

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus cannot possibly be exalted any higher than when He returned to heaven, and was seated at the right hand of God. It is written of His exaltation:

1. ALL POWER IS GIVEN TO HIM. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt 28:18).

2. HE HAS BEEN MADE BOTH LORD AND CHRIST. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

3. HE IS LORD OF ALL. "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36).

4. HE IS FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every

name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." (Eph 1:20-22).

5. HE IS HIGHLY EXALTED, WITH A NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

6. HIGHER POWERS ARE SUBJECT TO HIM. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet 3:22).

I hardly see how the absolute superiority of Christ could be stated with any more clarity. Let it be clear, a Jesus who is waiting to reign is NOT the real Jesus. A Jesus who has not yet assumed the rule of the Kingdom is NOT the real Jesus. The reason for this circumstance should be abundantly evident: salvation requires a Savior that is the unquestionable and uncontested King!

The subduing of inimical forces has never been an issue with God. Jesus will decimate the worst of all enemies by simply showing up in all of His glory. It is written, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and SHALL DESTROY with the brightness of His coming" (2 Th 2:8). His coming is the moment when all of His enemies will be openly and unquestionable subject to Him – whether they want to be or not (1 Cor 15:28).

There is a phenomenal amount of stilted theology that presents Jesus as not yet reigning, not yet King, and waiting on the sidelines until He returns to earth to set up His Kingdom. All such theology

is a reproach to the real Christ, and constitutes a practical denial of His present exaltation. It also obscures the fact that Jesus is primarily a Savior, and that His dominion is in order to bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10), not conquering the foe. He has already delivered the death blow to Satan, the arch-foe, doing so at His weakest point – His death (Heb 2:14). No battle of any sort is required bring an abrupt end to Satan’s activities. Divine glory will accomplish that task (2 Thess 2:8-9).

This series of devotions will accent the superiority and centrality of Jesus Christ. It will also affirm the absolute necessity of knowing these things, and living with an acute consciousness of them.

Over twenty-five times the Lord said to Israel, “and ye shall know that I AM THE LORD.” In addition, the reason for Divine injunctions was often said to be “that ye might know that I AM THE LORD” (Deut. 29:6). Again it is written, “that thou mightest know that THE LORD, HE IS GOD” (Deut. 4:35). This is the language of Divine objective – the heart of God’s Kingdom!

The knowledge of God reaches its highest potential in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Here God is seen, and His objectives perceived, most clearly. There is less mystery, fewer areas of vagueness, and more lengthy development of Divine motivations.

The writing pertaining to Jesus and the New Covenant are considerably less in volume than those of the Old Testament – Moses and the Prophets. Quantitatively, the New Testament writings contain only 41 percent of the number of books in the Bible, 28 percent of the number of chapters, 31 percent of the

number of pages, 34 percent of the verses, and 30 percent of the words. Yet, who would dare to declare that it had less content, fewer truths, or decreased insights?

Where understanding is prevalent fewer words are required, less demonstration is necessary, and the requirement for rules is diminished. In confirmation of this, the Apostle summed up the social aspects of the Decalogue: "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Rom. 13:9).

The prevalence of "spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9) during this "day of salvation" is completely attributable to the Lord Jesus Christ – God's Administrator! He has, by His death and resurrection, produced the basis for the opening of the "eyes of the understanding" (Eph. 1:18), and now He is administrating an "understanding" through the appointed means of His Word (I John 5:20).

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Chapter 2

IN CHRIST, MEN ARE FREE TO RECEIVE THE BLESSING

Under the Law, with no provision for the remission of sins, God could not bless men as He does in Christ. Man, in general, did not have a heart to serve God. Even when the children of Israel were at the peak of willingness, they fell woefully short of the Divine objective. In his rehearsal of the covenant God made with Israel at Horeb (Deut. 5:1), Moses reminded the people of their commitment. “And ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice . . . speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it” (Deut. 5:27). Noble aspiration, indeed!

Moses recalled God’s assessment of the situation: “I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them forever” (Deut. 5:28-29). God, Who requires purity of heart, could not confer the blessing of eternal life on those people!

The situation, however, has changed in Christ. He has been appointed to announce the liberation of man. That day in an obscure synagogue in Nazareth, “where He had been brought up,” Jesus proclaimed His mission. Having been given “the book of the prophet Isaiah,” He opened it, and “found the place where it was

written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:17-19). Isaiah’s prophecy spoke of the proclamation of “liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isa. 61:1). The freedom which Jesus proclaimed was real – it was not just a figure of speech.

This was not political freedom or moral license. It was a spiritual freedom in which men were liberated to appropriate the Divine provision of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Sin, which prohibited the reception of these benefits, has been removed by Christ. God “condemned sin in the flesh” of His only begotten Son (Rom. 8:3). The condemnation was so thorough that, where there is faith, God no longer credits man with those trespasses. The Apostle confirmed this in his proclamation of the Gospel. “All things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them . . .” [but unto Christ] (2 Cor. 5:18-19). It only remains for man to accept this reconciliation by belief of, and obedience to, the Gospel. That is what is involved in that admonition, “be ye reconciled unto God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Those who feel they are unable to obtain salvation have been deceived by the Devil. All men are able to appropriate salvation; their failure to do so is not because of inability, but deception and unwillingness. “But if our gospel be hid,” declared the Apostle, “it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4). With sin removed and the “strong man” bound, it but remains for

man – any man – to assert himself by believing the record God has given of His Son (I John 5:10-11). Men who do not avail themselves of salvation have been blinded to the freedom which Christ's death has obtained.

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Chapter 3

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BLESSING

"All things are delivered to me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Luke 10:22)

Until the appointed destruction of the heavens and the earth, a Mediator, or Administrator, is required for man to appropriate eternal life and everything that pertains to it. Man – any man – cannot, by his own ability or achievement, climb high enough to reach what God has to give. Further, God, because of His infinite holiness, cannot compromise His character to give it. The blessing

must come through a Divinely appointed Administrator! Someone must confer the benefit in behalf of God. Jesus is that Administrator! I am using the word “Administrator” as the one who makes the primary decisions, and dispenses the determined blessing. God has given everything into the hands of Jesus, as He Himself affirmed. In our text Jesus carries the matter even further. He states that no man “knows who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” That is, no man can go directly to God for the appropriation of what He dispenses to men.

Only the Son really knows the Father AND “he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” In Matthew’s record of this account, the desire of Jesus to make the Father known is revealed. After stating the fact made known in our text, Jesus immediately said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of [from] Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” (Mat 11:28-30). Jesus is eager to make the Father known to all who will come to Him – those who have a burden to know the Lord, and are heavy laden with holy desires they cannot fulfill on their own.

John speaks of this arrangement in his first epistle, doing so with a holy confidence and boldness: “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). The God that is known through the teaching Jesus is the real God – the “true God.” All other gods are false.

Think of the many affirmations of this truth. We have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). The gift of

“eternal life” is declared to be “through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:23). The “kindness” that has been exhibited by God toward man has been “through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). He is the Divine Administrator!

We enter into the spiritual presence of God “by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19), coming unto God “by Him” (Heb. 7:25). Our spiritual sacrifices are made acceptable to God “by Him” (Heb. 13:15). Men are “rooted and built up in Him” (Col. 2:7) with no hope of spiritual stability apart from intimacy with Him. That is why God has “called us unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9). Peace comes “by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36). Grace “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 5:21). God has “reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 5:18). He is declared to have “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph 1:5). The “fruits of righteousness . . . are by Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:11). The “spiritual sacrifices” that we offer are made “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are “hid” in Christ (Col 2:2-3).

The redemption we have is “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24). We even “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:11), and are “alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 6:11). When it comes to eternal life, it is written, “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23). There is no point in the life of faith where absolute dependency upon Jesus Christ ceases. There is no facet of spiritual life that can be enjoyed through human effort alone.

But what does all of this mean, and how is it to impact our

understanding? If what I have written is true, there is no form of human wisdom that can give a person an advantage with God, or make him a more competent minister of God. Whatever can be gained from theological schools, research, and plans developed by men, cannot make a person more godly, more acceptable to God, and more proficient in building upon the foundation. The plans and benefits created by men cannot penetrate the Kingdom of God or be successfully merged with it. They can give no advantage beyond this life, and they cannot be added to the Divine arsenal. And why is this so? Because everything has been given into the hand of Christ – and that sole Giver is God Almighty Himself. If you want anything from God, you have to go to Jesus! If you want to come to God, or present something to God, you have to go through Jesus to do so.

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Chapter 4

A NEW KIND OF MEDIATOR

The righteousness of God and the defilement of man necessitated a

mediator. The requirement is not one of mere formality, but of practicality. The objective of the mediator is to stand between two parties. Here are the facts: 1. The superior party has been offended by the inferior one. 2. A reconciliation is desired by the One offended. 3. The requirements of the offended One are to be met. 4. The offers of the offended one are to be apprehended. 5. The needs of the offending ones must be met.

The concept of a mediator presumes that there is a benefit to be ministered, a willingness for it to be conferred, and a desire for it to be received. Kindness and consideration are the environment in which the mediator operates. Wrath and indignation are what is avoided by having a mediator.

MOSES AS MEDIATOR

The first appointed mediator between God and men was Moses. While the word “mediator” is not used in the writings of “Moses and the prophets” (Luke 16:29), the concept was developed under the old covenant. Paul spoke of Moses when he wrote, “. . . and it [the Law] was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19). Moses brought the “words of the covenant” (Deut. 29:1), or the “tables of the covenant” (Deut. 9:9-15), to the people. He mediated the Law! John, writing of the role Moses played as mediator, said, “For the law was given by Moses . . .” (John 1:17).

There is a close affiliation between Moses and the Law which he mediated. This is perceived in the various references made to the Law by Jesus and the Apostles. Jesus referred to those who proclaimed the Law as those that “sit in Moses’ seat” (Matt. 23:2). He also said to the doubting multitudes, “Did not Moses give you the Law . . .?” (John 7:19), again referring to it as “the Law of

Moses” in John 7:23. Paul, in one of his early defenses, also mentioned “the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39), and the writer of Hebrews wrote of those that “despised Moses’ Law” (Heb. 10:28).

Moses mediated between two unreconciled parties – Jehovah God and Israel. Though chosen by God (Deut. 7:7) and blessed by Him, Israel was basically at variance with God. An atonement had not been made for their sin, their thoughts and ways were at variance with God’s, and their primary concerns were focused on themselves.

When they came out of Egypt and faced the Red Sea, their rebel-hearts surfaced; “For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exod. 14:11-12), they cried. Later, when finding bitter waters, they murmured at the waters of Marah (Exod. 15:23). Again, they murmured because of the lack of food (Exod. 16:2,3), and for want of water at Rephidim (Ex. 17:2-7). They continued to murmur when the unbelieving spies brought back a report that contradicted God’s promise to give them Canaan (Num. 14:1-5).

Not content with Moses, they also murmured against him and his brother Aaron (Num. 16:41-50). A second time they murmured because of the lack of water at Meribah (Num. 20:1-12). The history of this people is cluttered with expressions of rebellion and enmity. Moses upbraided them when he said, “Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you” (Deut. 9:24). In his valedictory address, his memory became his enemy as he confessed, “For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death” (Deut. 31:27).

The church is admonished to zealously avoid being like Israel. They are not notable examples for those that live by faith! “We should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them. . . . Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed. . . . Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted. . . . Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured . . .” (I Cor. 10:6-10). The curses brought against them were a commentary on the magnitude of their transgression. “And fell in one day three and twenty thousand . . . were destroyed of serpents . . . and were destroyed of the destroyer. . . .”

These things occurred because no reconciliation had been accomplished. There were overt blessings – water, bread, and meat; but they were alienated from God! God led them, fed them, and protected them – but they rebelled against Him! He gave them His Law, making it unquestionably plain, and they straightway broke it! They were unreconciled to Him, and that condition required a mediator – else they would have been destroyed!

Moses’ mediatorship was primarily to God in behalf of the people. Apart from the “giving of the Law” and its associated ordinances, he brought little to the people from God. His “rod” seemed to serve their desires more than the words of his mouth which had been provided by God.

More than once God’s anger waxed hot against these people. It was His appointed mediator, Moses – knowledgeable of the Divine ways – that turned His fierce anger from them.

The giving of the Law provided the most arresting physical environment for Divine communication the world had ever seen. “The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel . . . the hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in. . . . The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Psa. 68:8,17).

Over 700 years after the giving of the Law, Habakkuk wrote, “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise, and His brightness was as the light . . .” (Hab. 3:3-4). It was an event without parallel, as those mountain ranges lit up with the glory of God and the earth convulsed at His presence. Surely it was something that would never be forgotten! Would not the fear of the Lord control the nation of Israel?

An alienated heart cannot maintain a remembrance of truth! This is illustrated in Israel’s conduct following the display of God’s glory in the giving of the law. Before Moses had come down from the mount, they had become involved in idolatry (Exod. 32:6; I Cor. 10:7). God, witnessing their actions “said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let Me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation” (Ex, 32:9-10). It is fortunate for Israel that Moses was not like many leaders of our day. In such a case, he would have piously said, “the will of the Lord be done.” Instead, Moses pled for the people. “Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?” After reminding God that the Egyptians

would conclude that He had delivered Israel only to destroy them, Moses said, “Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of the evil against Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. . . .” The Divine response – “And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people” (Exod. 32:11-14).

A second similar occasion occurred when Israel rejected the faithful testimony of Joshua and Caleb, seeking to stone them with stones. Again the Lord told Moses He would “smite them with a pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and a mightier than they.” Again, Moses mediated for the people, pleading, “Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy . . . And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word” (Num. 14:10-20). Moses was a mighty mediator!

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Chapter 5

BENEFITS FOR REBELS

The Divine provision of benefits for rebels is an Old Testament concept. The condition existed then because of a lack of man's reconciliation to God. Further, the benefits that were given to them were temporal, not eternal. Eternal blessings cannot be ministered to alienated hearts – that would involve a contradiction of God's character.

In the remarkable declaration of the promises made to Israel (Deut 28), there is not a single one that does not pertain to this present world. There is no promise of eternal life, inner strength, inner peace, or newness of life –not a single one. And even those promises were conditioned upon perfect, unwavering and absolutely consistent obedience (Deut 28:1; 11:13; 15:5; 15:26; Lev 26:3).

The Divine provisions that were given to Israel were all external – temporal. Deliverance (Exod. 14-15), water (Psa. 78:16), bread (John 6:31), meat (Psa. 78:25-30), raiment (Deut. 8:4), a physical tabernacle (Heb. 8-9), and military victory (Num. 21:1-3,21-32,33-35). Notwithstanding all of these advantages, they remained rebellious and obstinate. Moses correctly called them “rebels” when they “provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips” (Psa. 106:33; Num. 20:10). They are referred to as “rebels,” “rebellious” (Deut. 9:7,24), “stubborn” (Psa. 78:8) “stiffnecked” (Exod. 32:9), “stiffhearted” (Ezek. 2:4), “disobedient” (Rom. 10:21), and “gainsaying” (Rom. 10:21) – certainly not complementary or God-glorifying expressions!

Thus was Moses' mediatorship one of heartbreak to him, and pacification to the people. No eternal benefits, and no involvement

with God for the people. Their only hope was for Moses to stand between them and the God from Whom they were estranged!

Several brief observations are in order.

1. Overt demonstrations of Divine power have no lasting effect upon the hearts of even a covenanted people. They could walk out of Egypt after 430 years, without so much as a dog barking against them (Ex 11:7), safely cross through the Red Sea on dry ground (Ex 14:16), and murmur not long afterward (Ex 15:24). They could receive miraculous bread from heaven every day (Ex 16:4-5), adequately providing the appetite of everyone in the congregation (Num 16:16-18), and yet complain about having to eat manna (Num 21:5). They could drink water that miraculously flowed like a river out of a rock of flint (Psa 78:16), yet think they were going to die of thirst later (Ex 17:6; Num 20:2-5). Overt chastisements did not change them – chastisements like 24,000 dying in a single plague (Num 25:8). In another pestilence sent by the Lord, 70,000 men died (2 Sam 24:15). People are not renewed within by visible sights and experiences.

2. God is incensed by the rebellion of those to whom He has revealed Himself. With overwhelming consistency, the reaction of God to Israel's waywardness is chronicled. He revealed to Moses that He could not "clear the guilty" (Ex 34:7), and announced through Nahum that He could not "acquit" them (Nah 10:14). He responded to their demand for meat by sending them a gigantic supply of quail, then slaying the people while they were chewing the meat (Num 11:30-33). 14,700 people died of a God-sent plague when Korah and his rebels raised a rebellion against Moses (Num 16:49). Over and over, it is written that "the anger of the Lord was kindled" against Israel (Num 11:10; 12:9; 25:3-4; 32:14; Josh 7:1;

Judges 2:14,20; 3:8; 10:7; 2 Sam 24:1). Like it or not, this was a revelation of God's righteous character, and God does not change (Mal 3:6).

3. Moses stood between a holy God and an unholy people. This was the nature of Moses' mediatorship. He stood between the people and God, turning away, as it were, His fierce anger from the people (Ex 32:9-14; Deut 9:13-20).

4. Without Moses the mediator, Israel would surely have been destroyed, as affirmed in the above texts.

5. The temporal benefits provided to Israel were due more to Moses and his mediatorship than to Israel's receptivity toward God's word.

We will establish in this series that this is NOT the kind of Mediator Jesus is. In this day of India- rubber theology, some have been persuaded that this is still how God deals with His people, giving benefits to rebels. However, this is not at all the case. In the salvation of God, the nature of the people is changed so that they no longer love sin, but rather have a basic inclination toward the Lord. The righteousness of the Law is even fulfilled in them (Rom 8:1,4).

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Chapter 6

A MEDIATOR OF ONE

In Christ, we have a new kind of Mediator – One that ministers under a new set of Divinely ordered circumstances. In his declaration of the glorious provisions of the new covenant, Paul writes, “Now a mediator is not the mediator of one, but God is one” (Gal. 3:20). He is making a comparison between the mediatorship of Moses, and that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses was a mediator of two – God and the people. He mediated a covenant that depended upon both God and the people. God set forth the requirements, and the people agreed to thoroughly meet them (Ex 19:7-8). In Moses’ mediatorship, the promise of life from God was a response to the obedience of the people – not the mediation of Moses: “Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord” (Lev. 18:5; Neh 9:29; Ezek 20:11,13,21; Matt 19:17; Lk 10:28; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12). The plan was straightforward: perfect obedience brought the blessing – and there was no promise of the blessing until there was complete obedience (Ex 15:26; Lev 20:22; Deut 5:29; 6:2; 11:8,22; 13:18; 19:9)! No Savior was provided. No remedy was given for transgression. No allowance was made for errors of judgment! Life was to be had, but must be earned under the Law –

earned by perfect, unwavering, and absolutely consistent obedience. A single infraction voided the covenant – just as James pointed out (James 2:10)!

But in the case of the New Covenant, “the inheritance” is not of the law, but by promise, or Divine commitment. “For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. 3:18). The Law was actually an intermediate provision, given to prepare men for the promised Savior. “Wherefore then serves the Law? It was added [to the Abrahamic promise] because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19).

Under the “old testament” (2 Cor. 3:14). The covenantal promise of life was made to Israel, conditioned on their perfect obedience. Under the new covenant, the promise “was made” to the “Seed,” Jesus Christ. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of ONE, And to thy Seed, WHICH IS CHRIST” (Gal. 3:16). Now those that are “in Christ” obtain the promise – not by virtue of their fulfillment of the law – but because of their union with Christ. “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). Since the resurrection of Christ, eternal life is never declared apart from Him!

In the promise of the covenantal blessing to Abraham, no one stood between God and him. There was no mediator like Moses to insure that the promise would be fulfilled to Abraham. God made the commitment without a “Daysman,” so to speak (Job 9:33).

“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Gen. 18:18). Under the Law, God’s distance from the people required the presence of an earthly mediator between Him and the people. But in the covenantal promise of universal blessing to Abraham, no mediator was employed!

Jesus did not come into the world as the result of mediatorial pleading! He was not sent because God was urged by another to send Him! The coming of the Savior was not contingent upon obedience, seeking, or devotion to the Law! Were that the case, He never would have come! A mediator-less promise was given to Abraham! Wonderful truth!

Thus we read, "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Gal 3:20). The covenantal agreement was made between the Father and the Son – The Almighty God and Jesus Christ, who are both “One” (John 10:30). THEN JESUS HIMSELF WAS GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE AS A COVENANT. This was according to God’s own promise: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . I the LORD have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles" (Isa 42:1,6).

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 7

GOD AND MAN RECONCILED

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." (Col 1:21)

In a very real sense, Jesus is the Mediator of "One," He is not bridging the gap between two alienated parties. He has reconciled men to God by means of His vicarious death, thus making us "one" in Him (John 17:11,21,22; I Cor. 6:17)! His mediatorship is not necessary because of a moral or spiritual gulf between God and man, but because of the incompatibility of the eternal order with the temporal one. While we are "at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight)" (2 Cor. 5:6-7). This is the condition that requires our Mediator! For those in Christ, moral liability and weakness is all traced to the fact that they remain "in the body" (Heb 13:3). That is why the body is referred to as a "vile body" (Phil 3:20-21), a "house of clay" (Job 4:19), "this corruptible" (1 Cor 15:53), "the body of this death" (Rom 7:24), and an "earthly house of this tabernacle" (2 Cor 5:1). It is why the body has been "bought with a price" (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 1:14), and will be "redeemed" in the resurrection of the dead (Eph 1:14; Rom 8:23).

Further, Christ's mediation applies only to those who are "in Him" (Col. 2:6-10; I John 2:5-10) – to those who have already been "reconciled" (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:21). Jesus is not pleading for those who are alienated from God! He Himself said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me" (John 17:9). He is ministering covenant benefits to those who have been reconciled to God by His death! Their faith appropriates what He gives by mediation!

Jesus is mediating the New Covenant, and that applies only to those who are in Christ Jesus. He is "the Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6). It is revealed that this mediation is in order that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). Our affiliation with the Mediator, as well as the benefits conferred by the Mediator, are realized AFTER we have come into redemptive affiliation with the Lord. Thus it is written, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, AND to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb 12:22-24).

In a very real sense, involvement in the mediation of Jesus is the result of being reconciled to God through Him. That is why believers are told, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did

beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor 5:18-21).

How blessed to know that those who are reconciled to God have a Mediator between them and God who is dispensing the benefits of the Covenant to the reconciled ones, and is bringing them to God and glory as well (1 Pet 3:18; Heb 2:10).

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

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Chapter 8

THE WILLINGNESS OF BELIEVERS

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." (Psa 110:3)

The history of Israel confirms the weakness and stubbornness of their wills. Speaking of their wills, it is written, "And yet they WOULD NOT hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods" (Judg 2:17); "'Notwithstanding they WOULD NOT hear, but hardened their necks" (2 Kgs 17:14); "they WOULD NOT give ear" (2 Chron 24:19); "To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they WOULD NOT hear" (Isa 28:12); "they WOULD NOT walk in His ways" (Isa 42:24).

In a Divine lament the Lord said, "'But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me" (Psa 81:11). Other versions read, "would have none of Me" (NKJV), "did not obey me (NASB), and "would not submit to Me" (NIV). In other words, they wanted nothing to do with God. His Word meant nothing to them because they did not have a preference for it, or a desire to hear it. There were exceptions to the rule – like Moses, Aaron, David, and the holy prophets. But they were exceptions.

Unwillingness is involved in the heart of unregenerate being "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9). Further, this was said of the people in covenant with God, whom He loved (Deut 23:5), who were a "special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut 7:6). He chose them "above all people" (Deut 10:15) – choosing them to be a "peculiar people unto Himself, above all nations that are upon the earth" (Deut 14:2).

This is the manner of an unregenerate people, even when unprecedented blessings have been lavished upon them. When the heart is not made new, and people remain fundamentally unchanged in their nature, they develop and culture a preference

for living without God –without His direction, and apart from His will.

There is a theology that states this heart-trait is true of “Christians” – it is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” But this is not true, and is a contradiction of what God has revealed about the heart of those who are in Christ Jesus. Through Ezekiel God spoke of a time when He would give men a “new heart” and a “new spirit.” "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezek 36:26-27). That promise is fulfilled in Christ Jesus, where a “new creation” takes place (2 Cor 5:17), and a “new man” is given (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

The Psalmist spoke of this time in the 110th Psalm – a Messianic Psalm that foretold the coming and exaltation of the Savior. Hebrews 1:13 and 10:13 quote the first verse of this Psalm as applying to Jesus. Hebrews 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,17,21 quote the fourth verse of this Psalm, applying it to Jesus. The phrase, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power,” applies to those who are beneficiaries of the reign of King Jesus.

While Israel was not willing, those in Christ are identified by willingness to please God. How often it is expressed in Scripture. “We are . . . willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8); “. . . for to will is present with me . . .” (Rom. 7:18); “So then, with my mind, I myself serve the law of God” (Rom. 7:24). Under the new covenant, the very concept of obedience requires willingness. It is “with the heart” that “man believes unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10) – an

expression denoting voluntary submission. Under such an arrangement, the commandments of God “are not grievous” (I John 5:3) – something which could not be said under the first covenant, called “the ministration of condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:9). It is, after all, the one who “loves” Christ that “keeps His words” (John 14:15,23).

The unique willingness of those in Christ is not an indication of their superior achievement, but of the effectiveness of Christ’s achievement. The “Gospel of Christ” – the announcement of reconciliation – constrains willingness in all that believe and obey it! It is in this sense that it is said to be “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes” (Rom. 1:16). It is powerless to all others! Let us be clear about this, a people who are unwilling to live for the Lord are not considered His people.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

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Chapter 9

SONS OF GOD

Christ is the Mediator between God and His sons – quite different from the situation in which Moses found himself. Jesus does not bring water to rebels, nor plead for the stiff-necked! God’s people are not noted for being “stubborn,” “stiff-hearted,” and “alienated.” There is, unfortunately, much ministering in our day which assumes that this is the case – but it is not. Any enmity that exists between God and His children has been caused by a departure from God (Gal 1:6), and a desire for the world (James 4:4). There is now a very real union between God and those who live by faith. In Christ, men are “joined to the Lord” (I Cor. 6:17), and made “joint-heirs” with Him (Rom. 8:17).

One of the terms that most precisely reflects this relationship is “sons of God.” This is absolutely unique to the new covenant – the “day of salvation.” Hosea foretold a time when it would “come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the Living God” (Hosea 1:10). That was, however, a truth attended with great mystery in those days. The statement stands alone among the prophets; no other inspired man under the old covenant mentioned it.

Now, under the new covenant, those who through faith and obedience embrace the Son are called “the sons of God.” “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God . . .” (I John 3:1-2). Those who are led by the Spirit of God in the holy work of subduing fleshly inclinations are properly called “the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Devotion, further, to the matter of shining as lights in the midst of a “crooked and perverse nation,” constitutes a revelation of “the sons of God” (Phil. 2:15).

There is some disagreement among conservative theologians concerning whether the people of God are really the sons of God or not. The utter foolishness of such questioning is seen in the many assertions – plain assertions – that God has made concerning the subject. Jesus is bringing “many sons” to glory (Heb. 2:10), and it is “because ye are sons” that God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father” (Gal. 4:6). If God recognizes those in Christ as “sons,” who would dare to make Him a liar (I John 5:10) by questioning the reality or accuracy of His affirmation?

As the “sons of God,” those in Jesus become His “brethren.” Thus is it written, “For both He that sanctifieth [Jesus] and they who are sanctified [those “in Him”] are all of One [the Father]: for which cause He [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them [believers] brethren” (Heb. 2:11).

Those who are “joined to the Lord” have come into an area of blessing that is unequalled. The greatest godly men of prior ages coveted the status of the sons of God in their time, but did not realize it. Abraham was “the friend of God” (James 2:23), David was a “man after” God’s “heart” (I Sam. 13:14), and “Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7:28). This greatness is not due to personal achievement or superiority. In Christ – and in Him alone – we have been exalted to the status of God’s sons. While John was a giant standing in the valley of unfulfilled prophecy, even the “least in the Kingdom of God” is like a comparative midget standing upon the mountain of reconciliation. Excellence accompanies that position because men have been united with their Mediator.

What a glorious thing has transpired in Jesus! He now takes the things of God and, through the Spirit, and gives them to His own “body” (I Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18). What was impossible for Moses is both possible and reasonable in Christ. He now accomplishes what formerly was a logical impossibility – the ministration of benefits to God’s reconciled sons. Thus, in practicality, He is a “mediator of one.”

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

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Chapter 10

MEDIATING THE PURGED CONSCIENCE

The provisions of the new covenant have been clearly identified by both the prophets and the Apostles. The provisions consist of a Divine reaction to the appropriation of Christ’s work by faith. 1. “I will put My laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.” 2. “I will be to them a God, they shall be to Me a people.” 3. “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest.” The reason for the conferment of these blessings is also stated: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:10-12; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 10:16-17). Jesus now ministers these covenantal benefits to His “brethren.”

Both the greatness and the effectuality of His mediation are seen in the ministration of the “purged conscience” (Heb. 9:14). Legally, this is achieved by His blood; practically, it is accomplished by His Mediatorship. In this sense, “He is the Mediator of a better covenant” (Heb. 8:6) – “the Mediator of the New Testament” (Heb. 9:15), or “Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant” (Heb. 12:24).

The purging of the conscience is a pivotal aspect of the Glad tidings of good things. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14) . Here is a benefit that was not provided under the Law. Because there was no adequate offering for sin (Heb 10:4), there could be no cleansing of the conscience. Now, this purging results in the knowledge of God (2 Pet. 1:2), which is the “knowledge of salvation” in its fullest sense. God, in such a case, becomes “my Salvation” (Psa. 27:1; 62:2; 118:14; Isa. 12:2), and knowledgeably so. Salvation is then associated with God’s Person rather than mere external deliverance, as it was with Israel on the banks of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:2).

It is “the blood of Christ” that cleanses the conscience from the lethal contamination of “dead works.” But let us not miss the point

here: if Christ were not alive and mediating the New Covenant, there could be no purifying of the conscience! This purification is not the result of an intellectual embracement of a mere historical fact, but results from the ministration of that reality by a living Christ! “How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience . . . And for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament . . .” (Heb. 9:14-15).

When the heart has been persuaded of the effectuality of Christ’s death, and when that persuasion is followed by obedience to the Gospel, the “knowledge of salvation” is ministered by Christ. The Apostles referred to this “knowledge” in their use of the terms “assurance” (Col. 2:2; Heb. 6:11; 10:22), “confidence” (Eph. 3:12; Heb. 3:6,14), and “peace” (Rom. 15:13; Col. 3:15). John spoke of the “knowledge of salvation” when he wrote, “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God” (I John 3:21). Jesus is the Mediator of this benefit.

Tomorrow: “Receiving the Atonement”

PRAYER POINT: Father, in the name of Jesus I thank You for the purging of the conscience.
THE ADMINISTRATION OF JESUS

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Devotion 10 of 24

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Chapter 11

RECEIVING THE ATONEMENT

Another view of the purging of the conscience focuses on man's ACCEPTANCE of "the salvation of our God" (Psa. 98:3). Again, this activity is identified with the Mediator of the New Covenant. "And not only so, but we also joy in God THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ, BY WHOM we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11). Other versions read, "received the reconciliation" (NKJV), "we are now at peace with God" (BBE), "now have this restored relationship with God" (GWN), "has made us friends with God" (NLT). Older English versions use the word "atonement," while later versions use the word "reconciliation." As duly noted by Albert Barnes, atonement "was the ancient meaning of the English word atonement — A T O N E M E N T — being at one, or reconciled." The English definition of the word "atonement"

states that it is now “obsolete,” and meant “2: the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ; 3: reparation for an offense or injury” (MERRIAM-WEBSTER).

In any standard version of Scripture, the word “reconciliation” occurs, at the most, four times: Rom 5:11; 11:15 (KJV=“reconciling”); 2 Cor 5:18,19 (KJV=“reconciliation”).

In our text (Rom 5:11), the point being accented is THE MEANS of reconciliation rather than the reconciliation itself: “were reconciled to God BY the death of His Son” (Rom 5:10). In my own judgment, that act was described most accurately by the ancient English word “at-one-ment,” which accented the oneness with God that was realized in Christ Jesus.

Our text plainly affirmed that receiving the atonement is more than a mere human response. It is more than an act of the human will. It is “BY” Christ that we “receive the atonement,” and it is “THROUGH Him” that we do so while joying in God. Without the activity of the Lord Jesus there would be neither joying nor receiving of “the atonement,” which, in this case, is the means through which reconciliation is realized.

Without Jesus “the atonement” could not have been wrought or received! He is necessary for both its accomplishment and its reception. He accomplished it in His death; He ministers it by His life at God’s right hand. As it is written, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10). Under Christ’s supervision, the “atonement” becomes accessible to

men through faith. Were He not governing the Kingdom of God, men would strive in vain for experiential reconciliation. They could not appropriate the atonement, nor would God acknowledge it. The reception of reconciliation requires the ministration of a living and reigning Christ!

These days, the salvation of God is not often depicted as men being made “one” with the Lord – even though that is part of the apostolic doctrine:—i.e. “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17); “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17:21). Most generally, salvation is set forth as being forgiven of sin. That is, indeed, a vital aspect of salvation. However, the forgiveness of sins is in order to unanimity with God – agreement and accord with Him. It is that agreement that enables men to be united with one another, and the absence of that accord is what creates division.

This condition of oneness is also reflected in several poignant sayings of Scripture. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have THE MIND OF CHRIST” (1 Cor 2:16). “Let this mind be in you, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS” (Phil 2:5). “For we are made PARTAKERS OF CHRIST, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Heb 3:14). “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet 1:4).

Now, the question becomes, have you received that atonement? If so, it will be reflected in the way you think.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

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Chapter 12

HEARTS PURIFIED BY FAITH

The purging of the conscience from guilt (Heb 9:14) is also associated with saving faith. Faith, in this case, is the persuasion of the truth of God's testimony concerning His Son (I John 5:10-11).

In a discerning analysis of the conversion of the Gentiles, Peter interpreted their experience of salvation. In our time, you will not often hear conversion described in this manner. In fact, for the nominal Christian, this way of identifying salvation would probably never occur if it was not read directly from the Word of God. "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). Although there were external manifestations of the Spirit at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46), they were only

incidental. They were largely to attest to Peter and those with him that the Gentiles had been accepted. As Peter later explained, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17).

Another interesting thing here is that Peter said what occurred at the house of Cornelius was the same thing that occurred to himself and others on the day of Pentecost. He also said it was a response to words that were delivered so they could be saved. "And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 'who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17, NKJV). This exposes the falsity of the position that says only the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. It also shatters the view that this was limited to the empowerment to preach the Gospel. If either of these positions were true, Peter could not have explained the phenomenon that took place at the house of Cornelius as he did.

The real value of that occurrence is found in the statement concerning purification – the purifying of their hearts “by faith.” Peter reported this same event at the Jerusalem conference. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). He also stated that this was an evidence of the Gentiles being saved by grace (Acts 15:11). When James heard the report, he concluded

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). When the same report was given earlier in Jerusalem, the people "held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

The fact that the conversion of the Gentiles was described as being saved by grace, God taking a out a people for His name, and being granted repentance unto life, makes this case relevant to us. Those are descriptions of a process that is common to all believers. It is a reproach to the Savior and His redemption to become enamored of the appearances of that epochal occasion. Such appearances, though initiated by the Lord, were not even consistent during the first century of the church – but the purifying of the heart by faith was! It is that consistent work that is to be emphasized!

The purification of the heart and the purging of the conscience refer to the same thing. Purifying the heart emphasizes the appropriation of redemptive benefits, while the purging of the conscience emphasizes the removal of sin's contamination. Christ is the preeminent consideration in both views, and they are accomplished under His administration. From the Father's right hand, Jesus administers this cleansing by means of the truth of the Gospel. It is His life that gives the Gospel its power, and His authority that makes it applicable to man.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 13

PURIFIED BY OBEDIENCE

Obedience is an integral part of faith, and is indispensable to the realization of a pure heart, or purged conscience. Using the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19), Peter unlocked our understanding on this matter. "Seeing ye have purified your souls IN obeying the truth through the Spirit . . ." (I Pet. 1:22). Salvation so intimately and vitally involves man, that his own actions play a significant role in its accomplishment. It is true that this role is evidential, not foundational – but that by no means suggests obedience is optional. This exposes as a fable the view of man being unable to contribute to the realization of salvation. The purification of the heart is identified with man's obedience to the Gospel, as well as with the work of God Himself (Acts 15:9).

Man's obedience, however, is not independent of Divine influence. It is accomplished "through the Spirit," as He works in concert with man's spirit. His use of His sword – the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) – brings spiritual truth within the grasp of faith, thus making saving obedience possible.

The role of Jesus the Administrator in accomplishing this is vital.

Before His death, He promised His Apostles that He would send the Spirit. “When the Comforter is come Whom I will send you from the Father . . .” (John 15:26a). Again he testified, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you” (John 16:7). The basis for the sending of the Spirit was the sacrifice of Christ. This is the emphasis of Jesus’ words in John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name. . . .” Let it be clear that the Holy Spirit was not given to the apostles exclusively, although they received a unique measure of that Spirit. Although Jesus said He would send the Spirit to His apostles, yet, when He came, He declared, His convicting ministry is intended for “the world” (John 16:7-11). The Holy Spirit is also given to all who are in Christ Jesus (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 11:17; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).

It is “through” the Spirit that obedience – personal conformity to the truth – is rendered to God. Man’s initial entrance into God’s Kingdom occurs when, in baptism, he experiences the “answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Pet. 3:22). This is his introduction to the purging of the conscience. It is administered by the authority of the reigning Christ, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, by means of one’s obedience to the truth.

The working of the Spirit is what leads to true obedience: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, UNTO OBEDIENCE and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:2). Those who affirm the Holy Spirit has no role in salvation are simply wrong, and there is no nice way to say it.

Because the Holy Spirit works in concert with, and under the administration of Jesus, He is referred to as “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9; 1 Pet 1:11) and “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:19).

THE ADMINISTARTING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 14

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

This is the only text in all of apostolic doctrine that refers to the confession of sin. When the people were baptized by John, they did so “confessing their sins” (Matt 3:6; Mk 1:5). The baptism of John was for the remission of sins. As it is written, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS" (Mark 1:4). That is also one of

the reasons for baptism into Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

When Paul preached in Ephesus, “And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds” (Acts 19:18). The text continues, “Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19:19). James writes to a group of worldly-minded people who professed faith (James 4:4): “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Other versions read, “confess your sins” – although the conventional word for “sins” (*hamartia*) is not used here. In James the word used is “*paraptoma*,” which means “unintentional error” as well as “willful transgression.” It appears to refer to brother against brother. In fact, the context suggests that in praying for the sick some correlation was made between the sickness and sin – for sickness is sometimes the result of sin (1 Cor 11:29-30). Also, in James the objective of the confession is healing, not forgiveness.

At any rate, these are the texts we have to work with on this subject. The fewness of them forbids the development of an intricate doctrine about the confession of sins itself, as some have dared to do. In this treatise, I will deal with the confession of sin as it is mentioned in First John 1:9, our text for this devotion.

It is arresting to consider that the forgiveness of reference is owing to the justice, or righteousness, of God, as well as His faithfulness: “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Other versions read, “faithful and righteous” (NASB), “upright and true” (BBE), “trustworthy and just” (CJB), “faithful and reliable” (GWN), “trustworthy and upright” (NJB) “steadfast He is and righteous”

(NLT), and “faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises” (AMPLIFIED). Thus, the faithfulness and righteousness of God is a reason for the forgiveness of sin, as well as His love and grace! That indicates that the confession of sin, while imperative, is not the foundation for forgiveness. The foundation is God’s own nature – “faithful and just.” I gather that this is owing to the mediation of Jesus, which is based upon the effectiveness of His vicarious death.

The mediation of a purged conscience depends upon man’s acknowledgment of personal sin. “IF we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9). Elsewhere Paul speaks of the recovery of the sinner involving God giving him “repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim 2:25). I gather that this involves the confession, or admission, of sin. David confessed, “I have sinned against thee” (Psa 41:4), and “against Thee and Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight” (Psa 51:4).

The confession of sin is not a mere formality; it is something that involves man’s comprehension. God’s Kingdom is operating within a moral environment – among His intelligent offspring. The benefits of the Kingdom cannot be realized without the personal involvement of those for whom they are prepared. Sin interrupts fellowship with God (Isa 59:2), and that fellowship will not be restored until the offense is confessed, or acknowledged.

John teaches us that personal benefit from God’s justness and faithfulness depends upon our action – quite a different view from that of much contemporary theology. My point here, however, is that Jesus mediates this cleansing – it is His blood that relieves the conscience of guilt, and His reign of authority that brings it to a

conclusion. To be more precise, it is the persuasion of the atoning efficacy of His blood that relieves the conscience of the sense of alienating guilt.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 15

BOLDNESS BEFORE GOD

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16)

Yet another view of the purged conscience, or purified heart, is seen in our approach to God through Christ. Those "in Christ" are exhorted to "come **BOLDLY** unto the throne of grace . . ." (Heb. 4:16). Other versions read, "with confidence" (NASB), "without fear" (BBE), "confidently" (CJB), "with assurance" (MRD), "with freedom" (YLT), and "fearlessly, confidently, and boldly" (AMPLIFIED). This same admonition is stated another way in

Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . ." (Heb 10:22).

Coming from the word "parrhaysee," "boldly" has the following lexical meaning: "all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication assurance" (GINGRICH). You might refer to this as holy courage, or being free from debilitating fear. This is a most marvelous thing, because we are called to approach the Divine Throne in this posture – coming with confidence and assurance, free from inhibiting fear, and willing to bear our hearts and souls before the One seated upon this throne.

It is a Sovereign throne, and the One sitting upon it rules the universe, and does whatever He wills whenever He wants, no man forbidding or questioning Him. The One upon the throne is "God the Judge of all" (Heb 12:23), and nothing is hidden from Him. Yet, this is also a "throne of mercy," where mercy is dispensed at His discretion, and "grace to help" is meted out with Sovereign decision.

This boldness is proper, and acceptable with God. As it is written, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near . . ." (Heb. 10:19-22). "Having" boldness speaks of its availability to the believer, not necessarily of its realization. The redeemed are urged to possess what is theirs in Jesus!

This "boldness" is not brashness or presumption. It is the result of an awareness of one's acceptance with God in Christ. John put it this way, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we

confidence toward God” (I John 3:21). This confidence enables us to approach the Living God by faith, even though we have “sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). We do not ignore our sin, or pretend that we have not committed it. We come to God, through Christ, fully aware of our sin, yet not condemned in our conscience by it. This is the result of the mediation of Christ.

This is not a throne where negotiations take place, or compromises are realized. The nature of the One seated upon the throne is unchangeable (Mal 3:6). This is the same God who expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23-24). It is the One who sent the flood, destroying every living thing except those in the ark with Noah (Gen 7:21). It is the same God who sent plagues upon Israel for their disobedience (Ex 32:35; Num 16:49; 25:9; 2 Sam 24:15). This is the God who made and sent a fish to swallow Jonah, keeping him in its belly for three days (Jonah 1:17). It is the same God who struck down Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-10). It is the same God who mandated the death of Herod for refusing to give glory to God (Acts 12:21-23). This is the throne and the God we are admonished to approach boldly, confidently, and with much assurance!

How is it that we can, yes **MUST**, come boldly, confidently, and with much assurance before this throne? It is because of the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. Through the shedding of His blood. He has atoned for our sins, and now He stands between us and God to assure us we are welcome before this throne (1 Tim 2:5). Yes, there have been judgments mandated from this Throne – and there will be a final judgment when every person who has ever lived, including angels, will stand before this throne. But now – now in this day of salvation and time of Divine acceptance (2 Cor 6:2; Isa 49:8) – mercy and grace are being dispensed from this throne to all who come confidently before it!

The boldness, confidence, and assurance in which we come before this throne are the result of faith – believing that Jesus is everything God has declared Him to be, and has accomplished everything God has declared Him to have accomplished. Those who have believed “the record God gave of His Son” (1 John 5:10-11) will realize faith’s power and effectiveness. There are no exceptions to this rule!!

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 16

WRITING THE LAW UPON THE HEART

The promised covenant proclaimed, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart” (Jer. 31:33). The writer of Hebrews proclaimed this as a present reality in Christ. “But this Man [Jesus], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that He said before, This is the covenant

that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them . . . Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . .” (Heb. 10:12-21). The current rule of Christ is thus identified as the time when God is writing His law upon men’s hearts.

In his contrast of the old and new covenants, Paul makes a comparison of the types of inscriptions under both. The redeemed, he confirms, “are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us [the Apostles], written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3).

The law written in tables of stone mirrored the type of covenant it represented. It was one without comprehension, freedom, or growth. Those tables were “stony” – like the hearts of those to whom it was addressed (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26). They did not see the implications of the Law, and were unable to successfully and consistently adapt it to their lives. Their very best efforts could not produce a condition God describes as “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph 5:27), or being “blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke” (Phil 2:15).

That same law is now inscribed upon “fleshly tables of the heart” – hearts that are pulsating with Divine life (Gal. 2:20). It is now possible to have the “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” – without a meticulous list of approvals and prohibitions (Heb. 5:14). The law must be written in the heart, for instance, for one to successfully “. . . follow that which is good” and “abstain from all appearance of evil” (I Thess. 5:15,22) [Observe the absence of details in those Apostolic instructions.] However, those

who have the law written upon the “fleshly tables of the heart” can “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). How else, for example, could one ever hope to obey the exhortation, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 13:14)?

The “Apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42) is not a manual of procedures that identifies acceptable conduct, but a spiritual interpretation of Christ and the salvation which He has wrought. With a consistency befitting of the Kingdom of God, “do’s and don’ts” are presented incidentally. They are never the principal message or primary emphasis. It was not so, however, with the old covenant. The details of acceptable conduct were preeminent. The Apostolic emphasis reveals a new covenant, written in a new manner – upon the heart.

This by no means suggests that those in Christ are free to roam about in the field of disobedience and carnal pleasure. It does mean that those upon whose hearts the law has been written do not want to live in such a manner.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 17

TO WILL IS PRESENT WITH ME

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for TO WILL IS PRESENT WITH ME; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” (Rom 7:18). Other versions read, “I have the desire to do what is good” (LIVING), and “I can will what is right” (NRSV).

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law,” proclaimed the Apostle (Gal. 5:18). That leading is not mystical, but facilitated through a willing and discerning heart. The Spirit leads neither the ignorant nor the stubborn! Those possessing such traits “quench” and “grieve” the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). It is the “willing” that are given the promise of good (Isa. 1:18-19).

In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul confesses a sanctified will – “to will is present with me.” The seventh chapter of Romans is an exposition of the complex nature of man – one part being willing, and the other part suggesting thoughts that are contrary to that will. The saved person is a kind of dichotomy: One part is redeemed, while body is not yet redeemed (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14). One part serves the Lord, and one does now (Rom 7:25). This is a challenging circumstance that requires a measure of “spiritual understanding” to respond to it acceptably.

In Christ Jesus, true and consistent willingness is but another view

of the law being written upon the heart and placed in the mind. It is the underside of agreement. Believers are quick to admit that their achievement has not measured up to their wills. Their failures, however, are attributable to the weakness of their flesh, not the stubbornness or reluctance of their wills. Paul put it well when he wrote, “. . . for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good, I find not” (Rom. 7:18). That dilemma is created by the conflict of the flesh and the Spirit – not by a basic variance between the individual believer and his God. As it is written: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17).

The spirit of man has experienced reconciliation, but his fleshly, or earthly, nature has not. The body, together with the parts of man’s person that are wed to it, has yet to be renewed in the resurrection (Rom. 8:23). Until that time, an irreconcilable conflict exists between the old and new natures of the believer. The agreement of the will, however, makes one directable and acceptable to God in Christ.

David was in agreement with the Lord, and found delight in His commandments. How often he affirmed this to be true. “I myself delight in Thy statutes” (Psa. 119:16,65); “I delight in Thy commandments” (Psa. 119:47); “I delight in Thy law” (Psa. 119:70). Paul spoke for every person “in Christ,” when he said, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22). This “delight” prompts a hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6), and cannot be satisfied with the baubles of this world.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 18

THY LAW DO I LOVE

"I hate vain thoughts: but Thy law do I love" (Psa 119:113). "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God . . ." (Rom 7:25).

When the law is placed within the mind, and inscribed upon the heart, a deep love for it is realized. Israel, although they were chosen and blessed by God, "despised" God's judgments (Ezek. 20:16), His "statutes" (Ezek. 20:24), and His "Law" (Amos 2:4). Conversely, David spoke for believers when he said, "O how I love Thy law" (Psa. 119:97); ". . . Thy law do I love" (Psa. 119:113,163); ". . . I love Thy testimonies (Psa. 119:119); "I love Thy commands above gold" (Psa. 119:127). With a total lack of pretense he spoke with the Lord God, ". . . consider how I love Thy precepts" (Psa. 119:159).

John referred to this experience when he said, "For this is the love

of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Today it appears as though people are fond of saying they "love God" with all of their heart, yet they remain abysmally ignorant of His word. Such things cannot be! Loving God is directly related to loving and cherishing what He has said. A continued ignorance of His Word evidences that God Himself is not loved.

Paul spoke of this kind of love as receiving "the love of the truth" (I Thess. 2:10). He stated that such a love was in order that men may be saved. He spoke of the deceiver working successfully in such people: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, **THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED**" (2 Thess 2:10). Confirming the gravity of the situation, he also stated God would not ignore the failure of people to "receive" the love of the truth. The consequences are nothing less than damnation. "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 Th 2:11-12). Such people will not be free to reject the lie, but will be compelled to believe it, in order that God may justly condemn them – and that is a matter of revelation.

The enjoyment and satisfaction that are found in the words of His mouth evidence that the Law is upon the heart – and where such love is missing, there is no accord with God, no acceptance by God, and no salvation. No profession of identity with God can be confirmed without a corresponding love for the truth, for the commandments, and for the Word of God.

God's covenantal promise was, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Heb. 10:16). While delight and love are the results of the law being written upon the heart, a devotion to its consideration evidences its writing upon the mind. This is not a feigned love, institutional love, or mere profession of possessing a love for the word of the living God, or for God Himself. If it is possible for a person to be, what some call, "a new testament Christian," and yet not possess a love for the word and for the truth, then God has misrepresented Himself. Such a misrepresentation is totally impossible, for God "cannot lie" (Tit 1:2). There is a sense in which every person who does not have a love for the truth, and for whom the commandments are thus grievous, has a sign on his forehead that can be read by angels, and sensed by the godly: "I am an unbeliever, and do not love the truth."

Meditation in the precepts and statutes of God (Psa. 119:15,23,78) is an activity in which the God of heaven finds great delight. Not only did David, for instance, "love" the Law of the Lord; it was his "meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97,99). The contemplation of God's perspectives as revealed in His Word was the Psalmist's chosen occupation. Little wonder He was a man after God's own heart – a man in whom God greatly delighted (Acts 13:22).

Paul, in keeping with God's superior revelation in Christ, wrote; "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God . . ." (Rom 7:25). The law had been written in his heart – that is why he could delight in it. It had been written on his mind, that is why he could serve it.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 19

MEDIATING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"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)

The old covenant was not characterized by the "good knowledge of the Lord" (2 Chron. 30:22). Israel, with whom that covenant was made (Heb. 8:9), drew back from the covenant-making God because they were ignorant of Him and His ways. Their reaction to the giving of the words of the covenant at Mount Sinai, demonstrated the impact of that ignorance. "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but LET NOT GOD speak with us, lest we die" (Ex 20:18-19). The lack of knowledge of God – an ignorance of Him – dictated this response. God was not speaking to slay them, but to make covenant with them!

How often God spoke of Israel as a people who did NOT know Him.

1. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel DOTH NOT KNOW, my people doth not consider." (Isa 1:3)

2. "The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law KNEW ME NOT: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." (Jer 2:8)

3. "And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they KNOW NOT ME, saith the LORD." (Jer 9:3)

4. "Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they REFUSE TO KNOW ME, saith the LORD." (Jer 9:6)

5. "Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, NOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD in the land." (Hosea 4:1)

The new covenant, which incorporates the knowledge of God in its constituents, produces results that were in keeping with God's

“eternal purpose.” Men may now “come” to Him (Heb. 4:16), “draw near” to Him (Heb. 10:22), and “live by every word of God” (Luke 4:4) – characteristics quite different from those found under the old covenant!

Jesus is the Administrator of this knowledge, because He is the only One suited for such a task. He Himself said, “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Mat 11:27). If men wonder who Jesus is willing to teach, He continued, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mat 11:28).

John affirmed that Jesus “is come” – i.e. has come and is remaining – and is teaching us about God. “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). The true God is the One of whom Jesus Christ gives us an understanding. Paul alluded to this teaching when he wrote to the Ephesians, “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). The Ephesians did not hear Jesus when He went about among men, doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38). Jesus taught them from heaven, just as He does all of those who have been made accepted in Him (Eph 1:6).

Any other God is nothing more than an idol. Therefore John added, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1 John 5:21)

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 20

THEY SHALL ALL KNOW ME

“ . . . for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest . . . ” (Heb 8:11)

Under the old covenant, there were few individuals that possessed the knowledge of God. The masses were ignorant of Him, and thus alienated from Him (Jer 9:3,6). But it is not so under the new covenant. Of the new covenant, Jeremiah prophesied, “for they shall ALL know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Jer. 31:34). Paul confirmed that this has been fulfilled in Christ when he said of the new covenant, “For this is the covenant . . . for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. . . . In that he saith A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:10-13). In other words, the days of having some association with God without knowing Him are over! There simply is no such thing as a person who is accepted by God who

does not, to some degree, know Him.

Unlike the old covenant, the new one is not characterized by only a few individuals being acquainted with God. Under the old order, the priest – not the people – accomplished “the service of God” (Heb. 9:6). The high priest appeared “alone” before the Lord, and that only once a year (Heb. 9:7). Special prophets were also required for the discernment of God’s will (2 Chron. 26:5; 36:12; Jer. 7:25).

This was a consistent pattern under the Old Covenant. The mass of the people were largely anonymous. The whole of the people were sanctified by the few who dared to believe and obey the Lord. The people had to have a leader like Moses and a high priest like Aaron, or they would have been destroyed very near their commencement as a nation.

Tragically, this is true of almost all Christian “movements” – both historical and at the present. For example, the movement with which I have been identified is noted for its leaders, not its people. From its beginning, the people have never been noted for being holy (1 Pet 1:15-16), having their affection set on things above (Col 3:1-2), or looking for “that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:13). It has always been their leaders – their historical teachers and preachers – that have given any dignity to their movement. This circumstance is even true of large and effective movements, like the Reformation Movement, where some fundamental realities were rediscovered. Because of the lack of discernment among the mass of the people in such movements, few, if any, of them have successively passed to the second generation. The reason – God was not known by such bodies of people.

God is known by the perception of His will and objectives. These have been revealed in the Person of Christ and the words of Scripture – both of which are available to every man “in Christ.” Those who possess the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:8), and have availed themselves of “the scriptures which are able to make” them “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15) are “increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

This knowledge is so common in the new covenant, that those who do not possess it have cause to be shamed. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for all have not the knowledge of God: I speak this TO YOUR SHAME” (I Cor. 15:34). A deliberate involvement in sin is the only thing that will inhibit the knowledge of God – that is how profuse it is under the new covenant! There is, further, no excuse for being overcome by sin under Christ. This is the perspective from which God says, “They shall all know Me.”

It is time for those with understanding to come to grips with the seriousness of the people being fundamentally unacquainted with God. The absence of such knowledge is why they stumble through life like blind men. It is the cause for division, dissension, and the rise of immorality. It is why there is not a prevailing interest in the things of God, and an insatiable thirst for the Word of the Lord lacking. It is why people do not give of their substance to the Lord, and why they do not demand spiritual substance from their preachers and teachers. Further, one of the great transgressions of our day is the custom of tailoring Lord’s Day gatherings for those who do not know God, nor have evidenced a desire to know Him.

To confirm the centrality of knowing God, or the knowledge of

God, consider what can only be accessed by this knowledge.

1. Grace and peace are had in abundance through the knowledge of God: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." (2 Pet 1:2)

2. Although all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given to us, they can only be accessed through the knowledge of God: "According as his divine power hath 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)

3. The successful escape from the pollutions of the world is through the knowledge of the Lord: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." (2 Pet 2:20)

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 21

GIVING US AN UNDERSTANDING

Jesus is the Mediator of the knowledge of God. It is He that “is come, and has given us an understanding, that we might 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” (I John 5:20).

Jesus does not minister an academic understanding of God. God cannot be known in that manner. Illumination of this sort does not come from reading the books detailing the observations of men, but from God. As men effectively communicate the Word and promises of God, God will work through their endeavors – but only so. Divine tutelage flows out of man’s union with Deity. Those who are reconciled have been “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), “joined to the Lord” (I Cor. 6:17), and made “partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14). They have also been made “added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14), and are, through the promises of God, made “partakers of the Divine nature” (I Pet. 1:4). “He that abides in Christ, he has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). This is a relationship of faith, and out of it the knowledge of God is ministered by Christ.

The understanding of God – or the knowledge of God – “is life eternal” (I John 5:20b). Jesus Himself, when speaking to the Father, defined eternal life as knowing “the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent” (John 17:3).

This knowledge involves a certain acquaintance with God (Job

22:21) – a familiarity that enables the individual to discern God’s ways, preferences, hates, and desires. Of old time God expressed His desire to be known – a trait that no other god possesses. Through Jeremiah He said, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer 9:24). As much sense as it may make to some to glory in a formal religious advanced education – and even to receive credentials for it that separate the individual from the masses of believers – this text seems to me to forbid such glorying.

This kind of knowledge – knowing and understanding a person – even exists on an earthly level. For example, after being widowed in 1979, I remarried, and have remained with my wife, sister June, for thirty years. I have come to “know” and “understand her.” If you were to ask me about her preferences, I could tell you what they are. I could precisely define her likes and dislikes, down to the food she enjoys and the colors she prefers. I know her.

This is the kind of knowledge I am addressing in this devotion. It involves having spent time with the Lord – walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,25), living by faith (Heb 10:38), enjoying the fellowship of the Son (1 Cor 1:9), and taking advantage of having access to God (Eph 3:12). All of this is mingled with a constant and preferred exposure to His Word (Lk 4:4). Add to that the fact that Jesus promised to “manifest” Himself to the person who loves and keeps His word (John 14:21,23). That is the context in which the knowledge of God is realized.

Men are spiritually alive to the degree that they comprehend the God of their salvation – to the extent of their spiritual discernment of God’s purpose in Christ Jesus! Confidence, assurance, and boldness are all results of this understanding. The academic recitation of Gospel facts is not the evidence of the knowledge of God. Rather, embracing and conforming to those facts evidences its possession! Where these exist, Jesus has ministered “an understanding” – just as our text affirms!

The requirement for Christ’s ministration of the knowledge of God is seen in His own words; “. . . neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). Luke’s gospel states it in these words, “. . . and no man knows . . . who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him” (Luke 10:22).

Sin has resulted in the obscurement of God. This obscurity has been produced by the moral and spiritual gulf between Himself and those outside of Christ. Man has become self-centered, and thus cannot comprehend God. It is not that God is unknowable, or that man is incapable of knowing Him, even though transgression has made it appear as though these things were true.

The remission of sins refurbishes man’s powers of discernment, enabling him to comprehend the One in Whose image he has been made. From within, Christ takes His Word, and imparts an understanding of the Father. This knowledge involves a comprehension of His overall objective, and is ministered from an eternal perspective. It cannot, further, be passed from man-to-man. It must be the result of Divine fellowship.

THE ADMINISTRATING JESUS

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Chapter 22

THE BENEFITS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, #1

The inestimable value of the knowledge of God can be seen in its benefits. This knowledge is expressed by the Scriptures and personally expounded by the Lord Jesus (Matt 11:27; 1 John 5:20). Without His ministration, the Scriptures are nothing more than a dead letter. Men live by the Word of God, but the Scriptures are not life – Jesus Himself is “the Life” (John 14:6). However, He does not minister influence independently of the Scriptures. This was true when He was upon the earth, moving among men, and it is true now that He is in heaven, administering the great salvation He has effected.

Without the Scriptures, Jesus has no comprehensible base from which to minister. The God He reveals is the God made known in the Scriptures. The Word of God cultures men how to think about God, and Jesus expounds THAT God unto them. God is not an idea, He is a Person. Yet, I fear, even within the professed church

He is approached and declared as though He was nothing more than an idea.

In the new covenant, Jesus and the Word are complementary – one is never considered in isolation from the other. Thus are the Scriptures, particularly as they relate to the Savior, called “the Word of Christ” (Col. 3:16). Jesus said of the Scriptures, “they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). When he was on the Isle of Patmos, an angel told John, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10). In both of these texts the point is that Jesus Christ is the theme or focus of Scripture. To put it another way, He is the One who is carrying out the promises and commitments that are promised in them. Therefore we read, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor 1:20).

He is the One who is working out the “eternal purpose” of God (Eph 3:11), for that purpose has been purposed in Him: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3:11).

ESCAPING THE POLLUTIONS OF THE WORLD

Concerning the benefits of the knowledge of God, which are ministered by Jesus Christ, one of the chief ones is this: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world THROUGH the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . .” (2 Pet. 2:20). The knowledge of God is the means through which this vital separation is achieved. If it is true that the people of God will be finally presented to Christ "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27), then it is clear that at some time, they must make a clean escape

from the world – appropriately referred to as “this present evil world,” from which Jesus died to “deliver us” (Gal 1:4).

This world – the temporal order – having been defiled by sin, is a “present evil world.” Satan is its “god” (2 Cor 4:4), and “fornicators, covetous, extortioners, and idolaters belong to its order (1 Cor 5:10). Those enamored of it become defiled and corrupt, and consequently disqualified for Divine fellowship. The mandate from heaven is this, “keep” yourself “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). “All that is in the world,” declares John, “is NOT of the Father” (I John 2:16). An effective separation from its contaminating influence must occur if men are to reach heaven!

This “escape” is not accomplished like that of Lot’s deliverance from Sodom. It is written that “while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful to him: and they brought him forth and set him without the city” (Gen. 19:16). That was a deliverance reflective of the times – a period when the knowledge of God was at a minimum level. But men do greatly err when they suppose spiritual deliverance is accomplished in this manner during this “day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

The “knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” compels one to voluntarily come out of the world order. Such an individual is said to have “fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before” him (Heb. 6:18). The greater glory of the world to come draws men away from the course of this world. The knowledge of the Lord, so to speak, puts heaven in man’s eye!

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Chapter 23

THE BENEFITS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, #2

GRACE AND PEACE MINISTERED

Grace and peace are essential in the economy of faith – the new covenant. An awareness of God’s favor and lovingkindness, together with an assurance of our acceptance with Him (Rom. 5:1) must be possessed by those who have abandoned the “fashion of the world” (I Cor. 7:31). The supply of grace and peace, further, is increased in direct proportion to our spiritual involvement in the Kingdom. The more we are devoted to the denial of “ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:12), and the closer we get to the “salvation ready to be revealed” (I Pet. 1:5), the more grace and peace are required.

In the matter of the ministration of grace and peace, the role of the knowledge of God is again seen as a critical one. “Grace and peace

be multiplied unto you THROUGH the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Pet. 1:2). Those who “acquaint” themselves with the Almighty (Job 22:21) so delight Him, that His lovingkindness and settled peace are copiously given to them.

Grace depicts a God who smiles approvingly, so to speak. We have in Noah an historical example of the effect of such a situation. It is written that he “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:9). His preservation from God’s wrath and indignation was only a small representation of what is “prepared for them that love” God (I Cor. 2:9).

In Christ, grace not only involves preservation; it also is associated with the enjoyment of eternal benefits and blessings. “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 1:14).

Peace enables the heart to remain stable under stress. The peace of God is said to “keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). It is evidenced when the heart is “not troubled,” even though tribulation is being experienced “in the world” (John 14:1,27; 16:33).

Both grace and peace are experienced to the degree that the knowledge of God is possessed. That is the appointed vehicle by which they are ministered.

ALL THINGS PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS

Divine resources are necessary for the sustaining of spiritual life. God's purpose in Christ is to bring "many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10) – to get them from earth to heaven. In His Kingdom an adequate provision and allocation of resources has been made for the achievement of that purpose. The race is long, the terrain is rough, and His people are in enemy territory. They must draw upon heavenly supplies in order to successfully navigate through Satanic straits, and finish their course!

"According as His Divine power hath given us all things pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him . . ." (2 Pet. 1:3). "Life" refers to spiritual life – reciprocity to God. "Godliness" is the expression of that life in a godless world, amidst both internal and external handicaps. Everything that is necessary for the maintenance of "life and godliness" is granted "through the knowledge of Him."

Those who stand aloof from God, not availing themselves of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, have, in the most charitable view, severely handicapped themselves. They have cut off resources required to live unto God! On the other hand, those that "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:8) have, by that very attitude, guaranteed the supply of required spiritual resources.

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but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," (Eph 1:20-22).

Chapter 24

CONCLUSION

Christ Jesus is God's appointed Administrator. No spiritual blessing or benefit is realized independently of Him. He alone is "the WAY, THE Truth, and the Life" – the appointed means by which we come to God (Way); the vehicle through which the truth is made available to the hearts of men (Truth), and the only means through which spiritual life can be appropriated and maintained (Life).

Christ alone can "bring us to God" (1 Pet 3:18), teach us of God (Matt 11:27; 1 John 5:20), and cause us to be "heirs" (Gal 4:7). The riches of God's grace, and His indispensable kindness toward us, is "THROUGH Christ Jesus" alone (Eph 2:7). The peace of God keeps our hearts and minds "THROUGH Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). The ability to do "all things" required of us is only "THROUGH Christ" (Phil 4:13). Glory can only be brought to God through the church "BY Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:21). God supplies all of our need "according to the riches of His glory BY Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19). We have been "called unto His eternal glory BY Christ Jesus" (1 Pet 5:10).

We are "alive unto God "THROUGH Jesus Christ" (Rom 6:11).

“The gift of God is eternal life THROUGH Jesus Christ” (Rom 6:23). “The blessing of Abraham” has “come on the Gentiles THROUGH Jesus Christ” (Gal 3:14). The Holy Spirit has been “shed on us abundantly THROUGH Jesus Christ” (Tit 3:5-6). God makes us perfect in every good work, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight THROUGH Jesus Christ” (Heb 13:20).

“Grace and truth came BY Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Peace is preached “BY Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36). God will even “judge the secrets of men BY Jesus Christ” (Rom 2:16). Grace reigns “through righteousness unto eternal life BY Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:21). The grace of God is given to us “BY Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:4). God has “reconciled us to Himself BY Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 5:18). God “predestinated us unto the adoption of children BY Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5). The “fruits of righteousness” with which the children of God are filled are “by Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:11), and the “spiritual sacrifices” that we offer up to God are only “acceptable to God BY Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5).

From this perspective, Christ’s rule and reign is the administration of the benefits of the new covenant. He is indispensable to both God and man. In this “day of salvation” God cannot bless man without Jesus, and man cannot receive the blessing apart from Him. Salvation makes no allowance for even the slightest deviation from this reality. There is no such thing as strength, peace, or grace that is brought to us by means of a man-made system. There is no activity that, of itself, can bring true spiritual resources to us. God, for instance, will not come to His people through a mythical “portal of praise,” as some allege. In fact, the entire concept is riddled with error and Satanic venom. The truth of the matter is that Christ is bringing us to God, and God dwells in the Person whop knows and believes the love God has toward us in Christ Jesus (1 John 4:16).

When the church does not make a lot of Christ Jesus Himself, it withholds nourishment from the people. Preachers and teachers who have an emphasis other than the Son of God have taken the staff of life from the people. Wherever there is a body of people who remain ignorant of the Son of God, His accomplishments and His ministry, you have a people who are toppling on the brink of eternal disaster.

If Jesus is not well known, there is a corresponding ignorance of what He has done, what He is doing, what He gives, and how He blesses. Perceiving the truth of this, Paul confessed that he had abandoned every competing pursuit in order that he might “win Christ,” and “know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Phil 3:10).

All of this is owing to the indisputable fact that Jesus is the Administrator of the heavenly Kingdom.