



**Behold The Lamb**  
Publications

**Simply Christ**

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

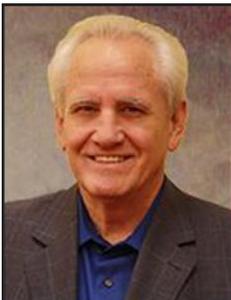
**Volume II**

Thirteen Gospel Messages from our  
Weekly SIMPLY CHRIST Newsletter!

**Isaiah 55:3:** *“Incline your ear; and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.”*

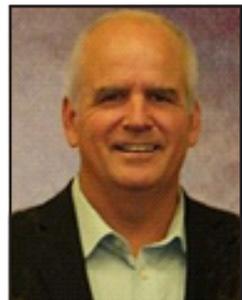
*“I’ve never heard this message before!”* This is the most common comment we receive from those who first hear the gospel message we preach. That is sad, because we do not preach a new message, but the same gospel Paul, John, and the other apostles preached. A few become very angry because we do not preach the traditions, and some search the scriptures diligently to prove us wrong. Most often those who sincerely search will come back rejoicing that the message is not only correct according to the scriptures (KJV), but that *“It works! It took the filthiness of sin out of my heart when I believed it.”*

Almost thirty years ago, I began a desperate search for *“the answer for the sin problem in the heart of man.”* Amazingly, when God began to teach me *“the truth that makes the believer free”* John 8:32, I tried to prove that what I was seeing was wrong. Every search of the



**Leroy Surface**

scriptures, however, only proved to me that the *“truth of the gospel”* Romans 1:16 will make everyone who believes it *“free from sin”* Romans 6:22. I had been afflicted with filthy dreams and imaginations, but when *“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shown into my heart”* II Corinthians 4:4, the filthiness *“turned off”* like



**Keith Surface**

you would turn off a water faucet, and the *“filth of sin”* was gone. We ask only that you *“listen”* as you read these messages. We have nothing to join and will never, ever, ask anything more of you than simply *“listen,”* because, as God Himself has said, *“hear, and your soul shall live.”*

# Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

## Volume II

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## I, WITHOUT CHRIST

“WHAT YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST IS WHAT YOU ARE WITHOUT CHRIST!” A few years ago I spoke these words to a friend who had secretly returned to alcohol. This man had once served the Lord and been very bold in his faith. Having served prison time in the past for driving under the influence of alcohol, he was required to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. He would relate to me how he would “tell them all:” “You may be alcoholics, but I am not! Jesus has made me free.” While I agreed with him in part, I was always troubled by his statements. I know that Christ came into the world, died, and rose again to make us free from sin, but what troubled me was my friend’s boasting. His rejoicing seemed to be more about himself than it was in Christ Jesus. You see, I know that “I” is the most dangerous word in a Christian’s vocabulary.

The apostle Paul never thought much of “I”. Most of us remember his words *where he said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”* | Timothy 1:15 In describing himself as the chief of sinners, Paul was referring to his statement two verses earlier where he said, *“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious...”* | Timothy 1:13 Notice he said *“Who was before...”* This tells us this is what he was prior to coming to Christ. Even though these things were in his past, this was still the way he viewed himself apart from Christ. Paul never "forgave himself" for his persecution of the church. He said *“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”* | Corinthians 15:9

No, Paul did not think much of “I”, but he thought everything of Christ. He said *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...”* Galatians 2:20 Paul was both satisfied and joyous over the fact that “I” did not live, but “I” was nailed to the cross of Christ and it was now Christ who lived in him. The glories of this new life, he always attributed to Christ Jesus and never to himself.

It is evident that Paul was not a sinner although some twist the scriptures, seeking to prove he was. He wrote to the Thessalonians,

saying “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:” 1 Thessalonians 2:10 To Corinth he said, “But (we) have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” 11 Corinthians 4:2 In every way he was a manifestation of the gospel he preached. Those who use his words in Romans 7, “the evil which I would not, that I do,” seeking to prove he had a “sin problem,” ignore the fact that he was speaking of his life before he came to Christ when he was under the Law. Paul started that passage saying “For **when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law...**” Romans 7:5-6 When he was under the Law he did the evil that he did not want to do, but now in Christ he served God “in newness of spirit” and was “made free from sin.” Romans 6:18 I cannot help but believe that those who seek to make Paul out to be a sinner are seeking to justify the sin of their own heart.

When considering all the glories we receive in Christ Jesus, we must never forget it is Christ and not ourselves. A person, having been cleansed from sin and filled with the Spirit, who begins to think that this glorious walk in Christ's victory is something they can sustain of themselves, is walking into a snare of Satan. Christ is the life of God's children. Colossians 3:4 Without him, we ARE who we always were. Thank God we never have to be without Christ, but this is more than just a confession. I have always been dismayed by those who claim such a precious salvation, but walk as though they do not particular need the Savior this very day. Christ IS our salvation! With him we are “new creations,” cleansed from sin and walking in victory, but without him we are the most pitiful of creatures. Paul wrote, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12 Those who abide in Christ need not worry about falling because “I” is crucified with Christ, but those who believe they are sufficient in themselves will find that “I” is as damming as he/she ever was.

Let me leave you with this: We must always remember that the *“word of our testimony”* Revelation 12:11 by which we overcome the world is never something about ourselves, but it is always *“the testimony of Jesus.”* Revelation 19:10 If our testimony becomes about ourselves, it will end in shame. Even Jesus said, *“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.”* John 5:31 The American church sings about “I, We, and Us”, preaches about “Who We Are,” and tells itself how incredibly special it is every Sunday, but our nation has not found this testimony to be true. We would do well to remember the words of the scripture that say, *“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”* I Corinthians 1:31

## PAUL’S DARK CHAPTER

Before he came to Christ, the apostle Paul was not an unclean man. To the contrary, all evidence suggest that he was indeed a good and decent man. He was very diligent, studious, and committed to his walk with God. Then known as Saul of Tarsus, he was brought up in Jerusalem *“at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God...”* Acts 22:3 Paul assures us that before coming to Christ, he was, *“touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”* Philippians 3:6 He excelled in *“the Jews religion”* Galatians 1:13-14 and was not a sinner in the way that the gentiles were. Galatians 2:15 Even his part in Stephen’s death and the persecution of the church was a testimony of his zeal for God under the Law. Yet somewhere, somehow, a few words from a passage of scripture he had known from his youth got his attention ...and destroyed him.

The words that brought Saul of Tarsus into darkness and despair were very simple. They were the words of the tenth commandment, *“Thou shalt not covet...”* I do not know what awoke Saul to these words. It is likely he heard someone in the early church declaring the work of the gospel. However it was that he was awakened to their true meaning, these words began to trouble his heart and mind. The other commandments dealt with his actions, but this commandment dealt with the content of his heart.

He could say that he had never committed adultery or fornication, but this commandment said, “You shall not desire it in your heart.” Jesus revealed the meaning of this commandment when he said, “...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” <sup>Matthew 5:28</sup> The Proverbs also agreed, saying “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” <sup>Proverbs 23:7</sup> When Saul saw what this tenth commandment was saying, he began to comprehend that “sin in your heart is SIN!” This new understanding had to be disconcerting for someone like Saul who believed he kept the Law so perfectly, but now he knew what had to be addressed. Saul set himself on a course to eliminate the sin out of his own heart. The result of this pursuit, however, would soon shake him to his very foundations.

In Romans the 7th chapter, Paul the apostle describes the events that led up to his “Damascus Road” experience with Christ. He starts this chapter addressing “*them that know the law,*” <sup>Romans 7:1</sup> and then continues addressing them saying, “*For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*” <sup>Romans 7:5</sup> This was a reference to their condition before they came to Christ when they served God under the Law. Saul had once viewed himself as a spiritual person who had put all sin in his life to death, <sup>Romans 7:8</sup> that is until he came “face to face” with the tenth commandment. He said, “*for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*” <sup>Romans 7:7</sup> This commandment was not the source of his lusts. It was what revealed to him that sin in the heart was equal to committing the act of sin. Upon understanding this, Saul was attempting to “stamp out” these lusts from his heart when he discovered that these hidden sins permeated his entire being. He was like a man who found a small sore, but through further examination he discovered this sore was a part of a greater cancer underneath. When he sought to remove the sore, the cancer began to fester and spread. Saul’s efforts to eliminate the sin of his heart only brought it out of its subdued state and it began to rage in his every thought and desire. He says, “*when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*” <sup>Romans 7:9</sup>

It wasn't until Saul understood that sin in the heart is sin, that the tenth commandment was able to accomplish in him that which had always been its purpose. It stripped Saul of his self-righteousness so that in his own eyes the sins of his heart were now *"exceeding sinful."* Romans 7:13 No longer were these hidden sins "little things" that did not matter. He now knew that these internal lusts were contradicting everything he thought himself to be spiritually. Saul began to see himself in a way that horrified him as a Pharisee. In despair he confessed to himself, *"...but I am carnal, sold under sin!"* Romans 7:14

The revelation that he was *"carnal, sold under sin"* was actually a truth Saul was forced to face about himself when he considered what was taking place in his heart and life. What was it that caused this man, who in his own eyes had been so alive spiritually, to admit to himself that he was not spiritual at all, but was a slave under sin? Saul began to see that he was living the life of a slave. You see, a slave may want to live his life one way, but because he is a slave, he lives his life as someone else wants him to live it. Saul considered his own walk. He said, *"that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."* Romans 7:15 This proved to Saul that he was not a freeman, but a slave. Saul also concluded that his "slave master" lived within himself. He said *"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."* Romans 7:20 It was the presence of sin in his heart that Saul ultimately found no way to overcome. He acknowledged its unending presence saying, *"when I would do good, evil is present with me."* Romans 7:21 **Sin's power is in its presence.** As long as it is present in you, it has power over you. At this realization, hopelessness began to set in. From the depths of his soul, Saul began to cry *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* Romans 7:24 He found that deliverance from the presence of sin and its power on the road to Damascus where he met the great deliverer, *"Jesus Christ our Lord."* Romans 7:25

I personally believe that the *"evil which I would not"* Paul speaks of in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans was his hatred and wrath against the church. Nowhere does Paul ever mention immorality or

uncleanness in his life, but he continually references his persecution of the saints. The scripture says Saul literally came to the point that he was *“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.”* Acts 9:1 He could justify his actions as defending the Law, but nothing could justify the hate and spite that consumed his every thought. He saw Christians such as Stephen lay down their life with love, but he could not even lay down his head at night without the anger that raged within. I am sure that Saul began to hate himself for what he was doing to men, women, their children, and their families, yet he was compelled from within to do even more. That is... until he met Jesus, The Christ!

## **A “YEA and NAY” Gospel**

Years ago we were at a local television station filming our weekly broadcast. A bible teacher at the station who had strongly withstood the gospel message that Jesus Christ came and died to deliver us from sin, caught us and said, *“I finally realized that you and I are saying the same thing, only in a different way.”* “How is that?” Brother Leroy Surface asked. “Well, we are both just preaching WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST.” “No!” Brother Surface said, “You teach that who you are in Christ is different than who you are in this world. I’m preaching that who you are in Christ is who you are on Main Street!”

The apostle Paul told us that the gospel he preached was not a “YES and NO” message. He said, *“But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”* II Corinthians 1:18-20.

It seems that today, however, the gospel is widely accepted to be a “YES and NO” message. Each precept of the gospel is declared to be true, but not exactly true. Every gospel declaration is filtered through the lens of “that’s only the way God sees us” or “that is

only how we are in Christ.” The apostles never used such “filters” when proclaiming the gospel. They spoke simple and clear gospel truth that was meant to be accepted for what it said. The opposite is the case in Christian theology today. We have a justification that says we are righteous, *Romans 5:19* just not righteous in character or act; a sanctification that makes us holy, *Hebrews 13:12* but not holy in actual experience; a crucifixion that makes us dead to sin, but not *“dead indeed to sin,”* *Romans 6:11* and a blood that cleanses from all sin, *1 John 1:17* except it does not actually cleanse from all sin. In other words, we say “Yes it does,” then we say “No it doesn’t.” This is exactly what Paul was speaking of as being *“yea and nay.”* Some call this the difference between “our position in Christ” and “our condition in this world.” The apostles never presented the gospel that way.

Paul would have been dumbfounded to find out that the gospel he preached contained a difference between “position” and “condition” for the believer. The only thing close to a “positional” theology in Paul’s message is discovered in the words, *“...because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:”* *11 Corinthians 5:14* Paul let it be known that since Christ died for everyone, then everyone also died with Christ. This includes every believer, every unbeliever, every sinner, every atheist, etc. You could call this the “position” of all humanity. Yet this “position” does nothing for anyone before God. It is only those who believe the gospel of Christ that experience the saving power of his death and resurrection. Christ did not die to change our “position.” He died to change our “condition.” Positional theology is the great doctrinal loophole people use to disannul the gospel scriptures that are too powerful for them to believe. The only reason a person has a “position” without a corresponding “condition” is because their heart is blind to the truth of Christ. The scripture says they are *“alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”* *Ephesians 4:18.*

Years ago I stumbled at one of the simplest gospel passages in the scripture. Paul wrote, *“...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* *Hebrews 10:10.* I stumbled

at this passage because it seemed to deny all my wisdom concerning my sanctification. I understood the process of sanctification by the continuous “work of the Spirit,” by “growing in grace,” by “test and trials,” by “dying daily,” etc., but this passage did not fit any of those things. It confused me because it looked as though Paul was describing my sanctification as something that was completed at Calvary when Christ died on the cross. My wisdom told me that this was just too simplistic, and even foolish. I knew Christ had changed everything when I came to him, but still it could not be that simple. It was not until I was willing to believe the simplicity and the “foolishness” of this passage that I discovered that I could rest in the sanctification Christ completed for me on the cross. Today I know that I am *“sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all!”*

Paul’s statement, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God...”* II Corinthians 5:17-18 is not a complicated statement. It means what it says! If any person, man or woman, is in Christ, they are new creatures! The old has passed away, and they are become new. They are not new creatures only in Christ. They are *“in Christ”* therefore they are new creatures at home, on the job, on vacation, and when everything is going wrong. If they are not new creatures, they are not in Christ. Paul did not say “most people in Christ are new creatures, or “some people in Christ are new creatures.” He said “if ANY man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” This is not *“yea and nay.”* This is *“yea and Amen!”*

## **CHRIST IN YOU!**

“Will you receive Jesus into your heart today?” Words like these are often the only view of salvation that many people ever hear. It carries with it the idea that the “meek and lowly” Jesus of Nazareth wants to come and be your companion to help you through the ups and downs of life. He understands because he had ups and downs in life too. There are certainly truths in this idea of receiving Jesus

into your heart, but it falls oh so short of the glorious gospel of Christ.

Paul preached the gospel as “CHRIST IN YOU the hope of glory” Colossians 1:27. There is actually a reason that his message was not “Jesus in you.” Although in reality both messages are the same, yet in making known the truth of the gospel these messages are very different. When speaking of Jesus, the apostles were generally referring to “*Christ after the flesh*” II Corinthians 5:16. This began with his virgin birth and continued all the way through his resurrection and ascension. While it is certain that Jesus is Christ, when the apostles spoke of Christ they were speaking of so much more than just the 33½ years of his walk on earth. Paul wrote, “*Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more*” II Corinthians 5:16.

The apostles preached the eternal nature of Christ. John begins the message of Christ with “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*” John 1:1-3 Here, the eternal and divine nature of Christ is revealed as the one by whom all things were made. “*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not*” John 1:10. Paul joins in the eternal description of Christ saying “*...all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*” Colossians 1:16-17. Peter gives us insight into the eternal nature of Christ telling us that “*the Spirit of Christ*” was in the prophets “*when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” I Peter 1:11. It was this eternal Christ, who was with God and was God, who left his eternal glory and came to earth on a mission from heaven.

The clearest description in the scripture of what Christ’s mission was is found in the message delivered to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. He told Daniel that from the time a proclamation was given to rebuild and restore the fallen city of Jerusalem, there would be a period of 483 years (69 weeks of years) until “*the Messiah the prince,*” or “*the Christ,*” would appear. Daniel 9:25 In the middle of the

next 7 years (1 week of years) that followed, Christ would be killed (“cut off”). Yet before these years expired, he would “...make an end of sins ...make reconciliation for iniquity, and ...bring in everlasting righteousness...” Daniel 9:24. This “mission” is why the eternal Christ came to earth “...made in the likeness of men” Philippians 2:7.

We all know that Christ made “reconciliation for iniquity on the cross,” but that was only part of his mission! According to the prophecy, he also came “to make an end of sins” and “to bring in everlasting righteousness.” You can be sure that he did not fail in this heavenly mission. As a summary of all that Christ came to accomplish, John wrote, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” I John 3:8. After the serpent’s deception had succeeded in causing the fall of humanity into sin and darkness, God told the serpent that the “seed” of the woman “shall bruise thy head.” Genesis 3:15 Calvary was about God keeping that promise. Hanging upon the cross, Jesus let all eternity know that he, the Christ, had succeeded in all he had come to accomplish. With his last breath he cried, “It is finished,” John 19:30 for he had accomplished his mission upon earth!

If you look at the world after the cross, in that day or in our day, it appears that nothing changed. Sin still exists; most people are still not reconciled to God; there are no signs of everlasting righteousness; and Satan’s work is seen on every hand. But this is where the “mystery” of Christ is revealed Colossians 1:26. It is a mystery that the prophets did not fully understand. The Jews certainly did not comprehend it. Even many in the church today deny it. Jesus’ mission was not to fulfill these things in the world, in the nations, or even in certain groups of people. He came to do it all “IN YOU!” His mission was that YOU would be reconciled to God! That an end of sin would be made IN YOU! That everlasting righteousness would reign IN YOU! That Satan’s works would be destroyed IN YOU! Christ’s mission was always to obtain absolute victory on the cross and manifest that victory IN YOU. He did not fail in his mission on the cross, and (if you will believe this gospel and trust in Christ) he

will not fail IN YOU! The gospel is “CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY!”

## CHOCOLATE MILK CHRISTIANITY

When I hear people say that the children of God have two natures, it puzzles me. I consider that a man pours milk into a glass. He now has a glass of milk. Then he pours chocolate syrup into the glass. While it can be said that he has chocolate and milk in the glass, the truth is the glass now contains neither chocolate nor milk, but chocolate milk. Both ingredients together make up the content of the glass. So when I hear people say they have both the nature of Christ and a sinful nature in them, I conclude that they have either a “Sinful Christ Nature,” or perhaps a Christ-Like Sin Nature.” You say that is absurd. Well, I certainly agree!

Ever since Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, fallen humanity has been a mixture of both carnal good and evil. A person without Christ is capable of great acts of human goodness, but they are also capable of great ungodliness. Their carnal goodness, however, is not godliness. God is never a mixture. John said, *“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”* <sup>1 John 1:5</sup> Jesus told us *“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.”* <sup>Luke 6:43-44</sup> Anything mixed with sin is sinful. Just as the chocolate turns all the milk into chocolate milk, sin in the heart pollutes all the contents of the heart.

James let us know that something was very wrong when cursing and blessing came out of the same mouth. He said, *“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”* <sup>James 3:11-12</sup> When a person can show great love and then turn around and show hate, spite, or wrath, neither the hate, spite, and wrath, nor the seemingly “great love” are of God. If a fountain is polluted, everything that comes forth from the fountain is also polluted.

Many years ago, a woman called Brother Leroy Surface because another minister had referred her to him for help. She told Brother Surface about the great gift of prophecy God had endowed her with. She said many renowned men of God had heard her prophesy and told her it was as great a gift as they had ever seen or heard. She had one problem though. At times something would take control of her and she would begin to utter the vilest words of cursing and profanity. This thing would even cause her to curse God and rail at His name with horrible vulgarity. She asked Brother Surface if he could help her because she had been to many others and found no help. Brother Surface had seen this sort of thing before and had seen God bring complete deliverance. He told the woman "I can help you if you will believe what I tell you." "What is that?" the woman asked. Brother Surface said, "The spirit that prophesies such great things through you and the spirit that curses God and speaks profanity through you are the same spirit. You do not have the Holy Ghost. Your spirit of prophecy is an unclean spirit that possesses you." The woman protested. "No! My gift is a wonderful gift from God! Many men of God have told me so." "Have any of those who told you your gift was of God been able to help you?" Brother Surface asked. "No," the woman answered, "But let me prophesy to you and you will see how wonderful my gift is." "I don't need to hear you prophesy to know that this spirit is not of God," Brother Surface replied. The woman refused to accept what Brother Surface told her and the call ended with her still bound and possessed by an unclean spirit, while believing she had the Spirit of God.

Jesus told us *"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit"* Matthew 12:33. The church has accepted a gospel that says God's children are both sinful and righteous, but have ended up with a church where everyone is a sinner. Recent statistics show that above 50% of evangelical men and pastors, and 76% of evangelical young adults admit to regularly using pornography, but "they are Christians" we are told. Is this the glorious church that Jesus Christ purchased with his own blood?

Something is horribly wrong! Yet until once again from pulpits across the land we declare the blood of Christ that was shed to “*cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness,*” <sup>I John 1:9</sup> these problems will only get worse.

## STAY IN CHRIST

A healthy fish lays on the deck of a boat. It flops a little, then just lays there. It cannot swim, take in oxygen, or eat, all the things that are natural to fish. I do not know if it has any awareness of what has happened to it. It is still a fish, but if it stays out of the water it will soon die. Water is the only environment it can live in.

Jesus said “*Abide in me, and I in you.*” <sup>John 15:4</sup> These words describe two different conditions in our walk with God. One is “*Christ in you,*” the other is “*You in Christ.*” Without “*Christ in you,*” you are dead. Without “*You in Christ,*” you will die. Christ is “*our life.*” <sup>Colossians 3:4</sup> He is the life we have received within, but he is also the only “*environment*” we can live in.

Paul wrote, “*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*” <sup>Romans 8:9</sup> To be “*born again*” is not just a new philosophy of living. It is a real birth. If you are a child of God, the Spirit of Christ Jesus has come into you and changed everything about you. In the moment of your new birth, your sins were washed away, and your old man was found “*crucified with Christ*” where “*the body of sin was destroyed.*” <sup>Romans 6:6</sup> God gave you a new heart with his law written in it, <sup>Hebrews 10:16</sup> and you were sanctified “*holy*” by the shed blood of Christ. <sup>Hebrews 13:12</sup> Paul said the “*Spirit of his Son*” came in “*crying Abba, Father.*” <sup>Galatians 4:6</sup> This spontaneous hunger and cry from within to worship God and abide in his presence is one of the greatest evidences that there has been a new birth. This newborn child of God is no longer a sinner. Christ has come in and they have become “*a new creature.*” <sup>II Corinthians 5:17</sup>

Christ is not only the life that has come into the children of God, he is also the habitation, or kingdom, where God’s children live. Jesus’ admonition to “*Abide in me, and I in you,*” was not an admonition to himself. Christ comes into us to stay. His

admonishment is for us to stay in him. His words carry with them a warning. *“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 Jesus also said, *“**If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.**”* John 15:6

The word “*abide*” simply means “to stay.” Every child of God is “*born again*” in Christ. They do not have to “get in Christ.” They only need to stay in Christ and they will thrive and “*bring forth much fruit.*” John 15:5 In Christ they will find that sin has no dominion over them Romans 6:14 and Satan has no place in them. With Christ as the kingdom they live in, they find life to be “*righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*” Romans 14:7 In Christ, serving God in victory is as natural as a fish swimming in water. For these, there is no struggle to serve God. Christ lives in them and they thrive in Christ. These serve God in simple faith and communion with the Lord. Paul told us the secret of this walk saying, “*As (in that manner) ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so (in that manner) walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*” Colossians 2:6-7 None of the glories of salvation came to you through religious effort, but they were freely given to you through simple faith in Christ. Jesus said, “*Repent and believe the gospel,*” and you did. You simply trusted him, and he changed everything. This is also how you are to walk in him. Believe the gospel and trust in Christ. Ephesians 1:13

It is sad, but true, that most people are led out of Christ from the pulpit. Paul warned of this saying, “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*” Colossians 2:8 Simply put, they will give you every answer except Christ. It may be the “Law,” the “how to,” the “striving,” the “principles,” or just accept that “we are all just sinners.” None of this works for a child of God. They cannot live as a sinner because the life within them is repulsed by sin. The “Laws” of religion only deepen their struggle. The “how to” does not work for them, and the “principles” leave

them empty and dry. They feel like the fish, flopping and gasping for spiritual breath. They sense something is wrong, but do not comprehend what has happened to them. They are told “Don’t worry about it. This is just a normal thing for a Christian.” They do not understand that they have been given a gospel of religious flesh; and religious flesh is death to the children of God. It is an “air” that we cannot breathe. This is what Paul was warning of when he said, *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die...”* Romans 8:13 “Christ is our life! He is our breath! He is our habitation! If we simply stay in him, WE LIVE!

## PROMISES OF MEN

As a young minister, I was reading the words of Peter, *“Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,”* Matthew 26:35 when the Lord spoke to me, saying, ***“So goes the promises of men.”*** With these words, the Lord gave me understanding that you cannot build a walk with God upon your promises to God. If you want a walk that will stand, it must be built upon God’s promise to you.”

Peter told us that when the prophets foretold of this great salvation they knew they were not speaking unto themselves. Even though they used terms like *“house of Israel,”* or *“Zion,”* they understood that the promises they were hearing from God were not limited to a natural bloodline or generation. Peter wrote, *“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven...”* | Peter 1:10-12

Consider some of these amazing promises of our redemption which were spoken by the prophets of old.

*“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 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 36:24-27

*“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”* Jeremiah 31:31-34

*“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”* Isaiah 60:20

Can you believe God promised that you would be one those of whom he said *“shall be all righteous”*? Can you see that he promised he would cleanse you from all your filthiness and that he would give you a new heart and a new spirit, and you would keep his judgements and do them? This is not your promise to God. It is his promise to you. It is His promise that He would write his law in your heart and in your nature. In this promised redemption, you would not need someone to “disciple you” into righteousness, because God promised that you would know him for yourself, even if you were the “least” in the Kingdom of God.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is actually more than a promise. It is a promise fulfilled! Paul said, *“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again...”* Acts 13:32-33 The fact that Jesus Christ raised from the dead and ascended into heaven tells us that he had accomplished all that he was sent to do upon earth. These great promises of redemption are already fulfilled. They are now laid up in heaven, 1 Peter 1:4 waiting to be received on earth by those who will believe the gospel and trust in Christ. Ephesians 1:12-13

The reason that we do not teach the principles, methods, steps, how to, and the striving of religion is that such things as these are based upon human effort and ability. These things fail for the same reason the Law could not produce a righteous people. It was *“weak through the flesh.”* Romans 8:3 Anything that depends on human ability will fail you. The gospel of Christ only works for those who lose hope in human effort. God’s *“strength is made perfect in weakness.”* II Corinthians 12:9 When we realize that our strength can never keep us, we are ready to lay hold of that which cannot fail. Your promises to God will never keep you because they are not invested with the power of Christ. But, if you will believe what God promised, He has fulfilled in Christ for you, you will be like the house built upon the rock that the rising floods cannot wash away. You will walk in the victory of Christ, having a new spirit within, God’s law written in your heart and nature, and all your sin taken away! John 1:29 Let your confidence always be in Christ alone, and you will never fall. Jude wrote, *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”* Jude:24-25

## DID CHRIST FAIL?

The scripture gives just two explanations as to why any person lives, or dies, in sin. The first is hypothetical, because it is based upon a scenario that never existed. This scenario is that Christ failed in his mission upon earth. The apostle Paul wrote, *“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; **ye are yet in your sins**”* I Corinthians 15:17. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the proof that he is in fact the promised Christ, the Son of the living God. It is also the proof that he accomplished that which he came into the world to do. The prophet Isaiah tells us that after God would *“make his soul an offering for sin”* He would *“prolong his days.”* Isaiah 53:10 If Jesus did not come out of the grave on the third day, he was either an imposter, or he failed to accomplish that which God had

promised he would do. Either way, salvation would not have come and we would still be *"in our sins."*

A person is still in their sins as long as sin remains in them. The two conditions are inseparable. It is sin in the heart of a person that makes them a sinner. The acts of committing sin are simply evidence of what is in the heart, just as an apple hanging on the branch of a tree is an undeniable evidence that the tree is an apple tree. You can pick all the apples, but it is still an apple tree, from its "root" to its "fruit."

God defined the mission of Christ upon earth when he spoke to the serpent after Adam and Eve were corrupted by his subtlety. II Corinthians 11:3 He cursed the serpent and said *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* Genesis 3:15. This was the first promise that Christ would come, *"...made in the likeness of men."* Philippians 2:10 He would be the seed of the woman (born of a virgin) and his mission would be to *"bruise the head of the serpent."* That is how you kill a snake. Christ's mission was to *"destroy ...the devil,"* Hebrews 2:14 and thereby *"destroy the works of the devil,"* which is sin. John wrote, *"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."* I John 3:8 I truly believe that sin is nothing more or less than the nature of the serpent that entered into and polluted the heart and nature of man.

The clearest description of Christ's mission is found in the words of the angel Gabriel to Daniel concerning the coming of *"the Messiah the Prince."* Gabriel defined this mission as *"...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness..."* Daniel 9:24-25. Christians everywhere believe that Christ made reconciliation for iniquity through His death on the cross. Why do so many not also believe that he made an end of sins and brought in everlasting righteousness? People look at the world around us and are convinced that Christ did not make an end of sins, or bring in everlasting righteousness because of the horrible

condition of the world. But Christ did not die to “*make an end of sins*” in the world. He died to make an end of sin in you! The gospel is “*Christ in you the hope of glory!*” Colossians 1:27 If Jesus failed on the cross to do any of these things he was promised to do, he was not the Christ, but an imposter, and would have never come out of the grave.

Due to the fact that Christ was raised from the dead, we absolutely know that he did not fail in what he came to accomplish. This being the case, there is only one reason that any person is still “*in their sins.*” Jesus gave us this reason as he spoke to the Pharisees saying, “*...ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*” John 8:24 The Pharisees knew that Christ would “*make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness...*”, but they refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus let them know that as long as they continued in their unbelief, all their religious efforts would avail them nothing. They could strive against sin all the days of their life, but when they took their last breath, they would still be in their sins. Jesus reaffirms this as the reason that people are still in sin, saying of the Holy Ghost, “*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **Of sin, because they believe not on me;***” John 16:8-9

All over the world there are people who are in their sins simply because they have never heard this gospel of Christ. As Paul said, “*how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*” Romans 10:14 This is why Jesus told us to preach it to every creature. There are also many, however, who have heard this gospel, but refuse to believe it even though it is clearly stated in the scriptures. They profess to believe that Jesus is the Christ, but they refuse to believe that he actually takes away the sin of those who trust in him. Jesus speaks of these saying, “*...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 If they continue in their unbelief, they will also “die in their sins.”

## UNDERSTANDING REDEMPTION

Someone asked me recently, “Why didn’t God simply forgive Adam and Eve after they transgressed in the garden?” I told them I did not know if God forgave them or not, but if He did, it did not change the result of what they had done. Even if God forgave Adam and Eve, sin would still have dominion over them; Satan would still be the God of this world; their children would still be “*conceived in sin*” and “*shapen in iniquity;*” Psalms 51:5 and the death sentence (condemnation) would still hang over the head of every person from that day forward. Maybe they were forgiven, but what they needed was redemption.

Forgiveness is not redemption. Forgiveness deals with your past. Redemption is the act of recovering something that was lost. To understand redemption, there are four questions we must answer.

**1. WHAT WAS LOST?** We are what was lost. Adam’s transgression sold all humanity into the bondage of sin and Satan. The prophet spoke of this saying, “*For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.*” Isaiah 52:3 The apostle Paul confirms this when he speaks of trying to please God by the Law before he came to Christ. He said, “*...but I am carnal, sold under sin.*” Romans 7:14 In Adam, we were all sold “*under sin*” into the kingdom of darkness Colossians 1:13 from which we could never redeem ourselves.

**2. WHO WAS IT LOST TO?** We were lost to God. He created mankind in his image and for his glory. Mankind was to be a flesh and blood manifestation of the invisible God. In Adam’s transgression, we lost the image of God and took on the image of the serpent. John wrote, “*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning*” and “*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God...*” 1 John 3:8, 10 When Jesus said He came “*...to seek and to save that which was lost,*” he is speaking of us as being lost to God. Our redemption restores to God that which was lost to him. John wrote, “*And they sung a new song, saying,*

*Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation..."* Revelation 5:9 In redemption, the image and glory of God is restored upon those who are restored to God. Romans 8:29-30 As He was in Christ, so now in the redeemed, God is once again *"manifested in the flesh."* 1 Timothy 3:16

**3. WHO TOOK POSSESSION OF WHAT WAS LOST?** Sin and Satan became the lords over all humanity. They became possessors of what belonged to God. Just as God sent Moses to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt, God sent his own Son to deliver us from slavery in sin. Jesus said, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin."* John 8:34 Redemption delivers us from that bondage. Paul wrote that Christ *"...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* Titus 2:14 Notice that Christ redeemed us *"from all iniquity"*, and *"unto himself."* This is why the angel told Joseph *"thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* Matthew 1:21 Calvary was not about paying a debt for sin. It was about delivering us from sin itself.

**4. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RESTORE WHAT WAS LOST TO THE ONE IT WAS LOST TO?** The final part of understanding redemption is to recognize what was required to redeem that which was lost. This is called the *"ransom."* It is the cost of redemption. The scripture is clear that Christ *"...gave himself a ransom for all..."* 1 Timothy 2:6 A ransom does not necessarily speak of a payment to someone, but it does always speak of what it cost to redeem something. In World War II, millions of Allied soldiers died on the battlefield fighting the Nazis. Their blood was the ransom required to deliver the world from Hitler's tyranny. Even so, the blood of Christ was the ransom required to destroy Satan and deliver us from all sin and iniquity. No one has to be a slave to sin or Satan any longer, because Christ shed his blood to make us free. We are redeemed!

*"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;"* Psalms 107:2

Finally, there is a mistranslation in the KJV and some other versions of the Bible which blind many people to the truth of redemption. When the apostle tells us *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...”* Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, the word he used that was translated as *“forgiveness”* is the Greek word *“aphesis”* which actually means *“freedom.”* *“Aphesis”* is the word Jesus used for both *“deliverance”* and *“liberty”* when he read the prophecy *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath 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 4:18-19 *“Aphesis”* always means freedom. *“We have redemption through his blood, the freedom from sins...”* Jesus came not to only forgive sins, but to redeem from sin and restore us to God.

## WHY CHRIST DIED

God is both merciful and forgiving. According to what God told Moses almost fifteen hundred years before Christ died on the cross, our *“God”* has always been a merciful, gracious, and forgiving God. If this is true, why is it taught that Jesus had to die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven?

The prophet Isaiah said, *“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 These words, written almost seven hundred years before Christ died on the cross, reveal God as one who will *“abundantly pardon”* even the most wicked among us if they will *“forsake their way”* and *“turn to the LORD.”* So if God has always pardoned those who forsake their wickedness and turn to Him, why would it have been necessary for Jesus to die on the cross in order for God to pardon our sins?

The church, from the most lascivious to the most legalistic among us, teaches that Jesus died on the cross so that God could forgive our sins. The inescapable truth is, God has always forgiven

and pardoned those who have forsaken their sins and turned to Him? Another “inescapable truth” is that Jesus Christ must have died on the cross for something so much more.

The apostle Paul makes a powerful point when he tells us “...if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21 It is evident that if the Law could make anyone righteous then for Jesus to suffer and die to make people righteous would be a waste and a vanity. The same is true for anything that was available to mankind before Jesus Christ came and died. If Christ died to forgive and pardon sins, which was something God had forever done for all who forsake their ways and turn to him, Christ’s death was unnecessary and in vain.

So, why did Christ die? Those who know the answer to this question also “know the truth” which Jesus said will “make them free from sin.” Those who scream, “No one is free from sin” can speak only from their personal experience, because they do not know (or believe) the word of God. Christ, the creator of the universe, became a man in the womb of Mary for the sole purpose of dying on the cross to “take away the sin of the world.” John 1:29 The Old Testament prophecy of the “Seventy Weeks” tells why Christ came into the world: “...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness....” Daniel 9:24-27 From the beginning of time, God had “forgiven transgressions,” but Christ died to “finish the transgression.” God had “forgiven sins,” but Christ died to “make an end of sins.” God had “forgiven iniquities,” but Christ died to “make reconciliation for iniquity.” Through His death, He “destroyed the works of the devil,” John 3:8 when He “destroyed the devil himself” Hebrews 2:14 for those who “abide in Christ.” John 3:5-6

Before the first century passed, men had started to pervert the gospel of God’s grace into something that it was not. Jesus foretold this event in His parable of “The Wheat and the Tares,” saying, “...while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat...” Matthew 13:25 The apostle Paul warned the believers in Galatia against those who “pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:4-5 They twisted the grace of Christ into a doctrine that gave us over a

thousand years of spiritual darkness. Then came the reformation as the “light of the gospel” began to pierce through the “darkness of religion,” but once again, the “enemy” sowed tares among the wheat.

“Penal substitution” is a redemptive theory that has been around for less than five hundred years. This “theory” is commonly expressed as “Jesus took the penalty for our sins.” Although it is never once spoken by the scriptures, almost everyone in the modern church believes this theory, and most have come to the logical conclusion that if “Jesus took my penalty, I can continue to sin without fear of suffering a penalty.” Very obviously, as Jude said almost two thousand years ago, “*ungodly men*” are still “*turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.*”<sup>Jude 1:4</sup> Jesus said the “*tares*” are “*the children of the wicked one,*”<sup>Matthew 13:38</sup> but the “*seed*” that produces them is the “perverted gospel.” Where does the scripture say our sins are forgiven, “past, present, and future, even before we commit them?” The Bible says Christ’s sacrifice declares “*his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*”<sup>Romans 3:25</sup> Where does the scripture say Christ shed His precious blood to “cover our sins?” The apostle Paul said, “*Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*”<sup>Hebrews 13:12</sup> Where does the scripture say a “child of God is still a sinner, and must sin everyday?” John said, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...*”<sup>1 John 3:5-6</sup>

Finally, where is the “believer” who actually believes what the scriptures say about Christ dying to make us free from sin?

**Romans 6:22: “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*”**

## THE GREAT SHAKING

In Hebrews 12:18-27, the apostle Paul tells of two mountains: one that “*might be touched*” by the hands of man, and another that

cannot be touched. The first was Mount Sinai in the day that God spoke audibly to His chosen people. *“Obey my voice and keep my covenant”* He said, *“and you will be my special people, above all people”* Exodus 19:5-6. The mountain was on fire; the earth shook; thunders rolled; trumpets were pealing, and they heard the voice of God speaking. So fearful was the sight that the people refused to hear the voice of God, saying to Moses, *“Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die”* Exodus 20:19. That generation never received the promise because they refused to hear God's voice. The earth “shook” that day, and that entire generation, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, were also “shaken” and “moved out of the way” Hebrews 12:27.

Paul reminds us of those who lost the promise at the first mountain and speaks to our generation; *“You are come unto mount Zion...”* Hebrews 12:22. We have the same promise that was lost at the first mountain. We will be His *“special people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation”* if we *“hear the voice”* that speaks from mount Zion. Paul tells us about this *“mount Zion.”* It is *“the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”* In it is *“an innumerable company of angels; the general assembly and church of the firstborn.”* God, *“the judge of all”* is there, along with *“the spirits of just men made perfect”* Hebrews 12:23. Among these are Able, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and all others who *“died in faith”* Hebrews 11:13-16. They were *“made perfect”* Hebrews 10:14 when Jesus shed His precious blood to take away the sin of man. John 1:29, I John 3:5

Jesus, *“the mediator of the new covenant”* and His precious blood, the *“blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Able”* Hebrews 12:24 will be there. The blood that Able *“sprinkled”* in his *“more excellent sacrifice”* Hebrews 11:4, was animal blood, which speaks only of a “covering for sins,” but the blood of Jesus speaks of *“much more”* when it speaks of *“justification”* Romans 5:9. His blood is the *“blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified”* Hebrews 10:29. It speaks of *“cleansing from all sin”* I John 1:7, *“sanctification”* Hebrews 13:12, *“washing”* Revelation 1:5, *“redemption”* Ephesians 1:7, *“purification”* Hebrews 9:13-14, *“pardon”* Romans 3:25, *“peace”*

Colossians 1:20, *“entrance”* Hebrews 10:19, *“perfected in works”* Hebrews 13:20-21, and *“made to be overcomers”* Revelation 12:11.

Jesus warned, *“Take heed what you hear”* Mark 4:24. Always remember, *“There are many voices, but only one Word of God.”* The *“voice”* of the gospel is the blood of Jesus Christ, which was *“sprinkled”* to take sin out of the heart of man. The *“voice”* of a true prophet is *“the testimony of Jesus”* Revelation 19:10. In Mount Sinai, the *“voice”* was God, and the people refused to hear. The *“voice”* from mount Zion is the blood of Jesus Christ. *“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven”* Hebrews 12:25.

Modern day prophets warn of *“the great shaking,”* usually of mundane things like the crash of the stock market and the collapse of the American economy. These will come, but the *“prophets”* have prophesied visions of their own hearts when they call it the *“great shaking.”* Over four hundred years before Christ the prophet Haggai prophesied, *“Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come”* Haggai 6-7. God said there would be *“one more shaking.”* The first shaking was at Sinai, and the last would be at Mount Zion. God shook the earth at Sinai; at Mount Zion, the *“sprinkling”* of the blood of Jesus *“shook both heaven and earth;”* Satan was *“cast out of heaven”* Revelation 12:9-11, and *“the world was turned upside down”* Acts 17:6. False teachers entered, denying *“the speaking of the blood,”* thus *“turning the grace of God into lasciviousness”* Jude 1:4. Their *“gospel”* made Christ to *“be of no effect”* Galatians 5:4 to all who believed it, and *“the truth”* Jesus said would *“make you free”* John 8:36 was lost for centuries. The *“church”* has been weak and sinful unto this day wherever the *“speaking of the blood”* is not heard.

Betty Jean Robinson wrote a beautiful prophetic song titled *“It's Going to Rain Again.”* The *“blood of Jesus”* will speak once more as the gospel of Christ is restored to the church. Every nation, kingdom, and religion will be *“shaken”* as the blood speaks from Mount Zion through gospel preachers. The *“fads of religion,”* so

popular in our generation, will be exposed for what they are. Those who cling to either “law” or “lasciviousness” will be shaken and removed. Many in the heathen religions of the world will hear, while many in the modern “church” will be shaken and removed. Hebrews 12:27 The greatest harvest of souls will take place just before the return of Jesus Christ, when the message which the blood speaks is heard once more. *“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

## I AM JOE

JC, a prison minister who sometimes volunteers to help the prison chaplain, was handed an offender’s request form and asked to go speak to the inmate listed on the form. The man’s request form said, “I am a Muslim and I want to talk to a chaplain about my faith and what I believe.” JC glanced at the name on the request form and when he found the man he noticed that he had a patch over one eye. JC told the man “I am here to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

He began to tell the man who Christ is. He is the one who *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”* John 1:1-3 He shared how the angel Gabriel told Daniel that Christ would come into the world to *“make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.”* Daniel 9:24-25 The sin that Christ would make an end of was the sin that was brought into the heart and nature of mankind when Adam disobeyed God.

Finally JC shared how that Christ came in human flesh and died on the cross as Jesus the Son of God. When Christ, the one by whom all things were made, carried our sin to the cross and died, our sin died with him. The Apostle Paul said, *“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 This is how Christ makes an end of sin in everyone who believes the gospel and trusts in Christ.

After sharing the gospel of Jesus “*The Christ*”, JC started to leave, but the man said, “Wait! So you’re telling me that if I get saved I’m not going to struggle with sin anymore?” “Let me explain it this way” JC said:

*“There was this man named Joe who had a problem breaking into houses. He got caught and went to jail, but when he got out he still had this problem breaking into houses. Joe was caught again and went back to jail. This time he received a longer sentence, but when he got out he still had this problem breaking into houses. One day as Joe was breaking into a home, the owner of the home shot Joe and Joe died.”*

JC then asked “Does Joe still have a problem breaking into houses?” JC noticed a strange look on the man’s face as he answered “No.” “Why not?” JC asked. He answered, “Because Joe is dead.” “That’s right” JC said, and like the Bible says, “*he that is dead is freed from sin.*” Our death to sin in union with Christ is that real! The man replied “Now I know that God sent you to talk to me. I’m Joe.” JC was puzzled and asked “What?” The man pointed to his request form and said “I am Joe!” JC looked at the man’s request form and realized that what he assumed was his last name was actually his first name. It was a long name that started with the letters J-o. The man said “They call me Joe.” This is my third time in prison. This last time I got shot. That is how I lost my eye. I should be dead, but God gave me another chance so I could hear what you have told me. When you get back to the Chaplain’s office, tell the Chaplain to change my name form from Muslim to Christian. I want to be free!”

At each encounter with Joe, JC remembers the moment that Joe said, “I know that God sent you, because **I am Joe!**”

## ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

As a young minister I was questioning the Lord concerning the difference between what his word said and the sin I saw in the lives of Christian people. I said, “Your word says it cleanses from all unrighteousness, sanctifies the people, and purges the conscience. Why doesn’t your blood do what it did for the early church? Why doesn’t your blood do what your word says it does?” Having put God on the spot (I foolishly thought), he answered me with these words: *“Why don’t you believe my blood does what my word says that it does?”* I understood then that the problem was not with God, his word, or the blood of Jesus Christ. The problem was that we had ceased to believe the word of God. We had become so wise that we knew (so we thought) that “cleanse” did not mean cleanse, “sanctify” did not mean sanctify, “purge” did not mean purge, and “from all unrighteousness” did not mean from ALL unrighteousness. I also realized that we would not see the cleansing power of the blood in the lives of people until we first believed and preached the cleansing power as it is in the Bible.

I am not a defender of “orthodox” theology. Orthodox can be defined as *“adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith.”* The catholic church of the dark ages persecuted those who would not adhere to their accepted theology. Some protestant movements also persecuted and killed those who did not adhere to their particular “accepted” theology. The truth is that even today most of us judge truth based upon how it fits with our accepted doctrine and not how it fits with the scripture.

As a young minister, I was questioning an elder pastor concerning things the scripture said. Having no answer for the scriptures, he told me, “You need to just accept what holy men of God in our general council have told us these scriptures mean.” I knew I had just been told to not be concerned about what the scripture actually say, but to accept what was considered acceptable. That is not what Jude instructed the believer to do! He said that we should *“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* *Jude 1:3*

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