



**Behold the Lamb**  
Publications

**Simply Christ**

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

**Volume III**

Twelve Gospel Messages from our  
Weekly SIMPLY CHRIST Newsletter!

# A Simple Gospel

When God reveals something to you it never makes you feel as though you are the smartest person around. Usually you are left wondering why you had never seen this before. You may say to yourself: “A child could have understood this. Why have I been blind to it for so long?” True revelation from God is as though you just discovered that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . The thing God reveals becomes so simple that you feel as though every one else should understand it also.

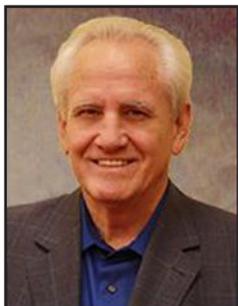
*“...thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”* Matthew 11:25

At times the gospel is presented in a fashion that resembles a person attempting to prove that  $2 + 2 = 5$ . A person may spend their entire life seeking to understand what is being presented to them,

but never seem to be able to grasp it. Some may come to the conclusion of themselves that they are just not “smart” enough to understand it. “Why does it make sense to everyone else besides me?” We need to consider that sometimes things do not because make sense because they simply **DO NOT MAKE SENSE!**

The purpose of Simply Christ and other Behold the Lamb

Publications is to share the gospel of Christ according to what the scriptures actually say. We dare not attempt to “put a square peg in a round hole” or make the scripture say something other than what God has said.



**Leroy Surface**



**Keith Surface**

As a young man I was told by an elder minister that I should just accept what the

leaders of “our movement” told us was true rather than believe what I saw the scriptures to be saying. I chose to believe that the word of God is true. Anyone that will do the same will find the gospel of Christ to be a simple message with the power to make everyone who believes it ...free indeed!

# Simply Christ

## Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

### Volume III

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## SINS THAT ARE PAST

Nothing changes the past. The milk is spilt; the deed is done; nothing changes that. Even God does not change the past, but he will change your future. He does this by changing what you are in the present.

What are *“sins that are past?”* These are sins that are not present sins. They are no longer a part of who you are. When the apostle Paul names the kinds of people who *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (fornicator, adulterer, covetous, thieves, etc.), he continues by saying, *“And **such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. These people whom Paul spoke of, as children of God, were no longer doers of these sinful things. Such things had been washed from their heart and life by the blood of Jesus Christ. They were *“sins that are past.”*

A man who has consumed pornography for years cannot say that it is a past sin as long as he continues to consume pornography. A person who has cheated other people cannot say the cheating is in their past as long as they still cheat people. Neither can the man who has abused his wife in the past say that it is a past sin if he still abuses her occasionally. The truth is that as long as such things are a part of your heart or nature, they are not past sins; they are your present condition.

Paul set the record straight concerning forgiveness of sins for those who trust in Christ. He lets us know that Christ being set forth as *“a propitiation”* declares the righteousness of God *“**for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.**”* Romans 3:25. It is not written in the scriptures that our sins are forgiven past, present, and future. The scripture says Christ *“...offered one sacrifice for sins forever...,”* but it does not say he forgave your sinning forever. This passage however Romans 3:25, tells us clearly that God forgives the sins of our past. The word *“remission”* in this verse comes from the Greek word *“paresis”* which speaks of

*“praetermission,” or “toleration.” “Praetermission” speaks of “a passing by without taking notice.”* In simple terms, God will tolerate your past sins and not impute them to you if you will trust in his Son, Jesus Christ. It is important to note that Paul says the promised *“praetermission”* is for *“sins that are past.”* This is what we call forgiveness.

Although our modern religious philosophy denies it, forgiveness of sins is always connected in the scripture with repentance and turning from sin towards God. Consider the following passages:

*“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and **turn from their wicked ways**; then will I hear from heaven, and **will forgive their sin**, and will heal their land.”* II Chronicles 7:14

*“Let the wicked **forsake his way**, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and **let him return unto the LORD**, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”* Isaiah 55:7

*“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and **unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob**, saith the LORD.”* Isaiah 59:20

*“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore **turn yourselves, and live ye.**”* Ezekiel 18:31-32

A person who is content to live in their sin may find a form of “Christianity,” but they will never find Christ. Yet the one who seeks to turn themselves from sin discovers that while they can often change their deeds, they cannot change the content of their heart. In truth, Christ is the only one who can truly turn a person from their iniquities.

After the lame man was healed at the gate called Beautiful, Peter told the people, *“Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”* Acts 3:26 Can you see that the blessing of Christ IS that **He turns us** from our iniquities? This mission of Jesus Christ to *“turn us from iniquities”* was not fulfilled through his earthly teachings because Peter says it was after Jesus was raised from the dead that He is sent to turn us.

God said through Ezekiel, *“make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die...”* Ezekiel 18:31. How can any person do such a thing? It is impossible for a person to give themselves a new heart. This is why God speaks again through Ezekiel saying, *“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.”* Ezekiel 36:26-27

This is the reason Christ came. He shed his blood to sanctify us Hebrews 13:12; to make us holy in heart, life, and nature. This is not accomplished through the principles and commandments of religion, but through receiving a new heart and a new spirit by faith in Jesus Christ. When Christ changes the heart of a person, everything about them changes. It is impossible for anyone who knows Christ to continue in sin. I John 3:6 When Christ comes in, sins that were present become *“sins that are past.”* You can know by God’s word that such sins are forgiven!

## **GOD’S JUSTICE**

The judge considers the man standing before him. He is filled with hate, rage, and violence. His list of convictions is long including robbery, assault, rape, and now murder. The judge must find justice for his victims and an equitable punishment for the crimes committed. With the law as his guide, it seems the judge has no choice but to pass a harsh and lengthy sentence.

Considering all the facts mentioned above, you would think this was an easy decision for the judge to make. Yet in the back of his mind he hears the pleas of another side of justice. Where was justice when this man's father abandoned him before he was even born? Where was justice when, as a child, he was abused by those who were supposed to protect him? Where was justice when he watched his mother prostitute herself to support her addictions? Or when he had to carry drugs for the dealers in his neighborhood to keep from being beaten or killed? Where was justice when this man's life and character were being formed?

This scenario reveals the limitations of human justice. Despite all the injustices that formed this man's life, the judge knows that to release him back into society would be a crime unto itself. He would most certainly offend again and destroy the lives and property of others. So justice must be carried out upon this man; a man who rarely, if ever, had justice offered to him.

God's justice does not have the limitations of human justice. It is revealed in the scriptures as *"the righteousness of God."* Paul said *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ...for therein is the righteousness (justice) of God revealed..."* Romans 1:16-17. The book of Romans presents God as the presiding judge over the trial of all humanity. The evidence against us is overwhelming, and presented in such a way *"that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* Romans 3:19. The question is: What will God do with an entire world that has been found guilty of sin?

God did not desire to damn the sinner, but neither could he take the sinful to heaven. Iniquity found in one, Lucifer, caused a *"war in heaven"* that lasted for thousands of years. Revelations 12:7-11. This iniquity also destroyed everything it touched on earth. Knowing that God could never populate heaven with *"workers of iniquity"* Luke 13:27 Revelation 21:27, it seems that damnation is the only answer.

The ruling from heaven's court began with an explanation of God's deliberation in making his decision. Paul writes *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so*

*death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*"Romans 5:12. God's justice did not only consider our offences, but the great offence of Adam that caused us to be sinners in the first place. We may have had a choice in what sins we committed, but we did not have a choice whether or not we were sinners. If someone tosses a child into the mud is it just to punish the child for being dirty? Of course not! God's justice considered that if one man brought sin upon all humanity, then that great injustice had to be dealt with if God was to indeed be the righteous judge of all.

The justice of God is summed up in a single sentence. Paul writes, ***"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."*** Romans 5:19. God had made his decree. There had to be a *"second man"* to undo what the first man, Adam, had done! To make a decree is one thing, but to bring justice is not always easy. This justice would require the death of the Son of God upon the cross.

How could Christ come as a man and fulfill this decree of divine justice that required *"many be made righteous?"* To do this He would have to *"take away the sin"* | John 3:5 that entered through Adam and replace it with the life of God himself, which is Eternal Life. The only way to accomplish such a thing would be through his death. Jesus Christ went to the cross so that we could joined to him in his death, and thereby be delivered from our *"old man"* of sin. Paul writes *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."* Romans 6:6-7. Christ also came out of the grave to bring us with him into newness of life. Paul tells us *"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."* Romans 6:8. This is how Christ made many righteous. He died to deliver us from the depravity of sin, and he resurrected to birth us into his eternal life. If we will believe this gospel and trust in Christ, this glorious redemption becomes our reality. This is the justice of God!

## IN HIS SIGHT

If someone presents themselves to me as one who knows Christ, I accept them as one who knows Christ. They do not need to prove anything to me. I care not about denomination or background. “God has people where God has people.” This does not mean that everyone who says they know Christ knows Christ. It simply means that I am not the one who sees into the heart of a person.

Sometimes I have met people who at first, did not appear very spiritual, but later I recognized what a precious walk they had with the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, I have seen those who appear to be very spiritual, but are not. They know the religious things to say and they project an appearance of spirituality, but at some point you begin to realize they are just a religious shell. It is like Jesus said, *“for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.”* Matthew 23:27. It is always heart-breaking when I realize such a thing. I would always rather find out that someone was “more” than I realized, than to discover that they had just been putting up a spiritual act for men to see.

My point is, that for any of us, what we see is limited. That is unless the Lord allows us to see further than what someone presents themselves to be. Sometimes he does, but sometimes he does not ...at least for a period of time. So no one should think that they have done a great thing if they successfully hide their real self from either you or me, even if they are standing right in front of us. Although we are redeemed, what we see is often limited by the natural seeing of the eyes.

Such is never the case with God. His sight is not limited and he is never deceived. Paul writes, *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”* Hebrews 4:13. I always wonder why people think there are things about themselves that God cannot see. Much theology is built upon the premise that our sins are hidden from God because of the blood of Christ. I have

heard many preachers assure us this is true, but I have never found anyone who can offer a single verse of scripture that says such a thing. The next time someone tells you that God cannot see your sin, ask them “Where in the bible does it say that?”

The phrase “*in his sight*” is used five times by the apostles in the scriptures. Each time it means to be standing directly in front of God. This tells us that it is not men that we are standing before, but God. Men do not always see things as they truly are. God always does. When the scripture tells us that Jesus reconciled you “*in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight*” Colossians 1:22, he is not saying that this is “ONLY the way God sees you.” It is saying that this is the way it will be for you, even as you stand directly before God who looks into the thoughts and intents of your heart. Christ has never made anyone to be a hypocrite. When he washes the outside of the cup, he washes the inside also. Matthew 23:26.

The apostle John told us, “*For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*” 1 John 3:20-21. A person may have the praise and esteem of everyone around, but if their heart is not right, God who searches the hearts, knows their condition. On the other hand, another person may walk with a pure heart before God, but be reviled and vilified by others. This person can rejoice because they walk in the sight of God, and not just in the limited sight of men.

You can have a clean heart, a righteous spirit, and a holy life. Ezekiel 36:25-27. This is what Christ died to do in his people Hebrews 13:12, and it is to such a people the invitation to enter the holiest is given. Hebrews 10:19-22. However, you will never have such a thing if you cherish what men see above what God sees. But, if you will be honest with God (and man) and believe this gospel of Christ, you can live and walk in God’s light of God where there “*is no darkness at all.*” 1 John 1:5-6.

## SEEING CHRIST

The apostles never told us the color of Jesus' eyes, the length of his hair, his height, or any other physical description. Even the prophets were silent on this issue, only saying *"...he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him"* Isaiah 53:2. It is evident that his physical features are not what God wants us to see about Jesus Christ, yet it is also clear in the scriptures that the wonderful glory of the gospel of Christ is only received by those who *"see him as he is"* I John 3:2.

The gospel is presented as a great light that shines in our hearts. Paul said *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* II Corinthians 4:6. This is how we see Christ. We see him when the truth of his gospel shines into our hearts. When this happens we are transformed into the image of the one we see. The scripture says, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* II Corinthians 3:18. This is how the gospel works. It is not a new covenant "law" neither is it a new set of guiding principles. Salvation does not come through determination, it comes through *"illumination"* Hebrews 10:32.

The gospel of Christ transforms those who see, but it does nothing for those who are blind to it. This is why Paul said *"...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* II Corinthians 4:4. Satan does not care if you are religious, but he will do everything he can to keep you from seeing the glorious gospel of Christ. He knows it is the only thing in existence that is invested with the power to make you free from both sin and Satan. It is the truth that Jesus said *"shall make you free"* John 8:32.

This great "truth" Jesus spoke of is not about you or me, neither is it some religious principle or formula. It is the truth of Christ!

**Who Christ is:** He is the one by whom all things were created, who was with God and was God John 1:1-3, yet became a man for our redemption. Philippians 2:7

**What Christ came to accomplish:** He came *“to destroy the works of the devil”* John 3:8, *“...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:24.

**Christ finished it all on the cross:** When he cried *“It is finished”* John 19:30 everything he came to do was accomplished. Our sin was destroyed Romans 6:6, and so was Satan Hebrews 2:14. We were sanctified Hebrews 10:10, and made righteous Romans 5:19. This is the truth, and if you see it, it will make you free!

Satan is destroyed for the child of God, but he still has dominion over those who abide in his kingdom of darkness. Even so, when the gospel is preached, he has no power to hold those who will open their eyes to see and their ears to hear. When the truth is preached, they will see Christ as He is. Those who were dying from serpent venom needed only to look upon the brazen serpent and they would live. Even so, Jesus said *“...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”* John 3:14-15. Sadly, many will perish in their sins because, as Jesus said, *“...their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”* Matthew 13:15.

There are many “portraits” painted of Christ that are not Christ at all. I am speaking of the doctrines that describe Christ and his work unto us. Some of these “portraits” show us a Christ who either “leaves us in our sins,” or “covers our sins to hide them from his Father,” and “is ever anxious to fulfill our every fleshly ambitions.” Others paint Christ as one who demands perfection, but offers it through religious laws, principles, and precepts. None of these “portraits” show Christ *“as he is.”* Therefore none of these doctrines have the power to make you free.

Christ is the Savior. He came to *“save his people from their sin”* Matthew 1:21. He did not come to give you a weapon to use to fight your way out of sin, and he did not come to leave you in sin. HE IS THE SAVIOR! When that light shines into your heart, you will be free! There is no demon, no sin, no bondage that can hold you when the glorious gospel of Christ shines into your heart. This is why John wrote *“whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him”* I John 3:6. For if you see him, then you know him, and if you know him, you are made free! The promise that *“we shall be like him”* is based upon *“for we shall see him as he is”* I John 3:2. Open your eyes to Christ ...and live!

## **SPIRITUAL GIANTS**

I cannot say I have never wanted to be a spiritual “giant.” I just know that I am not one, and I am sure that God agrees with me in this. I have seen those who perceive themselves to be spiritual giants, but it always comes across, at least to me, that their great spirituality is their personal delusion, or an illusion they wanted others to see. Whenever a Christian becomes great in their own sight they have become blind. Pride is a disease caused by a person’s inability to see things as they truly are.

As a very young Christian, I found there were always others who were ready to show me “how to truly walk with God.” The problem was that one would take me to the “right” and the other would take me to the “left.” Then there were those great television ministers who seemed to be so mightily anointed, who would hint that if you tried diligently enough, you could almost be like them. I heard one of them say God had called him to train ten thousand little versions of himself. Looking back, I have lost count of how many of those ministries ended up in shame.

One of the first things God spoke to me in a dream or vision was a warning not to let the religious builders build my spiritual house. The houses they built looked so magnificent, but God warned me that they had no foundation. As Peter said, *“This is the stone which*

*was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.”* Acts 4:11. In the night vision I saw that if I would prayerfully seek God and measure everything by his word, my house would stand when others fell.

As I sought the Lord, he began to open my understanding to the gospel of Christ. He took me to His promise of a New Covenant.

*“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:** and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: **for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest”*** Hebrews 8:10-11.

This is where I came to the realization that the New Covenant IS that God himself writes his law the hearts of his people. God said through the prophet Jerimiah, *“...I will put my law in their inward parts...”* Jeremiah 31:33. This is not a law learned. It is the new nature of a child of God! It is *“written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”* 11 Corinthians 3:3. This is a work that no man can do for you because God said *“they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”* We are sent to preach the gospel, but only God can put his law and life within a person. This reveals the fallacy of so much that is done under the name of “discipleship.” When we attempt to write God’s law in a person, the best we can produce is a cheap imitation. When God does it, it is glorious life and liberty.

The power of this promise overwhelmed me. Maybe this could be true for the great, the mature, or the spiritual elite, but I was none of that. I was just a young man whom God had delivered from the depths of sin and shame. I told God, “I’m just me. I am not great or super spiritual. I am the least in your Kingdom.” God did not dispute the fact that I was the least in his Kingdom. He just reminded me of his promise: *“...for all shall know me, from **the least to the greatest.**”* I then understood that his promise was true, even for me ...the least in his Kingdom.

I do not proclaim a gospel for “spiritual giants.” The simple fact is, those who believe themselves to be spiritual giants will always reject the simplicity of Christ. They worked so hard to get “spiritual” that it is impossible for them to believe the wonderful promises of redemption in the gospel can only be received by “babes.” Luke 10:21. No one is too sinful for Christ to make them free from sin, but many people are too spiritual in their own sight to receive anything from God. When a person tells me what they have done to overcome sin, I know by their own words that they are not free. But everyone whom Christ has made free, lives their life in amazement that God freely did such a thing ...even for them.

## **SPIRITUAL RACISM**

A few months back a stranger stopped by a church we were building and introduced himself as a brother in Christ. After a few minutes of talking about the love of Christ and the goodness of the Lord, he said to me, “You know, most people think that anyone can be saved, but that is not what the bible really says.” I responded, well, Paul said “*And he died for all...*” II Corinthians 5:15. Jesus told us to preach the gospel to “*every creature,*” and “*whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” Revelations 21:17. These statements tell me this salvation is for everyone. “No” he said, “Jesus told the Jews they were of their father the devil. He was letting us know that they could never be saved.” I am sure I did not hide my disgust as I responded to this man. John told us that “*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning...*” I John 3:8. I said to him, “Anyone, including you or me, which has evil in their heart is of Satan, because he is the father of all sin.” This man left quickly, and I realized his religion was just a cloak for his bigotry and hatred. Blacks, Jews, and many other people were deemed justly unworthy of salvation in this man’s eyes. He was just another of many hate-filled people who attempt to clothe their hatred in the banner of Christianity.

I recall another incident from about two years before. I encountered a man I see about once a year. He attended a large Charismatic church in Texas and seemed to be the one of the most vocal and unashamed Christians I knew. When surrounded by unbelievers, he would share testimonies of the wonderful things God has done. On this occasion the issue of the war in Afghanistan came up. "It's such a shame that our boys are dying in a war over there." he said. I had no disagreement with this, but his next statement floored me. "Those squinty-eyed mongrels over there can't even be saved! Why are our boys dying for them?" I felt righteous indignation arise within me as I saw this man's true heart revealed through his religious "fig leaves." I said, "Sir, those you call "squinty-eyed mongrels" are souls for whom Christ died! That contempt you hold for them is the same contempt the Jews would have held for you if you lived in the days of Christ and the apostles. They would have scoffed at the idea that someone as evidently wretched as you had any chance of being saved." Quickly this conversation also ended. I felt sick at my stomach at how Satan wraps his hatred and racial supremacy in doctrines and calls it the love of Christ.

There are those who hold that some people are excluded from salvation by God. When I hear such a thing, I want to ask them which of their own children do they believe God has predestined to be damned? Of course they never believe that, but it is so easy to believe someone else's child was born to be eternally damned. Jesus said *"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"* Matthew 6:23.

There are others who teach there are some predestined to damnation because they are Satan's seed, or offspring. Sometimes these are said to be individuals scattered here or there, but very often these include entire races of people. The simple truth is, however, that without Christ we all carry the seed of Satan, which is SIN. The apostle John wrote, *"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning..."*, but then he tells us in the same verse, *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* 1 John 3:8.

Christ came into this world to destroy the work of the devil in us which is SIN. His blood washes “Satan’s seed” out of our heart and nature. Two verses later, John says *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother”* | John 3:10. Those whom John called *“the children of the devil”* are those who do not do righteousness and/or do not love their brothers. This does not mean they cannot be saved. These are in fact the ones Christ died for, but until they believe the gospel and trust in Christ, they will never know his great deliverance from Satan and his works ...SIN.

A friend asked me recently, “What do you think about Jews.” Surprised by the question, I answered, “They are people.” I add to that “They are people for whom Christ died!” I think no more or no less of them than I do any person for whom Christ died. I do not deny that there are certain promises given to Israel because of Abraham. The scripture says they are *“beloved for the fathers’ sakes”* Romans 11:28, yet even with that understanding there are still certain truths made evident in the scripture. Since Christ died for all, he must love the Arab as much as he loves the Jew, and he must love the Jew as much as he loves the European, and he must love the European as much as he loves the African, and he must love the African as much as he loves the Asian, and he must love the Asian as much as he loves the Native American, and he must love the Native American as much as he loves the Arab.

The entire premise of the gospel is built upon the truth that *“...both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;”* Romans 3:9. For this reason Christ came, *“to take away the sin of...”* not just the Jew, or the Gentile, or the British, or the white, or the black, or the Asian, or any race, tribe, lineage, or a select few, but to *“take away the sin of the WORLD”* John 1:29. Anyone who will believe this gospel and trust in Christ will know glorious freedom from sin, and life in Christ Jesus which is given to those who have been born again, and are now the children of God.

## SPIRITUAL PRISONS

I ministered a service recently for a group of men who had become very circumspect in every aspect of their lives. They wore modest clothing and clean cut hair. They would not have contact with the opposite sex without having someone else present, neither would they use alcohol or drugs. As a matter of fact, even the food they ate and the people they associated with were very much restricted by certain preordained guidelines. Yet this rigid lifestyle of these men was not evidence of their righteousness. To the contrary, it was actually evidence of their unrighteousness. You see, I was ministering a service for inmates in the Texas prison system. The rules and laws that governed the daily lives of these men were not given to make them righteous, but to control their unrighteousness. Before I left the prison service I told the inmates, “This place may change what you do, but Christ changes what you are. If what you are is not changed, when you get out of this prison you will go back to doing the ungodly things that put you here.”

Religious law always serves as a spiritual prison for the unrighteous. The apostle Paul tells us that *“the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that THE LAW IS NOT MADE FOR A RIGHTEOUS MAN, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners...”* | Timothy 1:8-9. The Law of Moses was not given to a holy people, but to a people who rejected the voice of God and worshipped a golden calf. This is why Paul said it was for *“the ungodly and for sinners.”* If the children of Israel had a heart for God they would have received His voice when He spoke from the mountain and the Law of Moses would have never been given. Paul tells us the Law of Moses *“...was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...”* Galatians 3:19. It was a spiritual prison given to keep Israel’s transgressions in check until Christ, the promised seed, would come. The Law’s very existence declares the unrighteousness of those who serve it. In the last days of Moses’ life he commanded Israel, saying, *“Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, THAT IT MAY BE*

*THERE FOR A WITNESS AGAINST THEE. 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?"* Deuteronomy 31:26-27.

The gospel of Jesus Christ does not work by changing what you do; it changes what you are. This difference is the same as the difference between plucking bitter fruit off a wild tree or cutting the tree down. Religious laws and commandments pluck the sinful fruit off a person's life, but Christ cuts the sinful tree down. John the Baptist spoke of the work of Christ when he said, *"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* Matthew 3:10.

Paul, who was an apostle to the Gentiles, testified of how righteousness came to the Gentiles through Christ without the Law. He said, *"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness..."* Romans 2:14-15. The righteousness of Christ changes the heart and nature of a person so their natural actions please God. God's children do not need a religious law to order their life because their very nature is pleasing to God. Peter gives witness of this, telling us that through the promises of the gospel we are made *"...partakers of the divine nature"* II Peter 1:4.

What would you be if you cast off your religious restraints? THAT is what you truly are! If your religion has caused you to appear righteous in deed, but it has not made you to be so in heart and nature, your religion is just a spiritual prison that you dwell in. And, if your religion has not caused you to be righteous in both your deed and your heart, it is not Christ's work at all. For the promise of the gospel is that *"by the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be made righteous"* Romans 5:19.

You can always tell when religious law is speaking. It says **"DO THESE THINGS AND LIVE BY THEM"** Romans 10:5. Beware! This is the

“prison warden” speaking and not the voice of Christ. The voice of Christ does not tell you to “do” to live; it tells you to “see, believe, and live.” Paul tells us how a sinner is transformed into a righteous person. He wrote, *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness...”* Romans 10:10. The transforming power of the gospel only comes to you through hearing, seeing, and believing the glorious work of redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ upon the cross. Redemption changes what you do by changing what you are. You do not need a religious “prison warden” to give you the laws of religion, but we all need to hear and know the gospel truth that makes everyone who believes it “free indeed!” ***“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”*** John 1:17.

## THE ONLY FOUNDATION

A man is building the house of his dreams, a house he wants all to take notice of. He employs the best craftsmen to install his windows, lay his brick, build his cabinets, and trim out his house. It is beautiful house, the envy of all his neighbors, yet it does not take long before this man realizes that something is wrong. His window panes shatter, his bricks fracture, his cabinet doors will not close properly, and his trim separates at the joints. He calls each tradesman to repair their faulty work, but each one tells him the same thing. It does not matter what they do, the problems will only get worse. You see this man was so intent and focused on the crafts that would impress his friends, that he forgot the most important thing about constructing a building. He did not lay a proper foundation. Without the proper foundation, everything he built, whether good or bad, would fall in disrepair.

The apostle Paul uses the first three chapters of I Corinthians to bring us to this statement: *“...as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* I Corinthians 3:10-11. Paul is adamant that the foundation which he laid IS THE ONLY

FOUNDATION that can be laid. Anything that is built without this foundation has no foundation at all.

Paul was concerned about what those who came after him would build upon the foundation. Some would build good things like *“gold, silver, precious stones,”* and some would build worthless things, like *“wood, hay, stubble.”* He knew that everything that was built upon this foundation would be tested by fire. <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 3:13. The good would remain and the worthless would be destroyed. But, what happens if what is built is not on the foundation at all? The sad answer is that the good will pass away along with the worthless.

Paul describes the true foundation in several similar phrases. He describes it as *“The preaching of the Cross,”* <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 1:18, *“Christ Crucified”* <sup>ch 1:23,</sup> *“Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified,”* <sup>ch 2:2</sup> and *“Jesus Christ”* <sup>ch 3:11.</sup> Each of these express the same foundation in slightly different ways. Let’s consider the words *“Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified.”*

**Jesus:** This speaks of the man who was born of a virgin, placed in a manger, baptized by John the Baptist, worked miracles, taught the people, was betrayed, crucified, and raised from the dead.

**Christ:** Whenever we read the words Jesus Christ it helps our understanding to remember this speaks of *“Jesus, The Christ.”* This reminds us that Christ is not the name of a man, but the title given to the one who would fulfill all the promises of redemption. *“The Christ”* is not just a man. He is the one by whom all things were made. He was *“with God and was God”* <sup>John 1:1-3.</sup> He would be the Son of God <sup>Psalms 2,</sup> and he would bruise the head of the serpent <sup>Genesis 3:15.</sup> Perhaps the clearest prophecy of The Christ are the words brought to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel describes the mission of The Christ as *“to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”* <sup>Daniel 9:24-25.</sup> Being anointed *“The Most Holy”* by his Father, Jesus The Christ

fulfilled all the vision and prophecies of redemption when he died and rose again. Jesus is THE CHRIST!

***“and him crucified:”*** This tells us how Jesus The Christ accomplished what he was sent into the world to do. Through his death he *“destroyed the devil”* Hebrews 2:14, *“crucified our old man”* and *“destroyed our body of sin”* Romans 6:6, *“sanctified us with his own blood”* Hebrews 13:12, and *“blotted out”* the Law by *“nailing it to his cross”* Colossians 2:14. Everything Christ came into the world to do, He accomplished through his crucifixion and resurrection. It is the only way given by God for anyone to be made free from sin, cleansed from all unrighteousness, made a new creature, and reconciled to God. These things do not come through philosophy, discipleship, time, trials, or wisdom. The fullness of redemption is received through simple faith in *“Jesus, The Christ, and Him Crucified.”* This is the foundation of the church.

Paul was concerned in his day about those who attempted to build worthless things on the good foundation. Those such things the fire will burn away. In our day, however, a greater tragedy awaits. On every hand, religious things are being built, both good and worthless, without a foundation at all. When we attempt to give spiritual things to unregenerate people, we are attempting to beautify a house that was built without a foundation. When we seek to do such things, we are not saving souls, but locking them in to their damnation. In the end it will come to nothing. The words spoken may be true, but they will not stand when the flood Jesus spoke of arises. He let us know that even the best house built upon the sand will wash away. Matthew 7:26-27.

The true foundation of *“Jesus Christ, and him crucified”* cannot be built upon or added to anything else. The effect it has is as though one attempted to lay the foundation stones of a building on the roof of the structure. The stones will crush the roof and everything under without regard to how well it may have been built. Jesus revealed this truth saying, *“What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken;*

*but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*" Luke 20:17-18. The only hope is for the people to fall upon Christ and be broken, lest his truth fall upon them and grind them to powder. Simple gospel preaching destroys everything in its path, but it lays the foundation for a building that will stand when everything else falls.

## A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

A man calls the county agricultural agent for advice. "I have a tree in my apple orchard that I am having trouble with. Regardless of what I do it will not produce apples. For years I have watered, fertilized, and pruned it, but it never grows apples. I even cut back the other trees so it can get more sunlight. Every so often it puts out little pine cones, but I pull them off as fast as I can so it does not become a pine tree. Do you know what the problem could be?" "Yes," the agent replied. "Your tree is not an apple tree. It is a pine tree. Cut it down!"

Jesus told us *"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."* Matthew 7:18-20. If a tree produces corrupt fruit, you know it is a corrupt tree. It does not matter how much you water, fertilize, or prune it, it is still a corrupt tree. The only solution is to cut it down and plant a good tree in its place. This tree is a type of fallen humanity. God's redemption does not just prune the corrupt tree. He cuts it down and plants a *"tree of righteousness"* in its place.

The cross of Christ is God's great "ax." It is the instrument by which he cuts down the sinful tree out of the heart of those who come to him through Christ Jesus. The cross does not prune. It does not water. It does not fertilize. Its singular purpose is to be the *"ax laid unto the root"* of the "Adamic" tree. Luke 3:9. The apostle Paul gives witness of this work saying, *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* Romans 6:6. This is not a work in

progress, but a finished work. Those who are in Christ Jesus are not in the process of being “cut down.” The old tree IS cut down and they are now the *“trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”* Isaiah 61:3. The end of the *“old man of sin”* along with the works of sin is not the goal of our walk in Christ, but the starting point. Paul never said “I am being crucified with Christ;” he said *“I AM crucified with Christ.”* Galatians 2:20. Just as there was no resurrection before there was a crucifixion, there is no *“newness of life”* without first the *“old man”* having been *“crucified with Christ”* through faith in Christ Jesus. This is how God’s people are delivered from the bondage of sin. Romans 6:7.

There is, however, more to the Christian walk than just not being a sinner any longer. That of itself is more wonderful than words can express, but even as a good tree is planted to produce good fruit, we are delivered from both sin and the Law to bring forth fruit unto God. Romans 6:22, 7:4. The fact that a tree is an apple tree may insure it will not produce pine cones, but it does not guarantee that it will produce apples. Even so, the fruit of the Spirit that is produced in a child of God is directly related to their relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”* John 15:4. The fruit of the Spirit increases as we draw close in the knowledge of and communion with Christ. Peter said, *“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.”* II Peter 1:2

There is a difference between a person lacking the fullness of *“the fruit of the Spirit”* and a person bearing the fruit of sin. The apostle John wrote, *“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”* I John 3:15. Hatred is the corrupt fruit of a corrupt tree. The only answer for such a tree is that it be cut down by the cross of Christ. On the other hand, a child of God may be found lacking in the fullness of God’s love. Their answer is to simply draw close to Christ. As they do this, love will increase along with all the fruit of the Spirit.

For too long Christian people have been fed the lie that one person's impatience is the same before God as another's immorality. That is absurd! Would you consider the man who through a misunderstanding may have spoken harshly to your daughter to be the same as someone who seduced and abused her? Of course not! Neither does God! God will chasten the impatience found in his children, but sin he will judge along with the sinner. For the lack of understanding this simple difference, almost universally the church has accepted and gloried in the fallacy that all God's children are sinners. If they are, then Christ, who came to save his people from their sin, must have died in vain.

The purpose of this teaching is not to excuse the lack of *"the fruit of the Spirit"* in a child of God, but to point out the difference between the lack of spiritual fruit as opposed to the presence of sin. In fact there are strong warnings given to those who do not bear fruit unto God. Jesus said, *"...my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away..."* John 15:1-2. In the parable of the fig tree in the vineyard, Jesus concludes, *"if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."* Luke 13:9. Peter tells us *"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."* II Peter 1:9. A child of God who lacks the fruit of the Spirit is headed back into darkness, but cannot see they are on a course back to their former sins.

There is no reason for the children of God to lack in any spiritual thing. Peter writes, *"...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."* II Peter 1:3. Christ is the life of his people. He not only delivers us from sin, but he will cause his fruit to abound in our hearts and lives if we simply abide in him. He is our Life!

## ETERNAL LIFE

As I handed a man a rock, I said, “This rock was here thousands of years before you were born, and unless something happens, it will be around a long time after you die. It is not eternal, but we will call it “everlasting rock.” You now have “everlasting rock.” If you give this rock away, it will still be “everlasting rock,” but you will no longer possess it because you gave it away.”

For some reason many people view eternal life as something that began within themselves, and conclude that it would not truly be eternal life if they could ever lose it. Nothing could be further from the truth. Eternal life is the life of God. It has always existed and it always will exist. When the apostle John wrote of Jesus, he said, *“All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. IN HIM WAS LIFE; and the life was the light of men.”* John 1:3-4. The eternal life of God that was from the beginning became flesh and walked among men. This eternal life shined out of him and shed light on everything he came in contact with.

You can see eternal life. John tells us *“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;”* I John 1:2. Until Jesus Christ walked upon earth, no one since Adam had ever seen eternal life, but this eternal life was *“now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT through the gospel.”* II Timothy 1:10. Eternal life illuminates from wherever it is found. John not only saw it, but he possessed it and it was seen everywhere he went.

Jesus said *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* John 10:10. What is sometimes missed in this statement is the truth that no one would have life at all if Jesus had not come. Eternal existence is not eternal life. Without Christ, you may walk, breath, marry, and even exist forever, but that is not life. If you understand this truth, then you

know that “abundant life” is not a plentiful lifestyle. If that were true, the unbelieving wealthy person of this world already has abundant life ...without Christ. Abundant life is the unsearchable riches of Christ that spring up within God’s children to fill every part of our being. This overflowing life of God will also flow out to all those we come in contact with.

Eternal life and death do not co-exist, but through Christ we “*have passed from death unto life*” John 5:24. John said, “*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*” I John 3:15. If we believe the word of God, we know that eternal life is not in a murderer nor in anyone in whom hatred dwells.

Eternal life is so evident where it is present that John tells us it is the proof that someone truly believes God. He says, “*And this is the record (evidence), that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life*” I John 5:11-12. What is the evidence that a person has believed the truth? It is the eternal life of God within them that shines out of them to everyone around. Yet John is clear that a person has eternal life only as they have the Son of God. For “*this life is in His Son.*” Apart from the Son, no one has eternal life.

There seems to be a disconnect in the minds of many people between salvation and the Savior. Salvation, or eternal life, is viewed as a possession, a privilege, or a prize that God gives someone when they come to Jesus. But now that they have received this possession, do they really need Jesus anymore? The result becomes that many people live their lives as though they can ignore Christ, have no love for Him, and see no necessity to serve or obey Him. The attitude seems to express that they believe because they already have eternal life, they no longer need the Savior. Those who harbor such a thought do not know where eternal life exists. It is only found and possessed in Christ Jesus. Abandon the Savior and you have abandoned eternal life because “*this life is in His Son.*” Without him no one has any life at all.

## DARKNESS OF THE SOUL

SIN is not merely a deed. Sin is a darkness of the soul. It is a lawlessness that found refuge in the heart of man. Sin is the venom of the Serpent working in fallen humanity that pulsates rebellion against God and all that He is. Jesus describe it as the slave master that causes people to commit the acts of sin. *John 8:32-36*. This evil presence is what defiles a person. It is what separates them from God. Carnal religion restrains it. Redemption takes it away! *John 1:29*.

We all have personal convictions, and so we should. I doubt that your idea of holiness is exactly as mine. As a child of God there are many things that I set aside, not because I believed them to be sin, but because I believe them detrimental to my walk with God. There are still other things that I believe would be a mar on my personal witness or would cause some soul to offend. As the apostle Paul said, *"...if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend"* *1 Corinthians 8:13*. There are many such things as these that perhaps may be called sins against our testimony or against someone's weak conscience *1 Corinthians 8:12*, but what the scriptures are usually speaking of as sin is what John calls *"a sin unto death."* *1 John 5:16*. This *"sin unto death"* issues from the darkness of the soul and produces the manifestation of sin through our deeds. Such a thing is always damnable and therefore is always *"unto death."*

Sin is more than breaking a rule or even the letter of a commandment. David ate the shewbread which Jesus said *"...is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone,"* yet was not condemned for it. The disciples were condemned by the Pharisees because they broke the rules set by the elders when they ate *"without first washing."* But Jesus responded, saying, *"those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."* *Matthew 15:18-20*. Outward sin is the manifestation of a problem in the heart. It is this sin in the heart that defiles a

person before God. Let there be no doubt; a person commits adultery because they have adultery in their heart. Another partakes of pornography because of the fornication in their heart. Still another person steals because of the covetousness of the heart. Even the one who trusts in their own goodness without Christ, does so because of the defilement of sin. It is this defiled heart that makes a person a sinner before God.

I was sharing with a man the scripture where Paul assures us that *“the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Paul included the fornicator, the idolater, the adulterer, the covetous, and doers of other similar things. I Corinthians 6:9-10. The man protested the truth I pointed out that the redeemed do not do such things. He said, “All of us are sinners.” As proof, he said, “I was running late coming home from work and I drove faster than the speed limit. That’s a sin!” I stood there in disbelief at what I was hearing, remembering the words of Jesus: *“Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”* Matthew 23:24. Has the church come to such blindness that we believe one person surpassing the speed limit is the equivalent of, or justifies, fornication? If you are speeding, SLOW DOWN! If you are in fornication, REPENT AND BELIEVE THE TRUTH THAT WILL MAKE YOU FREE!

Immediately before Cornelius and those with him were filled with the Holy Ghost, God did something miraculous that most people are unaware of. Peter said that God *purified their hearts by faith.* Acts 15:9. Peter had just preached to them that those who believe in Jesus *“shall receive remission (freedom) of sins.”* Acts 10:43. Upon believing the gospel Peter preached, the Holy Ghost fell upon and filled them, but God in that moment had already purified their hearts. This is the work of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It is the promise of the gospel. Jesus came, suffered, and died to wash away the darkness of your soul. Revelation 1:5.

## GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

God has a purpose for you. As a matter of fact, God has a purpose for all humanity. It is what the apostle Paul calls God's *"eternal purpose."* Ephesians 3:11. Because this purpose is God's eternal purpose, nothing can change it or cause it not to be. God spoke through Isaiah saying *"the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"* Isaiah 14:27. There can only be one answer to this question. Nothing can disannul God's eternal purpose!

The first glimpse in the scriptures of God's eternal purpose is found when God announced that he would make a man. He said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."* Genesis 1:26. This image and likeness of God that Adam possessed was not merely a physical resemblance. I do not know if God has features as we do or not, but I do know that God is a Spirit and he is not defined by fleshly limitations. Adam was a manifestation of God's life, nature, and character in a flesh and bone temple. When he transgressed, Adam lost the likeness of God, but his fleshly features did not change. It was in his heart and nature that he lost the image of God. He was created in God's beauty, but he fell into the serpent's depravity. He had walked in God's holiness, but he plunged into darkness and sin. Yet as great and horrible as Adam's fall was, God's eternal purpose for humanity could not be disannulled.

The apostle Paul said God *"...saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to his own purpose and grace**, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**, But **is now made manifest** by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:* 2 Timothy 1:8-10. The eternal purpose of God that was first seen in Adam had been lost. It was more than lost. It was thrown away. It would not be seen

again until the appearing of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, once again the eternal purpose of God for humanity was made manifest.

When they saw Jesus, John said they *“...beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:14. We know that Jesus was full of grace and truth, yet John continues saying, *“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”* John 1:16. That which Jesus was filled with is given to those who trust in Christ. God’s eternal purpose for humanity is that we be filled with the same grace and truth that Jesus was full of.

Paul confirms this eternal purpose of God, saying, *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”* Romans 8:29. This statement is like an architect who in his mind knows what he wants to build, so he takes what is in his mind and draws it on paper for everyone to see. In his mind he *“foreknows”* what the building will be. Then on paper he *“predestinates”* it by specifying the dimensions, shape, materials, etc. Before anything was created, God knew what his people would be. They would be in the image of Christ. They would be the children of the living God. They would not be sinful because *“in him is no sin.”* I John 3:5-6. When God spoke it, it was predestined to be so. This was his eternal purpose, and it could not be disannulled.

The apostle Paul writes to the saints, saying, God has *“chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”* Ephesians 1:4. This verse is a description of God’s eternal purpose for his people. Paul described himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ *“...In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”* Titus 1:1-2. Before the foundation of the world, God promised himself a people who would be holy and without blame

before him in love. They would be filled with the “*eternal life*” of God. This does not mean that everyone will be saved or no one will be damned. It does mean that those who live before him will be exactly what he purposed his people would be before the world began.

The scripture leaves no doubt about what kind of people Christ will present to himself. They will be just as he foreknew, predestined, and chose that they would be before the foundation of the world. Everything Christ came to accomplish was to that end. He died on the cross to deliver you from sin. *Romans 6:6*. He shed his blood to cleanse and sanctify you. *Hebrews 13:12*. He resurrected to birth you into newness of life. *1 Peter 1:3*. And he sent the Holy Ghost to clothe you with his glory. *Romans 8:30*. Paul said God did all this and more “*That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*” *Ephesians 1:12*. The very existence of a child of God brings glory to God. It is impossible for any person to produce in themselves that which God has said his people will be. But if you will simply believe this gospel and trust in Christ, he will perform that work in you. After all, the gospel is still, and will always be, “*Christ in you the hope of glory.*” *Colossians 1:27*.

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