been made a “new creation (2 Cor 5:17), have been given the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8), and have been “joined unto the Lord” (1 Cor 6:17). How is your walk?

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 15 of 37

## A BRIEF SUMMATION

The truth consists of related and complementary parts. Everything fits together in glorious harmony, even as its Author is “One” (Deut 6:4; Mk 12:29; Gal 3:20). Scripture is written truth – Divinely originated realities embalmed in print. God revealed to Daniel something called “the Scripture of truth” (Dan 10:21) – something that, to that time, had not been divulged to men. Paul referred to the Gospel as “the word OF TRUTH” (Eph 1:3). Because Scripture is “the truth,” it must be handled correctly. Paul apprized Timothy of this fact: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15. “Rightly dividing the truth” has to do with dispensing the truth properly, like Jesus “divided” two fishes to a multitude of people (Mk 6:41). Second Timothy 2:15 in other versions is represented as follows: “handling accurately the Word of truth” (NASB), “correctly handles the Word of truth” (NIV), “rightly explaining the Word of truth” (NRSV), “giving the true word in the right way” (BBE), “teach the word of truth correctly” (GWN), “correctly explains the word of truth” (NLT); “correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth” (Amplified).

There is a certain unity in Scripture that supports its integrity. There are great realities that permeate all of Scripture. Here are a few examples of these unchangeable realities.

1–God Himself, His nature, and His purpose. 2–The natural state of all men. 3–The propensity of God to save. 4–The need for an Intercessor and Mediator. 5–The source of all evil. 6–The temporal nature of the present heavens and earth. 7–That just as there was an original creation, so there is a new creation of the heavens, the earth, and man. 8–That true wisdom is from above. 9–That there is nothing required of man that God does not do within him. 10–That God has devised a single means through which men can be saved. 11–That trust in anything other than God is trust in an idol, or false God. 12–That God will not ultimately accept anything or anyone that is imperfect.

All of God’s Word is related to Divine intent, determined before the foundation of the world. No text of Scripture stands on its own, as we will demonstrate. All Scripture is complementary, enhancing and clarifying the overall objective of God, as presented in Christ Jesus, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

An understanding of the nature of truth dramatically alters the manner in which we preach and teach. The common perception of expository preaching, for example, has some very basic flaws. It assumes that a given text of Scripture has an isolated meaning, established by its writer. Some suppose

passages can be sequestered from the remainder of Scripture, and expounded as though they were independent from the remainder of revelation. But this is not the case at all. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16-17), and is given in strict accord with the "eternal purpose" of God. The equipping of the saints is not an end of itself, but the means to an end – the fulfillment of the Divine agenda in "the world to come." True exposition requires the perceived centrality of the Person of Christ and the purpose of God.

Today there are an enormous number of professed preachers and teachers who are very sloppy in their handling of Scripture. Some actually stoop to the basement-level of using Scripture to support their own ideas and agenda. Others attempt to use the Scriptures to justify their private representation of their church being "the true New Testament church." Others use Scripture to justify their emphasis of health and wealth, as though that was the center-post of the Word of God.

Referring to the writings of Paul, Peter spoke of this kind of approach to Scripture: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable WREST, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:16). Other versions read, "twist . . . to their own destruction" (NKJV); "distort . . . to their own destruction." (NASB); "they are twisted by those who are uncertain and without knowledge, to the destruction of their souls" (BBE); "pervert them, as also the remaining scriptures, to their perdition" (ETH).

The words "to their own destruction" do not refer to the Scripture, "which cannot be broken" (John 10:35). This is referring to those who "wrest" or "twist" Scripture. That attempt justifies them being "destroyed, or going to "perdition," which is Hell (Rev 17:8,11). In fact, Jesus referred to Judas as "the son of perdition" (John 17:12), and the great false prophet to come is called the same (2 Thess 2:3).

This is a Divine commitment, and it is to be taken seriously. Those who "wrest," "twist," or "distort" the Scripture – if they do not repent of their action – will be destroyed, or go to Hell. That may not sound good, but that is the truth. The Scripture is the means God uses to reveal His Son, His will, His purpose, and the destiny of all things. If the Scripture is used for any other purpose, the person who does it will be destroyed. Believe me when I say it is well past time for the professed church to get serious – holy seriousness – about how they handle and perceive the Scriptures.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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## CONCERNING "DOCTRINE"

A brief word concerning the use of the word "doctrine" in Scripture will also serve to clarify the nature of "the truth." When used of proper instruction, "doctrine" is also used IN THE SINGULAR,

never the plural. In every version of Scripture, the term “doctrines” refers to error and falsehood. We read of the “DOCTRINES of men,” “DOCTRINES of demons,” “divers and strange DOCTRINES,” and “teaching for “DOCTRINES the commandments of men” (Matt 15:9; Col 2:22; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 13:9). The NIV refers to “false DOCTRINES ” (1 Tim 1:3; 6:3). Such doctrines are “divers” in that they lack harmony, and tend to promote division and discord. They are “strange” because they do not blend with God’s “eternal purpose,” nor complement the clear teaching of Scripture.

The “doctrine” of Scripture is its overall thrust and emphasis. It is the tenor, or tone, of revelation. It is the character and thrust of the teaching. True teaching derives its strength from Jesus Christ as its foundation, and the Holy spirit as its inspiration. It tends to expound the purpose of God, clarify spiritual life, enhance the worth of our salvation, and make practical righteousness reasonable.

The NIV translation uses the word “teachings” in First Corinthians 11:2, Second Thessalonians 2:15, and Hebrews 6:1. In my judgement, this misrepresents the intent of the Holy Spirit. Paul spoke of the “ordinances” he delivered to the Corinthians (“traditions,” RSV, NASB, and NRSV). This does not speak of the thrust of Paul’s teaching, but of his instruction concerning conduct in the assembly. The Thessalonians were also addressed concerning matters of human conduct (“the traditions which you have been taught”). The Hebrews were admonished to avoid an emphasis on the elementary principles of the faith, called “the principles of the doctrine of Christ.” None of these cases justify the use of the word “doctrines.”

The following references declare the singularity of true doctrine. The term represents the thrust of the teaching – the supporting postulates that gives the teaching its spiritual logic. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at HIS DOCTRINE" (Matt 7:28). "And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at HIS DOCTRINE" (Matt 22:33). "And He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in HIS DOCTRINE" (Mark 4:2). "Jesus answered them, and said, MY DOCTRINE is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16).

The understanding of doctrine is not the result of academic teaching. It is appropriated by a sensitive heart and faith. This is a revolutionary concept, but is clearly taught by our blessed Lord. "If any man will do His will, he shall know OF THE DOCTRINE, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). A resolution to do the will of God allows the development of spiritual focus and understanding. If you really want to know what Jesus is talking about, the will of the Lord must become your quest. This has a much higher priority in the faith-life than is commonly perceived. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, THAT YE MAY PROVE what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2, NASB). For “prove,” the NIV reads “test and approve.” The New Revised Standard reads, “discern.” The New Living Translation reads, “will learn to know.”

“Sound doctrine” (2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1) equates to “the doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 2:10). In Christ, all valid teaching is based upon a proper representation of God – His Person and Purpose. Who God is, and what He is doing is what gives sense and harmony to things that are becoming of “sound doctrine.” When what is taught leaves people focusing on the things pertaining to this world, the teaching has been founded on unsound and false doctrines. Things that are becoming of “sound doctrine,” when they are believed and embraced, leave the people thinking about God, Christ, and “the salvation of God” (Lk 3:6; Acts 28:28).

The Scriptures are written in such a manner as to expose defiled hearts and minds. If, for example, a person is determined to be rich, and thinks that is what God desires for him, it will appear as though that is actually taught in Scripture. However, when the Day of judgment comes, and earthly riches do not even exist any longer, it will become very evident that the Word of God really had another focus – and then, it will be too late to finally perceive that.

In our time, there needs to be a major overhaul of how the Scriptures are perceived, preached, and accepted.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 17 of 37

## THINGS BECOMING SOUND DOCTRINE

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1)

Other versions read, "things which are proper for sound doctrine: (NKJV), “the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (NASB), "what is in accord with sound doctrine" (NIV), “what is consistent with sound doctrine” (NRSV), “in agreement with true and right teaching” (BBE), “must agree with true teaching” (NIRV), “promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching” (NLT), and “teach what is fitting and becoming to sound (wholesome) doctrine [the character and right living that identify true Christians]” (Amplified).

The words that follow our text confirm that this word pertains to the manner in which people live.

AGED MEN: "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." (Titus 2:2)

AGED WOMEN: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, That they may teach the young women . . . (Titus 2:3).

YOUNG WOMEN: " . . . to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home [“good managers of the household,” NRSV], good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).

YOUNG MEN: "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded" (Titus 2:6).

What is said of these groups is NOT the doctrine, but is in keeping with “sound doctrine.” The “doctrine” concerns God and Christ, NOT men. What men and woman are admonished to do is to be in keeping with the nature and purpose of God, and the supplies provided in Christ Jesus. Men and woman are simply not permitted to live in contradiction of who God and Christ are, what God has purposed, and what Jesus has provided.

Sound teaching tends to godliness. That is because it has a focus that demands that godly demeanor.

God is unequivocal on this point: “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:15-16). If God is holy, men are not allowed to be unholy. If God is pure, men are not allowed to be impure. If God does everything in strict accord with His will (Gal 1:4; Eph 1:5,9,11), men are not allowed to make their will primary.

It is possible to emphasize holiness without it being achieved in those being taught. The “doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12), or “the doctrine of God our Savior” (Tit 2:10), or “the doctrine of Christ” (He 6:1; 2 John 1:9), however, will inevitably produce holiness in those who embrace it. This is the meaning of Paul’s counsel to Timothy: “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim 6:3). Men are out of order in drawing up lists of what people should do – making the application of the truth themselves. The doctrine will do the work in those who believe it when it is preached.

A life lived in acute awareness of, and dedication to, the Lord confirms the truth and effectiveness of sound doctrine. If the thrust of teaching is toward God, a life lived in that posture corroborates that teaching. Thus it is written, “Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may ADORN the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Titus 2:10). The NIV read, “make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”

The Apostles put the Lord Jesus Christ at the very heart of their teaching. Everything depended upon Him, Who is the “Head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:22). Their preaching and teaching was not tangential, majoring on passing issues and novel interests. If issues did not relate to the “great salvation,” they simply did not deal with them. The “doctrine of Christ” is the teaching that has Christ at its center. The focal point of such teaching is not conduct, but the Son. He is immediately related to all sound doctrine. Any teaching that does not absolutely require Jesus – Who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do – is spurious, and is to be rejected. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 1:10).

Jesus alerted His disciples to the thrust of the teaching given by the Pharisees and Sadducees. They did say some things that were true. However, their teaching did not lead men into the truth. They had objectives differing from God, and thus their teaching was flawed at the core. It was like creeping leaven that pervaded the heart and mind, corrupting the understanding. “Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Mat 16:12). Their doctrine stood on a foundation destined to crumble. How tragic that so much contemporary religious teaching falls into this same category.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

## ASPECTS OF TRUTH

### DIVINE REQUIREMENT

The revealed purpose of God is to “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph 1:10). Everything Jesus said, did, and is doing, is immediately related to THAT objective. God never speaks or works among men without THIS purpose in consideration. Required things are necessary in order to the fulfillment of THAT intention. However, it is possible to think of requirements from the standpoint of Law alone, i.e., “this must be done!” We cannot allow ourselves to be limited to that perspective. It is necessary, but is not large enough to sustain the human spirit, nor can it enable one to participate in the “good and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom 12:1-2). There are matters that were absolutely essential to the salvation of man.

### A PROPITIATION FOR SIN

God’s objective is to unite mankind with Himself. This is not possible, however, while they remain associated with, and dominated by, sin. In order to facilitate His will, a covering for sin was provided in Christ Jesus. This allowed God to fulfill His will without compromising His character. Thus is written, “And He [Christ Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

### A SAVIOR “MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN”

If men are going to be brought to God, it must be by A MAN. Angels cannot bring men to God, nor can the Seraphs and Cherubs that occupy the area around the throne of God. For this reason, God sent His own Son, “in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,” to bring the people to Himself. As it is written, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pet 3:18). The purpose of the Son was not simply to identify with the human race, but to enable the purpose of God to be fulfilled. “Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things PERTAINING TO GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb 2:17).

### A WAY OPENED TO GOD

Identity with God REQUIRES access to Him. That access, however, was closed in Eden, and men were not able to open it again. How, then, would God’s purpose be fulfilled? The Lord would make “a new and living way” – one accessible to men, and honored by Himself. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, WHICH HE CONSECRATED FOR US, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh” (Heb 10:19-20).

As glorious as these things are, none of them have significance of themselves. It is their relation to what the Lord is doing that gives them their significance. The power of these requirements is realized in their unity. They are all related to the objective of God, finding their sole significance in His eternal purpose. Even such great matters as Jesus being made like us, providing a propitiation,

bringing us to God, and opening a new and living way, are validated by the determinate counsel of God – His “eternal purpose” (Eph 3:11).

You must know that salvation is not merely the response of God to sin. It is the execution of His “eternal purpose,” of which it is written, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to HIS OWN PURPOSE and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9). No person is able to grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15) until this is seen.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 19 of 37

## DIVINE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The “eternal purpose of God” is the context of salvation in all of its marvelous facets. That is where all true harmony is found – in the reality of what God is determined to do – and will surely fully do it. As simplistic as that may seem, it has escaped the attention of multitudes of professing Christians. Settle it in your mind, salvation is not primarily God’s response to sin. Rather, it is the expression of His flawless will, which will accrue to His glory. This is not a human conclusion, but a Divine affirmation.

1. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His PURPOSE." (Rom 8:28)
2. "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which he hath PURPOSED in Himself" (Eph 1:8-9).
3. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph 1:11)
4. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal PURPOSE which He PURPOSED in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3:10-11).
5. "... God, Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own PURPOSE and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9).

Some of the Divine accomplishments immediately related to that purpose are as follows.

## JESUS PUT AWAY SIN

Sin stood between man and God, inhibiting the fulfillment of His will. It was not simply that man needed to be made clean; he needed to be clean to have access to, and fellowship with, God. Jesus was sent into the world to resolve the human dilemma by putting away sin. “For then must He often

have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared TO PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). Spiritual cleanness is not an end of itself. It is good and imperative that our sins are forgiven, but that is the means to the appointed end, not the end itself. In keeping with the Divine purpose, Coming to God is the point, and the remission of sins is necessary for this to occur.

## JESUS DESTROYED THE DEVIL

The divine objective appeared to have been thwarted by the wicked one. As man’s adversary, the devil ravished humanity, blinding it to the glories of Divine provision and intent (2 Cor 4:4). Jesus, however, would resolve this situation. He came to render the devil impotent, delivering a mortal bruise to his head that would eventually be his total undoing (Gen 3:15). “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might DESTROY HIM that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:14-15). There is more to life, however, than just being rid of the devil. He was “destroyed” through Christ’s death in order that humanity might live again! That life is realized in fellowship with God through Christ and by the Spirit, which is in perfect accord with the purpose of God.

## REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

The law was ruthless in its condemnation of our race. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23), and the Law effectively condemns the conscience of all who will listen. With frightening tones, the Law “stops every mouth,” rendering its subjects “guilty before God” (Rom 3:19-20). That curse, dominated humanity for 1,500 years during which the Law was the basis of coming to God. But, praise God, it is lifted in Jesus. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:13-14). The curse is lifted, however, in order that the blessing might be bestowed. There is no point to being delivered from law if we are not inducted into the fellowship of God! That is what God has purposed. The curse of the Law is NOT poverty and sickness, as the media-ministers are affirming. Rather, it is alienation from God, death in trespasses and sins, and being summarily rejected by God.

The power of these achievements – the removal of sin (Psa 103:12; Dan 9:24; John 1:29; Heb 1:3), and the ending of the Law as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4) – is realized in THEIR UNITY. They are all related to the objective of God, finding their sole significance in His eternal purpose. Men are not the point. God is the point. What men desire is not the point, but what God desires.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

## DIVINE PROVISION

The Lord is eager to accomplish His purpose. More than that, He is ABLE to do so. The Word of His grace is "ABLE to build you up" (Acts 20:32). Concerning the Jews, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is ABLE to graft them in again" (Rom 11:23). He "is ABLE to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). Those in Christ are told that God "is ABLE to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph 3:20). The enthroned Christ "is ABLE to succor them that are tempted" (Heb 2:18), and "He is ABLE also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). He is also "ABLE to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24). "Grace and peace" come to us "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 John 1:3).

Ponder how the Lord has "GIVEN us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (2 Thess 2:16). His Divine power has "GIVEN unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet 1:3). He has also "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph 1:3). The word has come to us from heaven, "He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6).

All of this makes perfect sense. Because of the spiritual poverty induced by sin, God Himself must supply us with "all things that pertain to life and godliness." Humanity is not capable of appropriating the required resources on its own. They do not come to us from formal education, or even from assiduous human study. Therefore God, in Christ, brings the resources to us. What a marvelous situation is thus declared. "But OF HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, who OF GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:30). In other words, to possess Jesus is to possess everything required to bring us into heaven without spot or wrinkle. Think of it, God can "GRANT YOU, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; [in order] That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:17-19).

There simply is no reason for anyone in Christ to go through life without understanding, without growing up into Christ in all things, and without having a strong faith and confidence. The fact that these unnecessary conditions exist, and in phenomenal proportions, confirms that "another gospel" has been embraced by staggering numbers of people (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6). Churches are filled with doubters, and unacceptable levels of spiritual ignorance are found in massive numbers of "church" people.

And why is it that those who live by faith possess the benefits announced by the Word of God? Is knowing what God has provided an end of itself? Indeed not! It is not enough to be wise if we do not walk with God! It is insufficient to have righteousness if it does not enable us to come into the presence of the Lord. What good is sanctification if God does not employ us in His eternal purpose? Of what worth is redemption if we do not return to the "chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls?"

The power of these benefits is realized in their unity. All of the precious gifts of God fit into a single accessible “bag,” so to speak. Further, and of particular relevance to our subject, they are all related to the objective of God, finding their sole significance in His eternal purpose. We need all of these gifts in order to be personally involved in, and benefitted by, what God is doing in Christ Jesus.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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## THE MEANS OF APPROPRIATING THE BENEFITS

### FAITH

Faith – real faith – is integral to the experience of knowing the truth. “Faith” is a noun, and “believing” is a verb, always the expression of that faith. It is necessary to underscore the requisite of the possession of faith, and the expression of believing. This is essential because a phenomenal amount of unbelief is extant in the modern church. That is precisely why sin is found in alarming measures (Eph 5:3), a fervent quest to please God is most unusual (1 Thess 4:1), and growing up into Christ in all things (Eph 5:15) is at totally unacceptable levels. This is the reason for the brief and infrequent occasions when the professing “Christians” are “come together . . . into one place” (1 Cor 11:20; 14:23).

The Spirit informs us that when men “stagger” at the promises of God, it is because of “unbelief” (Rom 4:20). Some Jews in the Abrahamic tree were “broken off” like dead and useless branches, “because of unbelief” (Rom 11:20). All professing believers are warned, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12). Unbelief is, then, is walking away from God. More than 600,000 Israelites could not enter into the promised land “because of unbelief” (Heb 3:19; 4:6). Solemnly the church is told, “Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb 4:11). The Holy Spirit has made it quite clear, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, AND that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6).

Faith is the means of maintaining spiritual life: “The just shall LIVE BY FAITH” (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11). “The righteousness of God” is received BY FAITH (Rom 3:22). We are “justified BY FAITH” (Rom 5:1). We have access into grace “BY FAITH” (Rom 5:2). We “stand” firm “BY FAITH” (2 Cor 1:24). We “walk,” or live out our lives, “BY FAITH” (2 Cor 5:7). We “are all the children of God BY FAITH in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26). We “through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness BY FAITH” (Gal 5:5). The Holy Spirit strengthens our hearts “That Christ may dwell in your hearts BY FAITH” (Eph 3:16-17). We “receive the promise of the Spirit THROUGH FAITH” (Gal 3:14). It is written, “For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8). The Holy Scriptures “are able to make thee wise unto salvation THROUGH FAITH which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). Those in Christ “are kept by the power

of God THROUGH FAITH unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5).

If you want to appropriate the benefits that are affirmed in the Truth, you must have faith. "The truth" is a complex of unified realities. There is no contradiction or variance in it – none at all. It makes no contradicting affirmations – and that is how it is to be perceived. If something is declared to no longer be compulsory – like the "First," or Old Covenant (Heb 8:7), circumcision (Gal 5:2), holydays, new moons, and sabbath days (Col 2:16), and the "Passover" (1 Cor 5:7) – it is not that they have been obviated by a Divine edict. Rather, it is because something of A GREATER GLORY has come, overshadowing the old. Such things are like the moon compared with the sun. When "the Truth" declares something of a greater glory, that very proclamation invalidates the compulsion of similar things of a lesser glory. Therefore, Christ's exaltation to the position of High Priest (Heb 2:17), invalidated the high priesthood of Aaron, which was one of a lesser glory (Heb 7:11-25).

Faith – real faith – enables you to be one who is "of the truth" (John 18:37; 1 John 3:19). The truth dwells in such people (3 John 1:3), and "the truth itself" testifies to their legitimacy.

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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#### THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

Obedience is an integral part of the kingdom of our Lord. It is perfectly harmonious with the revealed purpose of God. Disobedience cannot be merged with either the Truth, or the purpose of God. It is antithetical to both Truth and Divine intent. Even so, there are theological patterns of thought that allow for disobedience, teaching that men are locked into salvation regardless of anything they do. Not only does that contradict the thrust of the truth, it flagrantly contradicts the numerous revelations of how God has responded to disobedience – including His response to Satan and his angels, who were actually in heaven.

Disobedience is never in order, and obedience is never out of order! However, obedience is not an end of itself. It is possible to obey everything the Lord has said, and still be unprofitable servants. As Jesus Himself said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done ALL THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMMANDED YOU, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

There is a higher purpose that demands we obey! It is participation in God's "eternal purpose." "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM" (Heb 5:9). "Eternal salvation" includes remission, but is larger than remission. It also encompasses the "ages to come," where we shall "ever be with the Lord." Obedience is made reasonable and possible in the greater context of Divine intent. There is no such thing as a salvation from God that requires no obedience. If, for example, Israel was to realize deliverance from Egypt, they had to do what God commanded them to do – preparing and eating the Passover lamb (Ex 12:2-

13), applying the blood of their lamb to the door posts (Ex 12:7), gathering all of the things they would carry (Ex 12:34,39), obtaining the riches of Egypt by asking for them (Ex 12:35-36), and departing from Egypt at Midnight (Ex 12:29,41-42), etc. Their salvation and their obedience were blended together.

Jesus said, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15:10). If Jesus said we would "abide" in His love if we keep His commandments, why do some say even if you do not keep His commandments, you will still abide in His love? If Jesus kept His Father's commandments, how can anyone argue He will tolerate those who do not keep His commandments? If Jesus was "obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8), how can anyone be following Him and not do the same? If, as a Man, Jesus "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb 5:8), how can anyone support the erroneous postulate that men do not have to "learn obedience?"

If obedience is part and parcel of The Truth, and if it is perfectly harmonious with the Truth, how Can disobedience in any way be justified or excused? Remember, there are broad areas of obedience that must be worked out. To name a few: "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:16), "Be ye holy" (1 Pet 1:15-16), "put off the old man" and "put on the new man" (Eph 4:22-24), "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12), "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), and "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord" (2 Cor 7:1). The details of those broad categories are to be worked out by the individual. It will require fellowship with Christ, the grace of God, unwavering faith, etc. That is how salvation is realized.

Obedience blends perfectly with what God has said about those who are being saved. They have been called into fellowship with His Son (1 Cor 1:9). Those who emphasize obedience without actually having fellowship with Christ greatly err. Obedience is not possible without that "fellowship" taking place. We have been "called to be saints," or holy and separated ones (Rom 1:7). It is not possible to be obedient independently of that. Unholy people cannot be obedient. God has put us into Christ (1 Cor 1:30), and put us into His body, the church (1 Cor 12:18). Obedience is not possible without due regard for those placements. The promises of God have been given to us in order that we might be "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). These realities cannot be experienced independently of obedience, and obedience cannot be achieved if they are ignored.

Obedience is inextricably related to the truth. As it is written, "But unto them that are contentious, and do not OBEY THE TRUTH, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom 2:8). The Galatians had strayed and were told, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not OBEY THE TRUTH, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal 3:1). And again, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not OBEY THE TRUTH?" (Gal 5:7). The truth cannot, and does not, free those who do not "OBEY THE TRUTH."

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

## THE REQUIREMENT OF HOLINESS

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Thess 4:7)

Today, as you consider the Truth, which is a body of interrelated realities, each one complementing the others, think of what you have been called to – the state into which you have been summoned by the Living God. This is a state in which you are qualified to receive benefits and blessings from the Lord. It is a state that is an absolute requirement. In Christ, God has called us “unto holiness.” Other versions read, “to live a holy life” (NIV), “that our way of life may be not unclean but holy” (BBE), “to sanctification” (CSB), and “to be dedicated to him” (CEB).

Holiness is a state of spotless morality, and complete devotion to the Lord. It is a commanded condition: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:15-16). “All manner of conversation” is every aspect of life.

The Lord speaks with characteristic clarity on this point: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). As I peruse the church-world, it is obvious that this statement is either not known, or is known and not believed. The phrase “see the Lord” is used in the sense of First John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall SEE HIM AS HE IS" (1 John 3:2). This will not be true of a single unholy person!

For some, holiness is the main thing. They do not think of it in the context of the main thing, but as the main thing itself. To them, holiness is something that can stand by itself, without regard to the purpose of the Almighty. But this is not the case! Holiness is a means to an appointed end. Without that “end,” holiness has no real meaning. Hear the word of the Lord. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). It is possible to strive for impeccable holiness with absolutely no regard for “seeing the Lord.” There is a lot of preaching and teaching that is after this order – that holiness is how we are to live, yet without regard to the impact it has concerning “the world to come.” Whether or not you are holy has a direct bearing on where you will spend eternity.

Salvation is calculated to enable you to make the transition from this present evil world to the world to come. It fits you to stand before God, and pass unscathed through His meticulous judgment. The Lord has been clear about this. Again, it is written, "For we must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things DONE IN HIS BODY, according to that he hath done, WHETHER IT BE GOOD OR BAD" (2 Cor 5:10). That reality is directly related to, and harmonizes with, the command to “be holy.” It also blends with the fact of “the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:9). It merges with “God so loved,” and love one another” (1 John 4:11). Holiness is united to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:1-3), putting on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-18), edification (Eph 4:11-16), and being faithful until death (Rev 2:10). It is related to what we are commanded to BE (Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 15:58; Col 3:15; James 1:22), and what we are commanded NOT to be (Rom 11:20; 12:2,21; 1 Cor 14:2; Tit 3:14 ). It relates to Divine

approval (2 Tim 2:15), rewards to come (1 Cor 3:14; Col 3:24), and obtaining mercy and finding grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:15-16).

Of old time, Cain could not associate what he did to Abel with how he had to account to God. The Israelites were unable to relate coming out of Egyptian bondage to entering the promised land, and driving out its inhabitants. Those who are not believing on the Son of God, and living for Him, have failed to realize what God thinks of the Son, and how He will deal with those who have not seen Him correctly. The experience of being saved does not permit a person to select the things that are preferred among what is associated with being saved. You either determine to receive everything that comes with Christ, or be rejected by God. No person can have but a part of Christ, or a segment of salvation, or a sampling of Divine benefits. Everything God provides in Christ fits together and is necessary. The individual who comprehends this has been blessed indeed.

### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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### THE NECESSITY OF SELF DENIAL

The whole truth, with all of its glorious facets, demands self-denial. In the appropriation of salvation, the denial of self makes perfect sense. In the context of the Gospel, for example, no other posture is acceptable. Jesus made this clear in His teaching. "If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt 16:24). And again, "And HE SAID TO THEM ALL, If any man will come after Me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross DAILY, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:23-24). The Amplified Bible provides the following note for “deny” – “disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself.”

Elsewhere self denial is described this way: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1). Again, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15). And again, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil 2:4).

Moses is a classic example of a man with far less than we now have in Jesus, denying himself. It is said of him, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb 11:24-25).

After men have presented all of the arguments for the guaranteed priority of health and wealth, their theology all boils down to this: Living for self.

Self denial is not the same of asceticism, or living as isolated “monks.” God does not simply call us to a life of isolation. It is certainly true that we are not to “love the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15). Our fleshly lusts are to be subordinated with strong intent—mortified in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5). But that is not the end of the matter. We do not simply take up our cross to enter a life of idleness and a lack of involvement! Rather, we do so in order to follow Christ! Jesus asks this penetrating question, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36,37).

The power of the revealed means of denying self and taking up our cross daily, is realized in their unity with the provisions of redemption, and the will of God. They are all related to the purpose of God, the death and resurrection of Christ, His present intercession, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of eternal life. The denial of self, and the refusal to blend in with this present evil world, find their sole significance in God’s revealed eternal purpose.

God did not send Jesus so you could do your own will. Jesus did not die so you would be free to maintain your own self-interests. He did not raise from the dead in order that you might live for self. God did not give you the Holy Spirit so you could pursue fleshly interests. Jesus is not interceding for you and mediating the New Covenant so your life in this world might be the main thing. Jesus is not coming again to secure your position in this world.

However the denial of self, and daily bearing your cross, marvelously blend with those unchangeable verities.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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## ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #1

Everything that God does in this world, and among men, is tied in with His “eternal purpose” (Eph 3:11). Even salvation itself is according to that purpose. As it is written, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE" (Rom 8:28). Again, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph 1:11). And again, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but ACCORDING HIS OWN PURPOSE and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9).

The thing that moved God to provide salvation was not human need, but His purpose, or objective. It was the OUTCOME of that salvation that moved Him, not the resolution of the sin problem, which was an absolute necessity. This is why people getting into Christ, or being “saved,” is not the primary thing. It is what takes place AFTER we are in Christ that is primary. That includes sanctification (1

Thess 4:8), growing up into Christ (Eph 4:15), being conformed to the image of God's on (Rom 8:29-30), and the experience described in Second Corinthians: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest IN OUR BODY. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest IN OUR MORTAL FLESH" (2 Cor 4:11). In other words, the people of God are an exhibit of what God is doing in Christ Jesus, which exhibition prepares them to be with Christ in "the world to come." If the life of a professing "Christian" does not exhibit what God is doing in Christ, there really is no point to the individual being "saved." If God is not being glorified through one's life, that person is living in total vanity and pointlessness. Candidly, I do not believe this is generally known among professing Christians.

The matter of God's purpose being primary was lived out in the Lord Jesus Christ. There, in His life, what God is doing was revealed. Jesus was not sent into the world to resolve human problems and difficulties. One young man did come to Jesus with a domestic difficulty, and asked Him to speak to his brother, that he would divided the inheritance of his father with him. Jesus declined to become involved in that matter, saying, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14). No one ever came to Jesus with a marital problem – and such problems did exist. No one of record ever asked Him for advice concerning who to marry, or the issue of family problems. He plainly said He did not come to bring peace: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt 10:34-36). That is, it was the relationship each member of the household had with God that was the fundamental issue – and He came to make that clear.

His aim was not the correction of social inequities, or the stabilization of political structures. He never became involved in such things, for He knew there was an appointed and scheduled end of this world, and therefore what was taking place in it was not the focus of Divine attention. Domestic life is important, but did not require "God manifest in the flesh" to correct. Political inconsideration and even abuse, is not right, but it did not require the Lamb of God. There really is no domestic difficulty, national concern, or global condition that cannot be solved without a Savior, High Priest, and Intercessor in heaven. All such things were accomplished before Christ, without any difficulty at all. Problems in the households of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were resolved. A vast number of people were sustained in a wilderness where there was neither food nor water. Israel was delivered from slavery. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered. Ungodly kings were judged and thrown down. The difficulties of famine were resolved, etc., etc.

Who does not know these things? All of the various dilemmas of men, with the exception of sin, were resolved without the Son of God being sent into the world. There should be no question about the ability of God to keep both men and nature in synch with His will.

There was a higher objective that dictated Christ's descent to earth. It was God's "eternal purpose." Christ's identity with that purpose gives Him the power to save – not His identification with your objectives. We must forever put away from us the notion that Jesus was sent to empower us to fulfill earthly ambitions. Our purposes must be brought into harmony with God's purpose.

THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

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ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #2

MADE UNDER THE LAW

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, MADE UNDER THE LAW" (Gal 4:4).

Other versions read, “born under the Law” (NKJV), “He came under the control of God's laws” (GWN), “born a subject of the Law” (NJB), and “subject to [the regulations of] the Law” (Amplified).

Why was Jesus born “under the law?” He came into the world as a subject of the very Law that condemned humanity, stopping the mouth of every man before the presence of the Lord (Rom 3:19). The Law in all of its requirements and directives, could not condemn Jesus. The Law defined sin (Rom 3:20), but none of its elaborate definitions were in any way infringed by the Lord Jesus. He was, and ever remains, as “Jesus Christ the Righteous [One]” (1 John 2:1).

Why did Jesus perfectly keep the Law? Some teach that He did so in our place – i.e., that He kept the Law for us. But this is not so. Those in Christ are not described as those who obtain the credit for Jesus keeping the Law. Rather it is revealed, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:3-4). Fulfilling the Law, and being given credit for Jesus keeping the Law, are distinctly different things.

In the Kingdom of God, the greater takes the precedence over the lesser. The greater glory supplants the lesser glory. Thus the New Covenant takes the precedence over the Old Covenant, because it is a “better covenant” (Heb 8:6). The “circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11) takes the precedence over the circumcision of the flesh, because it is a better and effective circumcision. The “rest” into which faith ushers us (Heb 4:8), is a better rest than the Sabbath of the Law, and therefore takes the precedence over it (Heb 4:4-11). Christ Jesus is “our Passover,” and is greater than the Paschal lamb under the Law. Therefore He takes the precedence over the Passover feast of old (1 Cor 5:7). The greater glory is always the dominant glory!

Jesus proved to be greater than the Law –the very Law of God. The Law was given “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom 3:19). But Jesus stopped the condemning mouth of the Law, confirming He was superior to it. That being the case, men are to no longer look for righteousness by attempting to keep the Law. Rather, they are to come under the administration of Jesus Christ the Savior, in whom they actually become righteous – something the Law could not accomplish.

Therefore, Jesus did not keep the Law as an example for us, but in order that in Him the Law cannot condemn us. The Law yields to Jesus, and to the government that is on His shoulder (Isa 9:6-7). Jesus spotlessly fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law – and was and is the only Person to do so. But, when He did, the door of condemnation was unlocked, and we were placed under the care of a Savior, not one who looks for a reason to condemn. It is no wonder that insightful people flee to Him for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them (Heb 6:18).

## SUMMATION

One greater than the Law has now become the appointed Means of obtaining life from God. There was a reason for His subjection to Law, and it was a high and noble one. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, TO REDEEM them that were under the law, that we might receive THE ADOPTION OF SONS” (Gal 4:4-5). The fulfillment of God’s “eternal purpose” necessitated our liberation from the tyranny of Law. Jesus subjected Himself to that Law in order to accomplish this liberation.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 27 of 37

## ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #3

### DOING GOOD

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about DOING GOOD, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

Jesus is declared to be an “Example.” In the area of suffering we are told, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet 2:20-21). When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He said to them, "For I have given you an EXAMPLE, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

Jesus also left us an example of “DOING GOOD.” Did Jesus “do good” simply to leave us an “example” of HOW it was to be done (Acts 10:38)? Indeed not! When He “did good,” He rose to an even higher plateau. In keeping with the integration of every aspect of the truth with Divine purpose, Christ’s “good” doing contributed to Him being qualified to be a vicarious sacrifice for us. It was associated with Him bringing us to God (1 Pet 3:18). Further, bringing us to God was merged with us being delivered from the world (Gal 1:4), forgiven of sin (Col 2:13), accepted by God (Eph 1:6), and given the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 5:5). If Jesus had not brought us to God, His good doing and deliverance of those oppressed by the devil would have amounted to nothing! It all had to do with what God had purposed, and was carrying out.

One of the indictments of the human race was this: "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that DOETH GOOD, no, not one." (Rom 3:12).

This makes the example of Jesus doing good all the more significant. It also confirms why salvation involves the saved doing good: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). The person who was formerly a thief is told, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands THE THING THAT IS GOOD, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph 4:28). Believers are told they have been saved to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every GOOD WORK, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10). A blessing is pronounced upon them: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in EVERY GOOD WORD AND WORK" (2 Thess 2:16-17).

Even as Jesus went about "doing good," so those in Christ are to be noted for doing good. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us DO GOOD unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal 6:10). Those who are "rich in this word" are to be admonished, "that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they DO GOOD, that they be rich in GOOD WORKS, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim 6:17-18). All believers are admonished, "But to DO GOOD and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb 13:16). Peter exhorted the saints, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and DO GOOD; let him seek peace, and ensue it." (1 Pet 3:10-11).

Doing good, as lived out by Jesus, is not simply doing one of many things listed out for the saints to do. It is something that is integral to the salvation of God, which, in its totality, has to do with the "eternal purpose" of God (Eph 3:11). Be sure of this, there is nothing required of man that is separate from salvation, which is the expression of the purpose of God. No aspect of salvation is divorced from the purpose of God. When men point to something God has ordained –like baptism –and say it has nothing to do with salvation, they have displayed their ignorance of God and His eternal purpose.

In the professed Christian community, it appears there are very few people who consider Divine requirements, commands, exhortations, etc. to be an expression of matters directly related to His eternal purpose, to which the entirety of salvation related. What God is doing must not be viewed simply as something that needs to be done. What God is doing is an expression of what He has purposed before the world began. As it is written, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9). God has not made Himself available in Christ to assist you in what you are doing, but has called you into what HE is doing.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #4

CRUCIFIED THROUGH WEAKNESS

"For though He was CRUCIFIED THROUGH WEAKNESS, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." (2 Cor 13:4)

Christ's crucifixion occurred at His lowest point, when He was severed from Divine communion. He went into the cursed region, and returned, that we might be delivered from it "into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

The "weakness" experienced by Jesus commenced before the crucifixion itself. There came a point where He, the Lord of glory, required help! It is written, "And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, STRENGTHENING HIM. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:43-44). Think of it! As He prepared to be crucified, it is said of Him, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Heb 5:7).

Do you imagine that you are exempt from a seemingly helpless condition? Can you be reduced to a state where you need Divine help? – a state where help cannot come from any other source? Paul, himself a spiritual giant, once wrote, "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed OUT OF MEASURE, ABOVE STRENGTH, insomuch that WE DESPAIRED even of life" (2 Cor 1:8-9). Other versions read, "burdened beyond measure" (NKJV), "burdened excessively" (NASB), "under great pressure, FAR BEYOND OUR ABILITY to endure, so that we despaired even of life" (2 Cor 1:8).

Yet, Paul continued, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, [in order] THAT we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2 Cor 1:9-10). See, there was a PURPOSE that mandated that grievous experience: "But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Cor 1:9, NIV).

In a sense, this same objective mandated the experience of Jesus. He was going to return to heaven to be the Intercessor for the people of God, and He had to be "a High Priest" which could "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb 4:15), or be able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15).

You may rest assured, Jesus would never have become "weak" were it not for the purpose of God – His "eternal purpose." That Divine purpose is what compelled Him to submit to the Father's temporary abandonment! – which was the most difficult experience through which He passed. That is what compelled Him to say before as He prepared to enter into the world, "Lo, I come to do THY WILL, O God" (Heb 10:9).

This series – “The inter-relational aspects of truth” – has to do with this perspective. There is an underlying purpose – an “eternal purpose” – with which every single aspect of the will of God integrates. It is because of this purpose that all requirements for men are issued. All commandments, exhortations, admonitions, instructions, and warnings are delivered because of that “eternal purpose.” All Scripture is inextricably tied to it. If what God requires of you does not make sense, it is because His purpose is not perceived. If what He promises seems irrelevant, it is because His purpose is not comprehended. If repentance seems irrelevant to a sinner, it is because he does not understand what God is doing in Christ Jesus.

There are serious admonitions given to all believers, both individually, and in the aggregate. Such things as, “Be sober, be vigilant” (1 Pet 5:8), “Awake to righteousness, and sin not (1 Cor 15:34), “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom 12:1), “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col 3:1), and “be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58). These are, to an alarming degree, being ignored by what appears to be the majority of professing “Christians” Why is this so? It is because they do not know the purpose of God – what He is doing. By ignoring His requirements, they are excluding themselves from glory, and forever being with the Lord. And why is this so? Because God’s purpose has not made any provision for people fundamentally unlike Himself to dwell with Him forever. That is why people must be “born again” (John 3:3,7), becoming a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17). It is why God’s revealed purpose is to conform the saved to the Image of His Son (Rom 8:29-30).

When men – religious men – allow life in this world to be the preeminent consideration – marriage, worldly success, national stability, etc. – they have stepped outside of the circumference of the purpose of God, and entered into a state where there is no Divine help or Intercession. All heavenly assistance – grace, the Holy Spirit, intercession, answered prayer, etc. – are granted that men may participate in what God has purposed – before the foundation of the world.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5,14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 29 of 37

ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #5

RAISED BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was RAISED FROM THE DEAD according to My gospel" (2 Tim 2:8).

The resurrection of Christ is one of the three pillars that form the basis for the Gospel: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ DIED for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was BURIED, and THAT HE ROSE AGAIN the third day according

to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4). That resurrection was attested to by many witnesses: "And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me [Paul] also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor 15:6-8).

The resurrection of Christ was not a form of Divine novelty. It blends perfectly with the "eternal purpose" of God, has indispensable relevancy for the lives of believers, and is an exhibit of God's good pleasure. No person can be saved without Christ's resurrection. God cannot be ultimately satisfied unless Jesus is raised from the dead. The death of Christ counts for nothing if Jesus is not raised from the dead.

Nor, indeed, was Christ's resurrection intended to be an end of itself. It was the means of implementing a purpose settled before the foundation of the world (2 Tim 1:9). The "glory of the Father" was employed to raise Jesus from the dead, because the "eternal purpose" of the Father was thereby served. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). In fact, the resurrection of Jesus would have counted for nothing if Jesus did not return to heaven. And, His return to heaven would have had no relevancy if Jesus was not enthroned. And His enthronement would have no value for the saints He had not been given all power, and commenced His High Priestly ministry (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:1) of Intercession (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25), and Mediation (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

There are multitudes of professed believers who have never heard a valid exposition of the resurrection, ascension, High Priestly ministry, Intercession, and Mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. These matters are not common subjects of contemporary preaching, teaching, and purported exposition. Let me be clear about this. Preachers and teachers who minimize these aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ are NOT preachers sent from God (Rom 10:15). They may have what is considered to be an excellent education, and may even have achieved some form of fame. But, God has not sent them. They are not His servants. They are not bringing advantage to the people of God. They are NOT among the ministers whom God is giving to "every man" (1 Cor 3:5).

An incomplete Gospel cannot save people (Rom 1:16; Eph 1:3). It cannot cause anyone to be a "partaker of" God's "promise" (Eph 3:6). The Holy Spirit does NOT accompany the peaching of an fractional gospel (1 Pet 1:25). No one can be spiritually "begotten" by a partial gospel (1 Cor 4:15). "Life and immortality" cannot be "brought to light" by a catalectic or even fraudulent gospel (2 Tim 1:10).

When the resurrection of Christ is not preached and expounded, the purpose of God is not being served, and spiritual ignorance is being perpetuated. This message must not be upstaged by humanistic emphases and programs, for to do so is to incur the wrath of God. A significant percentage of sins and flaws that are found in the churches are directly traceable to a failure to preach the Gospel – and, in this consideration, to declare the resurrection of Christ, together with its effects and relevancy.

THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“ . . . the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 30 of 37

ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #6

ASCENDED ON HIGH

“Wherefore He saith, When He ASCENDED up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ASCENDED , what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things) (Eph 4:8-10; Psa 68:18).

If Jesus had been crucified, buried, and rose again, but did NOT return to heaven, His death and resurrection would have counted for nothing. The purpose of God was not completely fulfilled in the death of Christ. It was not fulfilled in the burial of Christ. It was not fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ! Its fulfillment was guaranteed, however, by a risen Christ RETURNING to heaven. “He ascended to “fill all things,” the prelude to the gathering of all things into “one” – which is His declared “purpose” – "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph 1:9-10).

The purpose of God is being fulfilled by the Intercession and Mediation of Jesus in heaven, enthroned at the right hand of God. It is being fulfilled by Him bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10), shepherding, feeding, and preparing them to be His wife. This is why sin is rebuked when it is found in the churches. The presence of sin contradicts God’s purpose, and occurs because the people have ignored a risen and enthroned Christ.

Because the Corinthians were walking “in the flesh,” and not crucifying it, as those in Christ do (Gal 5:24), Paul said, “For I determined not to KNOW any thing AMONG YOU, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). He did not say he was determined not to preach anything among them but Christ and Him crucified, but to KNOW that – having it dominant in His mind because of their unacceptable condition. So far as his preaching was concerned, he declared the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:1-3). He accented what Christ was building (1 Cor 3:9). He particularly focused on the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 6:14; 15:13-26; 2 Cor 4:14). He preached Jesus as the Foundation (1 Cor 3:11). He preached Jesus as the Creator (1 Cor 8:6). He preached Jesus as the means to victory (1 Cor 15:57). He preached Jesus as the appointed means of obtaining the promises of God (2 Cor 1:19). He wrote, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus THE LORD; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor 4:5). He also “preached . . . the Gospel of God” (2 Cor 7:11).

“The truth of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5,14; Eph 1:13; Col 1:5) contains an arresting number of factual details, the reason for the details, and how they blend together in perfect harmony. Sometimes a facet of the Gospel has to be emphasized because of the condition and ignorance of the people. All of this

is calculated to bring them within the circle of Divine purpose – to ready them to be gathered to Christ (2 Thess 2:1), be presented to Him as a “chaste virgin” (2 Cor 11:2), be praised by God (1 Cor 4:5), and be confessed by Jesus before God and His angels (Lk 12:8; Rev 3:5).

Faithful ministers serve the Lord with an acute awareness of the eventual separation of the tares from the wheat, and goats from the sheep, and the unbelievers from the believers. They keep the whole picture before them, so they can properly dispense spiritual food to the sheep.

If anyone doubts that the appointed purpose of God must be the accent, let them read what the living and enthroned Jesus said to His churches – speaking from heaven to them. The book of the Revelation is His message – twenty-one chapters that contain the assessment of the churches (chapters 2-3), exposure to the Throne room of heaven (chapters 4-5). Divine judgment (chapters 6,8; 9:13-21; 16:1-21), the conversion of Israel (chapter 7), the ultimate destiny of the redeemed (7:14-17), the assault of the devil (9:1-12; 12:13-17; 20:7-8), the pronouncement of woes (8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 12:12), The rise of a first beast who wages war against the saints (13:1-10), the rise of a second beast who makes war against the saints (13:11-18), the preaching of the everlasting Gospel (14:1-7), the fall of spiritual Babylon (14:8-20; 17:1-18:1-24), the triumph of the saints (15:1-8; 19:1-20:6), the destruction of all of the saint’s foes (20:8-10), the day of judgment (20:12-15), and the new heaven and the new earth (21:1-22:21).

There you have the preaching and teaching of Jesus Himself – and it took in all of the facets of eternal purpose, yet accented, and concluded, with the realization of that purpose. There is the ultimate example of preaching and teaching. None of those things are to be despised, or accented to the neglect of the others. That is the kind of thing that is being addressed in this series of devotions.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 31 of 37

## ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #7

### ANGELS, AUTHORITIES AND POWERS MADE SUBJECT TO HIM

“... Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” (1 Pet 3:21-22)

If you are a professing Christian, and regularly subject your mind to preaching and teaching, you do not often hear the proclamation disclosed in this text. Perhaps you have heard that Jesus is coming again to set up His Kingdom and reign. Peter affirmed, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). It is affirmed that “God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the

earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11). The present status of Jesus is plainly declared: "Which in His times He shall show, WHO IS the blessed and ONLY POTENTATE, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim 6:15). The Revelation asserts, "HE IS Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev 17:14). Our text affirms “angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” He is also declared to be “the Prince of the kings of the earth” (Rev 1:5).

Daniel saw a vision in which Jesus was returning to heaven – the disciples saw Him go up (Acts 1:9), and Daniel saw Him arrive. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before him. And THERE WAS GIVEN HIM dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan 7:13-14).

This is the same thing prophesied by Isaiah, “"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa 9:7). On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that Jesus had been exalted to David’s throne, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, and the promise made to David (Acts 2:25-36).

Jesus Christ cannot possibly be exalted more highly than He is right now! That is the consistent proclamation of the Spirit.

Why are heavenly powers subject to Christ? Is that an end of itself? Indeed not! The subjugation of all power in heaven and earth to Christ is necessary for the implementation of the “eternal purpose.” For that purpose to be fulfilled, inimical powers must be subjugated and controlled, while holy powers must be employed for the salvation of the chosen people. Remove the purpose of God, and there is no reason for powers to be subject to Jesus. “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being MADE SUBJECT unto Him” (1 Pet 3:22).

Jesus is bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10), shepherding them (Heb 13:20), interceding for them (Rpm 10:34; Heb 7:25), and mediating for them (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 12:24). It requires an exalted Christ, the Potentate, and the King of kings, to get the brethren home. All of their lifetime in the world they have to navigate through enemy territory. Their adversary the devil is stronger than they are of themselves. His spiritual lieutenants – “principalities and powers” – have been known to hold angelic powers at bay (Dan 10:10-13), to say nothing of men. However, even under those circumstances, if they follow the King, their progress will not be impeded, and they make it to the glory.

Understand that the Lord of glory has no difficulty at all with either earthly or spiritual enemies. Even when the Christ was in a humble state, divested of the prerogatives of Deity, He did not experience a single time when He was not completely superior to Satan and his hosts.

The exaltation of Christ was because of God’s “eternal purpose.” That was the holy cord that bound everything together. That was the appointed context of everything God did, and is doing, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Technically speaking, men are not the center of God’s attention. His purpose is the nerve center of His Kingdom.

It is no wonder that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). Understand, it is not that the prayers moved God to do His will. They rather bring the disciples into involvement in that good and acceptable and perfect will (Rom 12:1-2).

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 32 of 37

## ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #7

### JESUS INTERCEDES FOR US

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, YEA RATHER, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:34). The NIV reads, "Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – MORE THAN THAT, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Rom 8:34).

“Wherefore He is able also to save them TO THE UTTERMOST that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). The NIV reads, "Therefore He is able to SAVE COMPLETELY those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them" (Heb 7:25). The Amplified Bible reads, “to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity).”

When one is initially saved, or baptized into Christ (Gal 3:26), joined to the Lord (1 Cor 6:17), born again (1 Pet 1:23), or “added to the church” (Acts 2:47), Divine involvement does not cease. Salvation is not guaranteed upon the basis of one’s initial response to the Gospel. In order for the saints to make it safely to the Lord’s presence, and pass through the judgment of the Lord successfully, Jesus must constantly intercede for the believer. As long as they are “in the body” (2 Cor 5:6; Heb 13:3), and “in the world” (Phil 2:15), that intercessory ministry must not cease!

Deterministic theology notwithstanding, we need an Intercessor to be saved! It was not enough that Jesus died! His resurrection and ascension are not adequate of themselves to bring us home to God! That is precisely why Romans 8:34 reads, "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, YEA RATHER, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" Jesus is alive today, interceding for us because we need that intercession. What is more, God needs it in order to fulfill His purpose! When it comes to the removal of sin (2 Cor 5:21), making peace (Col 1:20), the destruction of the devil (Heb 2:14), the ending of the Law for righteousness (Rom 10:4), and the spoiling of principalities and powers (Col 2:15), Christ’s death was enough. But when it comes to you being brought safely to glory (Heb 2:10), it was not enough! It is a part of the purpose of God, and not the whole of it.

Salvation must have a conclusion as well as a beginning; an Omega as well as an Alpha. The forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, and justification were absolutely necessary. But they were not the end of the matter. That salvation had to be “worked out” (Phil 2:12), having a demonstrable affectation upon the life lived in the body. There is the reality and necessity of being saved “to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity,” and ONLY the exalted Christ is “able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25).

The sad lack of preaching on the intercession of Christ is but another indication of the general ignorance of Divine intent that prevails in the professed church. Much of the weakness and even falling away of many professing “Christians” can be traced to the intercession of Christ not being preached to them. There are a staggering number of self-appointed preachers who have never delivered an insightful word concerning the intercession of Christ. Many professing Christians have very little understanding of what Jesus is doing now. Christ’s intercession blends with God’s purpose in a seamless way. God’s purpose would be incomplete without it, and we would be also.

The need for this intercession ought to be apparent – but I fear that it is not. Though Israel God has confirmed by example that His does not keep His people independently of their faithfulness and obedience. In fact, He frequently chastened, and even abandoned Israel, because of their lack of involvement. During those spiritually primitive times, the required involvement was spelled out in ordinances – the ceremonial Law. That really was all they were capable of doing, for regeneration and the new creation had not yet been put in place. They required the removal of sin by the death of Christ, and His exaltation in heaven.

When Israel was delivered from Egypt, and arrived at the promised land, they were told to spy out the land, then to take it for themselves. Over half-a-million people (Num 1:46) refused to do so, and were consigned by God to die in the wilderness (Num 14:32-35).

When Israel failed to keep the land sabbaths, letting it lie idle every seventh year, God sent them into captivity in Babylon for seventy long years (2 Chron 36:20-21; Jer 25:11-12). Even though they had really been delivered, and finally did occupy the promised land, there was a time when, because of their unfaithfulness, God said to them, "for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1:9). He said to Jeremiah, "Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet My mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth" (Jer 15:1). Several times God said to Jeremiah, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee" (Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11-12).

Many professing Christians are completely ignorant of this God – but this is the true God, and they are trusting in a false god. With most arresting tones, we are told, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that FORGET GOD." (Psa 9:17).

O reader, flee from any teaching that suggests God will save you in spite of what you do or not do. That is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has made this plain by both example and doctrine. His salvation is complex, like a precious gem having many facets. But saving people without them being involved in the process, is not one of them.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 33 of 37

ILLUSTRATED IN CHRIST, #8

COMING AGAIN FOR US

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto THE COMING OF THE LORD. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for THE COMING OF THE LORD draweth nigh." (James 5:7-8)

In this series of lessons I am endeavoring to show that the power of the Truth is found in its inter-relational nature. It is like a many faceted jewel that is single, yet comprised of diverse, yet united, parts. Preaching that does not take this into consideration is always either lopsided, or mingled with the wisdom of men.

In the last few lessons the focus is being placed on Christ and the various ministries found in Him. Thus far we have considered 1-“He was made under the Law,” 2-“He went about doing good,” 3-“Crucified through weakness,” 4-“Raised by the glory of the Father,” 5-“Ascended on high,” 6-“Angels and authorities and powers made subject to Him,” and 7-“Jesus intercedes for us.”

Now, we come to the fact that Jesus is “Coming again for us.”

First, let it be clear that where these have NOT been declared, Jesus has not been preached as God has intended Him to be. The powerful effects of the proclamation of these facts are found in their unity with one another, and with God’s eternal purpose.

Some years ago, while employed by a Christian college, I preached in about 160 different congregations of varying sizes. In each of them I asked this question, “When was the last time you heard preaching on the second coming of Christ.” No one reported any recent preaching of that sort. Those who had heard of it said it was many years ago. Such things ought not to be!

And what of Christ’s return? Is it essential for the fulfillment of the revealed Divine objective (Eph 1:9-10)? Is it integral to God’s eternal purpose (Eph 3:11)? Does salvation make good sense without knowing about this return? Is the work of Christ considered to have been completed without His return in glory? Is there any hope of believers going to dwell with the Lord without this return?

The very thought of Jesus dying for us and not returning for us is absurd. Of what good is His death if we are not “ever with the Lord?” What significance is found in the resurrection if Jesus does not gather us to Himself? Will Christ’s ascension satisfy the purpose of God if Jesus does not return? And, will His intercession amount to anything if we are not “caught up to meet the Lord in the air,

and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17)? Why did Jesus say to His disciples before He died, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

Consider the sobering manner in which the Holy Spirit speaks about Jesus coming again. Ponder the various things with which it is associated.

**A VISIBLE APPEARING:** Angels said to those watching Him return to heaven, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

**THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS:** "And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:20-21)

**CONFIRMING AND BEING BLAMELESS:** "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 1:7-8)

**MAKING KNOWN HIDDEN THINGS AND THE COUNSELS OF THE HEART:** "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Cor 4:5)

**THE LORD'S SUPPER:** "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor 11:26)

**THE CHANGE OF OUR VILE BODY:** "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil 3:20-21)

**OUR APPEARANCE WITH JESUS:** "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col 3:4)

**SERVING GOD AND BEING DELIVERED FROM WRATH:** "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess 1:9-10)

**THE OBJECTIVE OF SALVATION:** "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess 2:19)

**BEING ESTABLISHED AND UNBLAMEABLE:** "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." (1 Thess 3:13)

**THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED:** "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess 1:7-8)

**KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENT WITHOUT SPOT:** "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim 6:14-15)

**FAITHFUL PREACHING:** "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim 4:1-2)

**THE TEACHING OF GRACE:** "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

**LOOKING FOR HIM:** "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb 9:28)

**BEING PATIENT AND HAVING AN ESTABLISHED HEART:** "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James 5:8)

**THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH:** "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 1:7)

**GIRDING UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND:** "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 1:13)

**FAITHFUL ELDERS RECEIVING A CROWN OF GLORY:** "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet 5:4)

**THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT HEAVENS AND EARTH:** "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet 3:10)

**THE SONS OF GOD BEING LIKE JESUS:** "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)

There you have a classic example of the interrelational aspects of the truth. The power of these aspects of Christ's ministry is realized in their unity. They are all related to the objective of God, finding their sole significance in His eternal purpose.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 34 of 37

### A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

An automobile consists of a number of components: i.e., body, motor, transmission, tires, radiator, interior, electrical components, etc. Each of these components is comprised of another level of parts. A motor has pistons, valves, rods, etc. A tire has a rim, inflatable part, stem, etc. Even the second level of parts have components: i.e., a piston has a head, an arm, bushings, etc. But the automobile itself is the point, NOT the components! Without the whole, the parts have no real significance. It would be out of order, for instance, to call the motor, or tire, or valve, an “automobile.” They are only parts of the whole – and the whole is the point!

An individual may become a specialist in the development and repair of automobile components – but unless his work makes the automobile functional, they have no real value. The automobile is the real point! Speciality has no value unless it contributes to the functioning of the whole.

SO IT IS WITH THE TRUTH. Subjectively, the facets, or components, of truth are complementary, harmoniously working together for man’s salvation. Objectively, they work together for the fulfilment of God’s “eternal purpose.” The point possessing power is the main point, not the subsidiary points. It is possible to exhaust one’s resources and self with attempting to establish something that is not the main point – the revealed object, or purpose, of the Almighty. Take the church at Ephesus during the end of the first century. Jesus evaluated that church, and what it was doing. They had engaged in some commendable things. 1–They had worked hard (labored). 2–They have endured (patience). 3–They could not stand those who were evil (could not bear them which are evil). 4–They tested those who said they were apostles, and found them nothing more than liars. 5–They had, Jesus said, “persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.” 6–They “hatred the deeds of the Nicolaitanes,” which, Jesus said, He “also hated” (Rev 2:1-6).

You will be hard pressed to find an existing “church” with such commendable activities and accomplishments. But all of that was NOT SUFFICIENT for Jesus. They had neglected the main thing. They had failed to blend with the eternal purpose of God. There was a single omission that invalidated all of those commendable things. There was a single thing that disqualified them from being one of Christ’s churches. Jesus said to them, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will REMOVE thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Rev 2:4-5).

Their love for Jesus was less ardent. The fervor of their devotion to Jesus Christ had cooled. They were apparently taking Christ’s love for them for granted, and therefore were not extending themselves for Him, and HIM ALONE. If that is really how discerningly Jesus views His churches,

then there are doubtless some churches that are on the verge of extinction, while others have already folded up and left the battlefield. When churches fail, it is because they have not pleased Christ Jesus, for He will not forsake those who are pleasing Him. Incidentally, in America there are hundreds, and perhaps seven thousands, of churches that are closing every year. To this day I am not hearing anyone of influence asking why. Does anyone of sound mind really imagine Jesus will ignore the fact that people claiming membership in His church are ignoring Him, and are not engaged in a fervent quest to dwell with Him forever?

Our objective is not merely to become a specialist in an aspect of salvation – like baptism, or holiness, or even apologetics or eschatology. Such things may be conducive to the development of a religious career, but it does not necessarily fulfill the will of the Lord. As unpopular as it may appear in this pragmatic age, God is not developing human careers, and large religious institutions. He is rather fulfilling a purpose conceived before the foundation of the world. Everything about truth works to that end, and no aspect of Divine working is separate from it.

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 35 of 37

## THE DETAILS OF LIVING

The Word of God deals with interpersonal relationships. However, no book of the Bible is exclusively devoted to that activity. No Apostle was chosen to be sent to men, to women, to married people, to single people, to aged people, or to young people. There is no epistle written for poor people, for rich people, for professional people, slaves, or slave owners. Such subjects are addressed by letters written to congregations and special individuals, but they are never the primary subject of writing. Men may place an emphasis upon such things, but Jesus did not! In our time there are whole “ministries” devoted to marriage, finances, evangelism, and recovery. That very circumstance shouts out loudly that Jesus Christ is not at the center of their teaching – because Jesus did not EMPHASIZE such things. Men may choose to upstage Jesus Christ by adopting another emphasis, but they are strictly on their own in doing so. If they tell men God is blessing their ministry, or that it is the means of appropriating Divine blessing and victory, they have simply lied.

The truth of the matter is that there is proportionately little “how to” instruction in the “Apostles’ doctrine.” Think of some of the things believers are admonished to do, with absolutely little or no instruction on HOW to do it. 1–“Be ye holy” (1 Pet 1:15-16). 2–Husbands, “love your wives” (Eph 5:25). 3–“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph 5:22). 4– “Perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord” (2 Cor 7:2). 5–“Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim 6:12). 6–“Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess 5:19). 7–“Abide in Him” (1 John 2:28). 8–“Resist the devil” (James 4:7). 9–“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom 6:12). 10–“Let not then your good be evil spoken of” (Rom 14:16). 11–“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph 4:26). 12–“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:17). 13– “Let not then your good be

evil spoken of" (Rom 14:16). 14—"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," (Heb 12:1). 15—"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil 2:3).

There are fifteen admonitions. For those who have a penchant for "how to" instructions, precisely how would you develop a practical routine to fulfill those Divine directives? And, if some did dare to develop such a routine, who would be willing to say it was really what God had directed THEM to do, but did not tell the apostles to say it?

## DIVINE PROVISION

God has graciously made a provision for men to know HOW to do what He desires, but it does not come through men. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is given to all those in Christ Jesus. He is the One who is leading the people, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14). He is the One who teaches the saints "how to do" what God demands of them. This is why men are admonished not to "quench" or "grieve" the Spirit of God (Eph 4:20; 1 Thess 5:19). John referred to this inward Teacher when he wrote, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . But the Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2:20,27). The Holy Spirit is "the Anointing" (2 Cor 1:21-22). It is the "how to" factor that is addressed by Him.

In addition to this, the grace of God, when received, instructs those in Christ. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, TEACHING US that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). Grace teaches the saints to reject ungodliness – not by a list of procedures, but by discernment and sensitivity. It is the kind of instruction that cannot be codified or put into a manual.

Then, there is the productive leadership of Jesus Christ Himself, "that Great Shepherd of the sheep." He Himself said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, but shall HAVE the light of life" (John 8:12). Jesus sheds forth light so that real dangers can be avoided, and genuine blessings can be obtained. Again, this is something that cannot be encapsulated in a procedure. The life of faith is not maintained by rules and procedures, but by fellowship with Christ, into which God has called us (1 Cor 1:9).

Those who insist on instructing people how to fulfill Divine admonitions by procedures and details that are not listed in Scripture, have managed to upstage the working of the Holy Spirit, the grace of God, and THE Shepherd of the sheep.

Whom is the person willing to say the leading of the Spirit is in any way inadequate? Who will affirm that the teaching of the grace of God is insufficient, or that the Great Shepherd of the sheep, when followed, will allow His sheep to stray?

Scripture always addresses human difficulties in view of God's objective in Christ. Sin is forbidden

because it excludes men from God (Rom 6:23). Perpetual ignorance is not allowed because it alienates from God (Eph 4:18). The emphasis of Scripture is involvement with God, not involvement with one another. Our interpersonal relationships are to be conducted in light of our fellowship with God through Christ and by the Spirit.

The church is primarily the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Its divinely appointed role is to apprise men of the purpose of God as realized in Jesus Christ. If the church does not do this, it has no other reason for existing. As for the individual believer, they are to follow Christ, not quench the Spirit, submit to being led by the Spirit, and receive not the grace of God in vain (2 Cor 6:1). In so doing, they will not require a humanly devised lists of “how to” do the will of God.

Concerning the theme of this series, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the grace of God are working in strict harmony with one another, and are all essential to abstaining from sin, overcoming the world, and being forever with the Lord.

#### THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

“... the TRUTH of God” (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); “the TRUTH of the Lord” (Psa 117:2); “the TRUTH of Christ” (2 Cor 11:10); “the TRUTH of the Gospel” (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

Lesson 36 of 37

#### WHEN THE WHOLE IS SEEN, THE ASPECTS ARE PERCEPTIBLE

The Word of God places a high priority on spiritual UNDERSTANDING; comprehending from God’s point of view. "Brethren, be not children in UNDERSTANDING: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in UNDERSTANDING be men." (1 Cor 14:20); "The eyes of your UNDERSTANDING being enlightened; that ye may know . . ." (Eph 1:18); "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to COMPREHEND with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height (Eph 3:17-19); "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but UNDERSTANDING what the will of the Lord is" (Eph 5:17); "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual UNDERSTANDING" (Col 1:9).

The key to understanding what men should do, is to understand what God has purposed to do, and is doing. When the whole is seen, the parts are understandable, or WHEN THE WHOLE IS SEEN, THE ASPECTS ARE PERCEPTIBLE.

In the world, learning is from the bottom up, from the simplistic to the deep, from the elementary to the profound, from the rudimentary to the primary. In nature, it is when we begin to exit from darkness that we commence to see light. However, this is NOT how “all things pertaining to life and godliness” are learned (2 Pet 1:3). In the Kingdom of God the principle is, "For with Thee is the fountain of life: IN THY LIGHT WE SEE LIGHT" (Psa 36:9). A proper perception of mankind, the human condition, and the obligations imposed upon men are clearly seen IN LIGHT OF GOD AND CHRIST. When we perceive what God is doing, what is required of us makes sense. Thus, unlike the world, valid spiritual learning is from the top down.

All preaching that is from the bottom up, dealing first with the simplistic, and then with the profound is actually fruitless. In spiritual life, one CANNOT make the transition from the simplistic to the profound. We know this from two revealed proclamations.

First, it is true, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom 1:20). Yet, no person was ever able to reason from the seen creation to the eternal God. They could not reason from the inferior to the superior. The 2,500 years from creation to the giving of the Law unquestionably confirmed this.

Second, in the Law of Moses, the emphasis was placed on human duty. Men were told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. This ranged from sewing and plowing, to keeping the Sabbath day and various feasts. They were told what could be eaten, and what could not be eaten; when to observe special feasts, and what was to be done during them. But those with whom the covenant was made were unable to move from rules to the Ruler, and from commandments to the Commander. They could not reason from deliverances to the Deliverer. They could not come to know God from the bottom up – the simplistic to the profound.

However, in Christ learning is achieved from the top down – from the profound to the simplistic, and from the Greater to the lesser. What men should do does not make sense until what God has purposed, has done, and is doing are known. "For with Thee is the fountain of life: IN THY LIGHT WE SEE LIGHT" (Psa 36:9). The Gospel is a declaration of what God has done, not what men should do. Everyone of record who believed that report obeyed the Gospel – and there are no exceptions. "For with Thee is the fountain of life: IN THY LIGHT WE SEE LIGHT" (Psa 36:9).

Personal opinions may be protected by the United States Constitution, but they have little value in God's kingdom. The Apostle to the Gentiles prayed for their understanding. He knew if they did not perceive the will of the Lord, they were not likely to become involved in it – an absolute requisite to being advantaged by it. Paul did not deliver a form of spiritual nursery rhymes to them, but declared "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8), telling them what the Lord had done (ex, Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 2:9-10; 6:19; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:4-9; 2:10; 2 Thess 2:13). "For with Thee is the fountain of life: IN THY LIGHT WE SEE LIGHT" (Psa 36:9).

Peter addressed this same subject in his counsel to dispersed believers. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, UNTIL the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet 1:19). Mark it well, the day could never dawn if the truth was not interrelated! The dawning of light upon the soul occurs when things "fit together" in our understanding; when a more complete picture is seen! This is seeing light in the light! As it is written, "For with Thee is the fountain of life: in THY LIGHT shall we see light" (Psa 36:9).

## THE INTER-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRUTH

"... the TRUTH of God" (Rom 1:25; 3:7; 15:8); "the TRUTH of the Lord" (Psa 117:2); "the TRUTH of Christ" (2 Cor 11:10); "the TRUTH of the Gospel" (Gal 2:5.14; Col 1:5).

## CONCLUSION

Prior to Christ, men were directed by precepts – codified rules. They were commanded what to do, when to do it, where to do it, and how to do it. These “precepts” are also called “ordinances” (Col 2:14; Heb 9:1). These ordinances constitute the ceremonial law, or HOW the people were to fulfill the demands of the Law itself. The Law commanded them to love the Lord with all of their heart (Deut 6:5), and the ordinances told them precisely how that was to be done (Deut 4:40; 7:11; 8:11). They were commanded by the Law to keep the Sabbath day holy (Ex 20:8), and the ordinances told them how to do it (Ex 20:9-10; 23:12-17; 31:15).

This arrangement was necessary because sin had dulled man’s spiritual capacity, as well as his appetite, for the truth. He could not reason soundly, and thus tended to wander into forbidden areas. Because wandering into forbidden areas provoked the Lord to anger, He hedged them in by ordinances to keep His wrath from destroying them. Frequently, a plague would break out killing thousands of the Israelites (Ex 32:28; Num 16:31-35,49; 25:50). If it were not for the “ordinances” – the details on how to keep the commandments – Israel would have become extinct.

However, in Christ the fuller picture is seen, and in light of that vision, men leave sin willingly and engage in a quest for Divine blessing. Their spiritual vision is what compels them – even more than a sense of duty or obligation. They are instructed from within, not from without – led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14), and taught by Christ (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20). This inward leading and instruction are possible because in Christ men receive a “new heart” and a “new spirit,” as prophesied by Ezekiel (Ezek 36:26). In the New Covenant, God’s “laws” are “put into their hearts” and “written in their minds” (Heb 10:16). Both God the Father and Jesus Christ make their abode within them (John 14:23) – something that did not take place under the Law. They possess a “new man,” which is to be “put on,” and “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). They have been “called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9). God has promised that if they will “be separate,” He “will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Cor 6:16). That very real condition, which is realized in Christ Jesus, alters how men live.

Further, in view of the destruction of the world and the coming judgement, it makes sense to “abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul” (1 Pet 2:11). Too, the awareness that an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom” can be possessed (2 Pet 2:11) makes an aggressive stance for Jesus and truth sensible, possible, and preferable.

All revelation fits together because it rests upon a single foundation – the purpose of God. Blessed is the individual who sees this! For such, the Word of God comes alive, refreshing and sustaining to the soul. Righteous, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit thus become realities, not points of argumentation, to those who see plainly (Rom 14:17). However, for those who choose to live by rules instead of by faith, life becomes tedious, tasteless, and hopeless.

– Given O. Blakely