



Behold the Lamb

Publications

Simply Christ

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

Volume 8

*Twelve Gospel Messages from our
Weekly SIMPLY CHRIST Newsletter!*

A Simple Gospel

A minister should never try to preach something they believe is “a deep revelation.” If what you bring is not simple and clear to you, it will bring confusion to those you minister to. I am not saying that others may not perceive what God has given you to be “deep,” but it must be simple to the one who proclaims it. The power of the gospel of Christ is in its simplicity.

Paul said “*the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.*” These “*deep things*” become simple things to the one to whom they are “*revealed.*” Revelation from God never makes you feel as though you are the smartest person around. Usually you are left wondering why you never saw this before. You may say to

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

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 to you that you feel every one else should easily understand it also.

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 8

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OUR GREAT PHYSICIAN

About three months ago I noticed a small dark spot on the side of my nose that looked like a piece of hardened blood. I pulled it off and discovered that underneath there was a deep hole in the side of my nose about the size of a pencil lead. It did not bleed and after a few days it covered with a light film, but the skin around it became raised and I could still see the hole. As I do with all such things, as I finish my daily time of prayer, I said, "Lord, take this away. It should not be there."

As the weeks passed, the hole became larger and more of the skin around it became raised and tender. I have to say this concerned be quite a bit, but I simply prayed about it and went on. Yet with each passing week this thing seemed to consume more of my nose. As we prepared for our Spring 2019 Campmeeting, this situation began to bother me more and more. I asked the church to pray with me, and said, "I have seen the Lord do so many wonderful things. I want to trust him with this also."

In the week leading up to Campmeeting, this hole began to expand rapidly. This troubled me. One day I saw a man whom it appeared had his ear removed due to some kind of cancer. I admit that I began to have unpleasant thoughts about having half my nose cut off. I kept seeing the Apple Computer logo, which is an "Apple" with a bite taken out of it. I said to myself, "That's what my nose will look like if the doctors have to deal with this."

I am not opposed to doctors or medicine, but Jesus Christ has always been my physician. Like King David, I have always desired to fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of men. II Samuel 24:14. There are so many healings and miracles God has given both myself and my family that I suppose some believe I make up the testimonies I give. Yet for some reason today's trials always seem more real than yesterday's victories. And it was today that I needed a touch from heaven.

The presence of God filled the Spring Campmeeting services. Rev. Andre Oatis from Donaldsonville Louisiana ministered the Saturday

Evening service and the glory of God filled the altar service. I called Bro. Oatis over and showed him what was going on with my nose. He prayed and rebuked this attack, and we just continued to worship God with the congregation. By the time Campmeeting was over, people were rejoicing continually in the Lord, but I could also see the concern in the eyes of many.

The days that followed were quite disconcerting. This thing increased in size measurably from day to day. The surrounding skin began to change color, and the entire area became painful to the touch. I told the Lord I wanted to trust him, but I did not know what he wanted me to do. I said, "Lord I know nothing can come into my life except you permit it. What are you doing here with this? I have never been one that believes a healing or miracle comes through "confessing." In fact I have seen far more people receive healings and miracles who at times expressed sincere fears or doubts than I have seen in those who tried to make sure every word was "positive" or who professed God was bound to do a certain thing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, *"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. BUT IF NOT, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods..."* Daniel 3:17-18. Trusting God is not something you do only if God does what you want him to do. Trusting God IS trusting God!

By the fourth day after Campmeeting, things appeared noticeably worse. People would look at me silently, not wanting to point out the obvious. It was enlarged, enflamed, and very tender. It seemed I could even feel it growing and consuming more flesh. I asked and told the Lord many things during this time. I never said I would not go to a doctor although I knew many would think me a fool for waiting so long. There were times I might have been in agreement with them. Finally, I told the Lord, "I believe you will take care of this. I will trust you!"

Around 10:00pm that evening, I was in my office when I lifted my finger and touched the place on my nose. I looked and there was blood on my finger. I touched it again and there was more blood. I went to the bathroom mirror, reached up and lightly pulled on the

raised portion around the hole in my nose. The skin pulled off and then a chunk of dead flesh came out. Underneath there was a hole the size of a pencil eraser and it was doing something it had never done in these three months. It was bleeding. Maybe it should have horrified me, but it did not. Somehow I knew this was the hand of the Lord. The bleeding stopped shortly and all the pain and inflammation was gone. I thanked the Lord and went to bed in peace.

In the morning the hole had neatly clotted over and you could only see a smooth scab about the size of a small button. There was no sign of redness, inflammation, or any other such thing. My wife saw me and asked “What did you do.” I just pointed to the place on my nose and said, “This is my miracle.” When I saw a brother a few days later he said, “I thought you went and had whatever that was burned off.” Each day that passed you could see the area getting smaller and healing as a normal wound should. I just want to offer thanks to Our Great Physician, Jesus Christ!

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” II Corinthians 2:14

FLESH AND SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul often presented the gospel in terms of “*Flesh*” and “*Spirit*.” If human nature, human effort, religious law, or carnal religious activity was the source or cause of it, he called it “*Flesh*.” If it came from God through the gospel of Christ, he called it “*Spirit*.” Jesus had already revealed this when he said, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” John 3:6.

“*Sinful flesh*” is easy to recognize. It is human nature that was polluted with sin through Adam’s disobedience. The “*works of the flesh (adultery, fornication, uncleanness, etc.)*” Galatians 5:19 are the full manifestation of “*sinful flesh*.” It is this pollutant of sin that Christ came to purge from the heart and nature of all who believe upon him. John 1:29.

Christ was sent to “condemn (sentence to death) *sin in the flesh*” Romans 8:3. Romans 6:6, and thereby “*save his people from their sins.*” Other passages confirm that “*Christ crucified*” is God’s full remedy for sinful flesh. Paul said those who are in Christ “...are *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*” Colossians 2:11. Paul also confirms this to the Galatians, saying, “...*they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” Galatians 5:24. These passages describe the work of the cross in our redemption. It is through the cross of Christ that “*the body of sin is destroyed.*” Romans 6:6.

Just as the forbidden fruit had the knowledge of both “*good and evil,*” flesh has a side that appears to be “good.” Paul described how this deceptive “goodness” of flesh had once deceived him, saying, “*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*” What was this “flesh” he was speaking of? It was everything he trusted in, in the Law of Moses. It was being “*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*” Philippians 3:5-6. Yet when Paul saw the glory of Christ, all the “*flesh*” he once trusted became as garbage in his own sight. Philippians 3:8. He finally understood the words of Jesus, who said, “*the flesh profits nothing.*” John 6:63.

The Law was a covenant of “flesh.” The Ten Commandments were spiritual Romans 7:14 and God intended for it to be written in the hearts of the people when he spoke them from Mt. Sinai, but the Mosaic Law is a “*carnal ordinance*” Hebrews 9:10 given for unrighteous people. I Timothy 1:9. Paul describes service of God under the Law as being “*in the flesh.*” He says, “*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.*” Romans 7:5. Even today, the blindness of being “*in the flesh*” causes many people to futilely attempt to serve God through carnal “commandment keeping.”

A stumbling block for many people is something Paul called *“the righteousness which is of faith.”* While it is evident that a person who is content to continue in sin does not even know God, there are others who sincerely aspire to serve the Lord, but attempt to do so through the keeping of carnal commandments, rituals, or ordinances. Those who seek righteousness through *“commandment keeping.”* are laboring *“in the flesh”* for a prize they will never receive. Paul told us that a person *“believes unto righteousness.”* Romans 10:10. This does not mean (as some pervert it to mean) that if a person continues in sin, but has faith, God sees them as righteous. *“Believing unto righteousness”* means that the promises of redemption are only received through believing the truth of the gospel. True righteousness is of the Spirit, and cannot be obtained through fleshly means. It is only received through believing the gospel of Christ which has the power to transform you completely.

Paul’s letter to the Galatians was written to a people who had *“begun in the Spirit,”* but were deceived into believing they would be *“made perfect by the flesh.”* Galatians 3:3. The *“flesh”* they were turning to was the commandments and ritualism of Moses. Many times I have heard those who profess salvation by grace but think they are becoming like Christ through their religious works. Paul’s question to such was, *“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”* Galatians 3:3. The same grace that saves us from sin keeps us in his likeness as we abide in the glorious light of Christ! Jude

24.

The entire epistle to the Galatians is a warning to those who embrace the Law of Moses, or any other religious commandment, as a manner of serving God. These things promise a righteousness, which they can never bring to you. In fact, the opposite awaits you. Those who embrace fleshly religion will end up in *“the works of the flesh.”* The more they cling to the carnal commandment, precept, or principle, the more concupiscence will rage in their heart. Romans 7:8. Those who seek *“perfection”* by the flesh always end up overcome by *“the works of the flesh.”*

When Paul said, *“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”* Galatians 5:16, he was simply telling us to walk in the light of the gospel of Christ. If a person *“walks in the Spirit,”* the lusts of the flesh are the furthest things from their heart, mind, or nature. Paul reiterates that the desires of the Spirit are so opposite and different from the desires of the flesh that it is impossible for anyone who walks in the Spirit to do the things a person does who walks in the flesh. Galatians 5:17. If you are *“born of the Spirit,”* then you *“live in the Spirit,”* so *“walk in the Spirit!”* Galatians 5:25. Simple faith in Christ through belief of the truth is more powerful than any fleshly religious work. **Walk in the Spirit ...and live!**

MUST I DIE DAILY?

For many years I believed the Christian walk was one of “dying daily” to sin and the flesh. I was sure this was true because the Apostle Paul said, *“I die daily.”* If he had to die daily to sin and the flesh, certainly we have to also. Then I did something out of place for a modern churchgoer. I actually looked up Paul’s words in the Bible so I could read them for myself. What I discovered shocked me.

As Paul was refuting those who denied the resurrection, he asked, *“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”* 1 Corinthians 15:12. Understanding that the entire gospel message hinged on the resurrection of Christ from the dead, Paul said, *“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”* 1 Corinthians 15:14-15.

Paul then points out the foolishness of putting his life at risk to preach the gospel if there is no resurrection. He asks, *“And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?”* 1 Corinthians 15:30. Perhaps no one ever suffered more for the gospel’s sake than the Apostle Paul. Consider the account he gives of the things he faced to preach the gospel.

*“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, **in deaths oft**. Of the Jews five times received I **forty stripes** save one. Thrice was I **beaten** with rods, once was I **stoned**, thrice I suffered **shipwreck**, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in **perils** of waters, in **perils** of robbers, in **perils** by mine own countrymen, in **perils** by the heathen, in **perils** in the city, in **perils** in the wilderness, in **perils** in the sea, in **perils** among false brethren; In **weariness** and **painfulness**, in watchings often, in **hunger** and thirst, in fastings often, in **cold** and **nakedness**.”* II Corinthians 11:23-27.

Notice Paul said he was *“in deaths often.”* This is what he was referring to when he said, *“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**.”* I Corinthians 15:31. Day after day he put his life in jeopardy to preach the gospel of Christ. How many times must he have not known if he would survive the beating, stoning, shipwreck, betrayal, etc. that he was currently facing? When I realized what Paul was expressing with the words *“I die daily,”* I knew it would be an arrogant and absurd boast for me to take up these words and apply them to myself.

Paul’s true gospel profession for himself, and for everyone who knows the reality of Christ, was actually the opposite of *“I die daily.”* As he presented gospel realities that every believer needs to know, he 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.”* Romans 6:6. This is the power of the cross of Christ. The cross crucified the person we once were (*our old man*) and destroyed the entirety (*body*) of sin so that from the hour we came to Christ (*henceforth*), we would never again serve sin!

Paul did not present our “crucifixion” as a work in process, or as something to be repeated over and over in our walk. He reminds us that *“Christ being raised from the dead **dieth no more**; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, **he died unto sin once**: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”* Romans 6:9-10. Christ died once unto sin for us and never has to die again. He now forever lives unto God. It is at this point Paul gives us the great gospel

assurance that we must stand upon. He says *“Likewise”* (just like Jesus died unto sin once, but now lives unto God) we must *“reckon”* (account, acknowledge the truth) that we are *“dead indeed (in fact) unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Romans 6:11. This is not confessing something to be true that is not. It is recognizing the power of what Christ actually did for us (and in us) upon the cross. This simple recognition and acknowledgement of the truth is vital to our rest, victory, and freedom in Christ!

The modern church has an irreconcilable conflict with Paul’s gospel profession. There is almost universal agreement that “we are all sinners and (many add) we sin every day.” This “ungospel” profession cannot be reconciled with the gospel the Apostle Paul preached. **You cannot count yourself *“to be dead in fact unto sin”* and claim to be a sinner also.** That would be what some people refer to as “speaking out of both sides of your mouth.”

If you stood in most churches and said “No! We are not all sinners! The redeemed are dead to sin and alive unto God,” you would be branded a deceived, arrogant, heretic or fool.” Yet until the church begins to hear such voices, the slide into the uncleanness and darkness that permeates the church world will continue. When *“truth is fallen in the streets”* Isaiah 59:14, it lays there until someone picks it up and begins to declare it.

A child of God is in fact *“dead unto sin, but alive unto God.”* Although we do not *“die daily,”* we do need daily renewal in the Spirit of God. Paul said, *“...the inner man is renewed day by day.”* 11 Corinthians 4:16. We eat and drink of Christ daily through his Spirit and his word, and he is the *“bread of life”* and the *“living water”* that sustains us as we walk through this present world.

AN IRRECONCILABLE DISPUTE

The modern church and the Apostle Paul are on opposite sides of an irreconcilable dispute. One is in agreement with scholars, theologians, and many millions of people. The other stands solely on the writings of the prophets and the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ. If one is correct, then the other is

stubborn, arrogant, and wrong. The question is, “What is the truth, and where in all of this, do each of us stand?”

The Apostle Paul did not believe or preach that a child of God is still a sinner. In fact his message was just the opposite. Of those who claimed that sinners would be received by God, he said *“LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU WITH VAIN WORDS: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”* Ephesians 5:6-7. He would list sins and warn that **anyone** who did such things would not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:21, I Corinthians 6:9.

Paul was adamant about this. He continually affirmed that sin was a thing of the past for a child of God. He said, *“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.”* I Corinthians 6:11.

In our modern religious philosophy, the question is asked, “How is it possible that a Christian could cease from sin?” Paul’s question was exactly the opposite of this. His question was “How is it possible for a Christian to continue to sin?” He wrote, *“How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* Romans 6:2. You may hear that the neighborhood thief was killed today, but if he breaks in your house tonight, you will know that his death was a false report. To Paul, it was unthinkable and not possible that someone who was in fact *“crucified with Christ”* could continue to sin.

Many are quick to point out that Paul labeled himself the chief of sinners. What they fail to tell you is that he qualified this statement two verses earlier, saying of himself, *“Who was before (previously) a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”* I Timothy 1:13. Paul confessed himself to be chief of sinners because he had persecuted the church, but he also lets us know that these things ceased immediately when he came to Christ! He said, *“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.”* I Thessalonians 2:10.

As in every church today, Paul recognized that in each of the churches he ministered to, there were some who **“CONFESS, BUT DO NOT POSSESS.”** Jesus had warned there would be *“tares”* among the *“wheat,”* but he also warned the ministers about seeking to uproot *“the tares,”* saying, *“...lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.”* Matthew 13:29. Yet you cannot let *“the tares”* take over the church. In some parts of Paul’s epistles there was as much written to *“the tares”* as there was to *“the wheat.”* If you have to tell a person to *“abstain from fornication,”* you are not instructing *“the wheat.”*

There are certainly times a minister must tell a person to *“depart from iniquity.”* I Timothy 2:19. However, it is different with Christ. **When Christ comes in, he commands iniquity to depart from the person!** Sin, iniquity, and every power of darkness must flee from the heart of any person into whom the light of Jesus Christ shines.

The Apostles did not present Jesus Christ as the *“Lamb of God who covers our sin or takes our guilt and penalty.”* They declared him to be *“the Lamb of God which **TAKES AWAY THE SIN** of the world.”* John 1:29. He is *“the Christ”* who gave himself to *“redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”* Titus 2:14.

Those who teach that the children of God are still sinners, are not in a dispute with someone like me. They are in fact disputing the apostles of Christ and the gospel they preached which *“turned the world upside down”* in their generation.

PURGING OUR CONSCIENCE

When I was about eight years old, I uttered some words my mother found very disrespectful. *“You need your mouth washed out!”* she exclaimed. She then summoned me to the bathroom and stuck a bar of soap in my mouth. I don’t know if it actually cleaned anything, but it sure made me pay attention to what came out of my mouth. If only it was this easy to wash the human heart.

All human efforts to deal with sin fall short of being a true solution. At best, human remedies only deal with a portion of the problem.

The Mosaic Law used the fear of death to effect change upon the people. *Hebrews 2:15*. Yet with all its rituals, commandments, and ordinances it could only change the actions of a person. It could not change what they were in heart and nature. Jesus described this approach as being like those who washed a cup on the outside, but on the inside it remained filthy. *Matthew 23:25*.

No book in the Bible deals more directly with the failure of human effort to cleanse a person from sin than Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. Paul presents that a person is not "complete" before God until they have been washed from sin, not only in their actions, but in their heart also.

The KJV Bible uses the words "***perfect, perfection, and perfected***" to describe the completion Paul speaks of in his letter to the Hebrews. These terms are not speaking of some kind of "spiritual robot" who never makes a mistake, but these describe a work that is not partial or incomplete in its reach and effect. When Paul says "*for the Law made nothing perfect*" he is pointing out that the Law could never do a "complete" work in a person. On the other hand, when he writes "*For by one offering he (Christ) hath perfected forever them that are sanctified,*" Paul is showing that Jesus Christ does not bring a partial salvation. When he sanctifies a person, he does it completely.

Central to our "completion" through Christ is the issue of our "***conscience.***" This speaks of "our innermost thoughts and feelings." Our "*conscience*" is not manifest only when we may do something we know is wrong, but our "*conscience*" determines why we do the things we do and think the things we think. This is what Jesus referred to as being "*the heart.*" He said, "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man...*" *Matthew 15:19-20*.

Any answer for sin that does not wash it from the heart is "***weak and unprofitable.***" *Hebrews 7:18*. This includes Moses' Law, which was based upon "***...gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.***" *Hebrews 9:9*. This inability to "complete" the worshipper was revealed in the fact that

the Law through its various washings could *“sanctify to the purifying of the flesh...”* Hebrews 9:13, (which speaks of the outer man), but it could do nothing to purge the inner *“conscience”* from sin. Paul points out that if the sacrifices of the Law could have purged the conscience *“...then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had **no more conscience of sins.**”* Hebrews 10:2. Those sacrifices could never purge the inner *“conscience”* from sin, therefore it left the worshipper very *“incomplete”* and defiled before God.

Paul presents the blood of Christ as a far superior sacrifice because it does so much more than just cleanse the outside of a person. He said *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**”* Hebrews 9:14. This is what Jesus described as *“washing the inside of the cup.”* Matthew 23:25. The offering of Jesus Christ upon the cross was the first and only sacrifice ever given that could wash sin from the heart and nature of man or woman.

I know this goes contrary to most religious tradition, but those who are washed by the blood of Christ no longer have a sin nature. If they do, then the blood of Christ is no better than the blood of animals. Paul reminds us that *“...it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”* Hebrews 10:4. Yet the Bible is clear that Jesus Christ is *“the Lamb of God **who takes away the sin of the world.**”* John 1:29. What do we believe? Does the blood of Christ actually take our sin away? Or does it not?

The purging of our *“conscience”* from sin is what Paul gives as the basis of our completion in Christ. He says, *“For by one offering he (Jesus Christ) hath perfected (completed) forever them that are sanctified.”* Hebrews 10:14. The word *“forever”* means *“into perpetually.”* The blood of Christ has no expiration date. If you do not draw back from faith in Christ Hebrews 10:39, the blood that washed your heart from all sin when you came to Christ will keep it clean throughout this life and into the world to come!

In a final confirmation of the complete cleansing Christ brings to the believer through his shed blood, the apostle exhorts us to

“...draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:22. Our *“full assurance of faith”* is that Christ not only washed our bodies from the stain of sin, but he also washed our hearts from the source of sin, which is *“an evil conscience.”* He did this perfect work with the *“blood and water”* John 19:34 that flowed from his pierced side. This is the source of true completion. It is the purpose for which Jesus Christ shed his blood!

THE GLORY THAT FOLLOWS

If you want to truly understand the grace given to us in redemption, like the Apostles, you must look to the prophets of God who ministered before Christ appeared.

Apostle Peter tells us the *“Spirit of Christ”* was in the prophets telling of the grace that would be bestowed upon us. He said, *“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.”* | Peter 1:10. The grace of God is forever defined, not by a theologian who presents a theory, but by what *“the Spirit of Christ which was in them (the prophets) did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* | Peter 1:11. The Apostle John would later identify these prophesies as being *“the record that God gave of his son.”* | John 5:10.

According to Peter, the grace of our salvation is revealed in what the prophets said about *“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* This twofold message is the very heart, soul, and body of the gospel of Christ. To understand it is to know *“the truth”* that Jesus said *“shall make you free!”* We all know the prophets spoke of the sufferings of Christ, but what about *“the glory that should follow?”*

In the phrase *“the glory that should follow,”* the words *“that should follow”* do not speak of something to come at a later time. The actual meaning of the word Peter used is *“to accompany”* or *“be joined to.”* It is not correct to view this as one person following another down a road. It is rightly illustrated if you use it as though

two people are walking together. Where one is, the other is also! So it is with the sufferings of Christ and the glory God promised. They are always together.

The first prophecy of the *“sufferings of Christ and the glory that would accompany it”* was given the same day that Adam transgressed against God. God spoke to the serpent, saying, *“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. Here we see the sufferings of Christ in that his human flesh was slain upon a cross, but we also find the *“glory that follows”* in that Christ was crucified so *“through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”* Hebrews 2:14. The Apostle John also tells us *“the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”* I John 3:8. John was crystal clear. Sin is the preeminent work of the devil, and sin is what Christ destroyed upon the cross! I John 3:8, Romans 6:6.

This simple prophecy of a redeemer who would destroy the devil and his works through bruising the serpent’s head is the foundation upon which every other prophecy of redemption is built. All the apostles understood that any grace which did not destroy Satan and his works, could not be the grace of redemption. Such a weak grace did not have the accompanying glory God had promised.

Daniel saw the sufferings of Christ when Gabriel said Messiah would *“...be cut off, but not for himself...”* Daniel 9:26, but he also saw the *“glory which would follow”* Christ’s sufferings when Gabriel promised Christ would come to *“...make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:24. A grace that does not bring this glory unto you cannot be the grace God promised would come!

Many of the other prophets saw *“the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow,”* but none so clearly as the prophet Isaiah.

SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST: *“...his visage was so marred more than any man...”* Isaiah 52:14.

GLORY THAT FOLLOWS: *“So shall he sprinkle many nations...”* Isaiah 52:15.

SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST: *"...he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."* Isaiah 53:8.

GLORY THAT FOLLOWS: *"...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many..."* Isaiah 53:11.

After Isaiah saw the sufferings of Christ he wrote about in Isaiah 53, he began to see more and more of the glory which followed as a result of Christ's sufferings. He heard God speak to the church, saying, *"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee."* Isaiah 60:1. He saw that the redeemed would be *"all righteous."* Isaiah 60:21. He said, *"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD."* Isaiah 54:13. *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper..."* and *"...their righteousness is of me."* Isaiah 54:17. Isaiah heard God make promise to Christ and his people, saying, *"My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever."* Isaiah 59:21.

Some mistakenly take the glory of these prophecies and apply them to Israel or even to the millennial reign of Christ. In doing so, they miss the truth and power of God's grace. Peter said, it was revealed unto the prophets *"...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; which things the angels desire to look into."* 1 Peter 1:12. These prophets were telling of the glory that would come to us through the sufferings of Christ!

For more than a generation, the glory that the prophets foretold of has not been seen upon the church. Scandals, uncleanness, trickery, and profiteering have become almost normal. There are multitudes who struggle everyday seeking by fleshly means to please God. There are even more who are lascivious and glory in the false belief that God's people are still sinners. But where do you find those who Jesus promised would be made free? The reason that darkness prevails in this generation is actually very simple. The glory that God promised only accompanies *"the sufferings of Christ."* Christ will never suffer again, but it is the preaching of the

cross that *“is the power of God.”* ¹ Corinthians 1:18. Until the power of the cross that destroyed both sin and Satan along with the power of the blood that sanctifies the people are once again fully and unashamedly preached across our lands, darkness shall prevail. But if we are not afraid to boldly declare the power of the sufferings of Christ, we will see that the glory still follows!

I WAS AFRAID

My first child was five months old when the doctors gave the report. The surgery would require removing his skull from the soft spot down to his eyebrows and all the way to each temple on the sides of his head. If I did not allow the surgery, the consequences would be horrible. The doctors said without the surgery things would only get worse and it was impossible for anything to get better. God had so recently given a miracle for my wife to conceive this child, but now we were facing this life altering situation. I was afraid of what might happen if I did not allow the surgery to be done, but I was also afraid of what would happen if I did allow it. This “fear” was not panic or torment. Neither was it the fear of the Day of Judgment that John speaks of. ¹ John 4:17-18. My fear was the understanding that either course I took could have unbearable consequences.

I did not believe I had great faith at all in that hour. I could not say, “I know God will give a miracle.” The only thing I could do was pray and seek God. At times I would take my son to the church alone to walk with him in my arms and seek God for an answer. When asked what we were going to do, I would simply say “I do not know.” Then one day in the middle of a Sunday morning service, God spoke three words to my heart: “It’s all right!” We canceled the surgery, and soon it became evident that the “impossible” was happening, and my child would be perfectly whole. God had heard my cry, even though I was afraid!

I know it shatters our theology, but the Bible is clear that there was an occasion when Jesus was afraid. Speaking of this, the apostle wrote, *“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up*

*prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and **was heard in that he feared;***" Hebrews 5:7. This passage is referring to Jesus in Gethsemane the night before his crucifixion. There he prayed and *"his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* Luke 22:44.

Peter, James, and John were present when Jesus *"...began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful** unto death: tarry ye here, and watch."* Mark 14:33-34. I am certain they had never seen Jesus like this before. Just a week before this, although troubled about what was ahead, Jesus spoke boldly concerning his death. He had told them, *"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."* John 12:27. Now his words seemed different as he prayed, *"O my Father, if it be possible, **let this cup pass from me...**"* Matthew 26:39.

Jesus knew the agony that awaited him in just a few hours. The prophets had already foretold his sufferings. His *"visage"* would be *"marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:"* Isaiah 52:14. He would be *"...brought as a lamb to the slaughter..."* Isaiah 53:7. The Psalms spoke prophetically of Christ, saying, they *"...plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows."* Psalms 129:3.

Jesus also knew David was speaking of him when he said, *"They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."* Psalms 22:13-18.

It was never in doubt that Jesus would choose to go to the cross. He prayed, *"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."* Matthew 26:42. Jesus was not in a panic. He was not ready to run away. But he was in great

apprehension about the agony that was just a few hours away. He said, *“The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”* Mark 14:38. We sometimes forget that although he is the Son of God, he is also the son of man. **Jesus had no sin, but he did have feeling!** In the hour of his “fear,” he did the one thing that every person should take notice of. He called upon the one who *“...was able to save him from death...”* Hebrews 5:7.

I have seen many people attempt to deny their “fears” so they can have “faith.” Such a course almost always ends in confusion. Faith in God is revealed more by what you do when you are “afraid” than it is when you are full of confidence. In his hour of fear and apprehension, Jesus called upon the Father who sent an angel to strengthen him. Luke 22:43. It is based on such truths as this that the apostle writes, *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* Hebrews 4:15-16. Jesus Christ understands the feeling of your infirmity ...and he can be touched by you. You can call upon him today!

THE LION TAMER

Everyone has power over sin ...until they don't! An alcoholic has the power not to take another drink ...until he does. A liar has the power to tell the truth ...until he lies. And a religious man has the power not to sin ...until he sins. Many people wonder why we continuously preach “freedom from sin” through the blood of Christ. The answer is simple. “Freedom from sin” is the only answer that is offered in the gospel. Any other answer is no answer at all. Jesus did not say “The truth will give you power over.” He said, *“the truth shall make you free.”* When the people asked him to clarify what he meant, Jesus told them clearly that he had come to make them free from sin. John 8:30-36.

There is an analogy we use seeking to give understanding concerning Jesus' promise to make you free.

A man shares his house with a wild hungry lion. This man happens to be a "lion tamer" so he knows how to keep the lion at bay. He seems to be in full control of the lion as he uses the tools of his trade, a whip and chair. He can make the lion back away. He can make the lion sit. He has power over the lion. As great as this "lion tamer" is, there is one thing he cannot do. He can never close his eyes in rest. If he does, all his power over the lion becomes useless and the "lion tamer" will be devoured. As long as he lives in this house, this man can have no rest until the lion is dead or until the lion is taken away. When that happens, he is finally free from the lion.

The analogy above fits every human religious effort to deal with sin. The things that promise you control or power over sin, are making a lion tamer of you. It will work as long as you are vigilant, determined, and never let down your guard. It comes in the form of various programs and precepts. Sometimes it is a list of principles or religious commandments to keep. At other times it is "spiritual warfare" methods by which you believe you are driving back the enemy and keeping yourself from Satan's devices. The power these things promise is sometimes said to be by the Spirit, or the blood, or faith, or knowledge, or determination, or something else. It always works ...until it doesn't. The day you grow too weary, you will fail. It is a great walk for someone who does not need rest for their soul.

Jesus said "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ...and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Matthew 11:28-29. Do you see how different this is from being a "lion tamer?" Christ did not come, suffered and die, to give us power over sin. He came *"to take away our sins."* 1 John 3:5. You do not need power not to do something that is not in your heart to do. Christ is not a lion tamer. He is the lion slayer! He nailed our "old man" to his cross *"that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* Romans 6:6. Sin and Satan are the lion! Only when sin is washed out of your heart by the blood of Christ will you ever find rest for your soul.

This simple truth of the gospel has become a rejected message in our generation. We think ourselves too wise for such simplicity. In our blindness we have traded “the lion slayer” for endless seminars in “lion taming.” Be honest and look at the results. Pornography is rampant in the church and increases more with every new program instituted to combat it. How many ministers in recent years have taught and fought against homosexual behavior only to become involved in it? Depression and even suicide in the ministry is increasing, especially among those who are teaching how to overcome these things.

The simplicity of the gospel is that Christ washes sin out of the heart of those who believe the gospel and trust in him. This is how Christ makes them free. They are not as strong as the “lion tamer.” Neither are they as “wise” as the one who knows all the principles. They are not even as determined as the one who has perfected himself. They don’t have to be, because Christ has made them free!

Let me leave you with this: **It is not the power of sin that destroys you, but the presence of sin.** Wherever sin is present, it has power. But when through the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, sin is no longer “present” in your heart, it has no power whatsoever concerning you. This is the freedom that is promised in the gospel of Christ.

HOW DOES GOD SEE YOU?

Many years ago there was a woman in the church who had two sons. These sons were “angels” in their mother’s sight, but were headed for a life of trouble. One day my dad warned the mother about the course these sons were taking and told her, “You need to discipline those boys before it’s too late.” She replied that she loved them too much to ever do such a thing. “You’re not loving them,” my dad said, “You are sending them to jail!” A few years later both her sons were sent to prison for crimes their mother “loved them too much” to see.

How did the church ever get to the place that it thinks it is a spiritual “revelation” to believe God does not see us as we really are? On

one hand we adamantly tell the world that nothing is hid from God's sight, "...but *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*" Hebrews 4:13. Then we turn around and tell those in the church that God cannot see your sin because when he looks at you he only sees the righteousness of Christ. Which is true? Is God blind to certain things? Or does he see all things as they truly are?

Nothing, not even the blood of Jesus Christ, hinders God's sight. If you have received the righteousness Christ brings to the redeemed, God sees it. **But so does everyone else!** It fills your heart, nature, and life. If righteousness is present in you, it is impossible to hide. On the other hand, if iniquity is present in you, God sees it, even though you may hide it from everyone else on the planet. Nothing in a believer or an unbeliever is ever hidden from God's sight.

Actually it is a great assurance for any person seeking to walk with God to know that nothing is hidden from his sight. He knows the thoughts and secrets of your heart, therefore he knows exactly what you need. If you are lost, he knows. If you're his child, he knows! If you're a pretender, he sees it! If you have secret sin, it is not secret to him. If your heart is filled with righteousness, he sees it. If it is filled with darkness, he sees it also. Even the things about yourself that you close your eyes to, he sees clearly. Nothing is hidden from his sight. This is not a bad thing. It is a wonderful thing. Because God always sees things clearly, he understands clearly what we have need of.

God gave his son to die on the cross because he clearly saw the sin that was destroying us all. Sin in the heart is a great "spiritual cancer" that damns and destroys the one in whom it is found. If God had closed his eyes to our condition, we would all have perished in our iniquity. God saw our dire situation and provided the perfect remedy "*to take away our sin.*" 1 John 3:5. This remedy is the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed to "*cleanse us from all sin!*" 1 John 1:7. This is God's complete and only answer to remove sin from the human heart.

It is an unwise thing for anyone to believe or desire that God would see anything less than their full and actual condition. The Bible says,

“...*“the goodness of God leads us to repentance.”* Romans 2:4. How can God lead you to repentance if he refuses to see your faults?

The truth is God is not “a parent so blinded by love” that he does not clearly see everything that works in the heart of any person. If the content of your heart condemns you, rather than cling to a fallacy that tells you God does not see your sin, draw near to the one that does see and ask him to show you the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Can you not see that God always sees ...and is seeking to save your soul from destruction?

RELIGIOUS THEORIES

A few years ago, I was speaking with a man of God who is also a cherished friend. He was saying something that seemed very unscriptural, so I interjected “...*but Peter said...*” Before I could finish, he spoke out strongly saying, “*I know what Peter said, but I have done my research!*” I thought, “How could this man of God so easily discard God’s word in exchange for his research?” In the issue at hand, it was not only what Peter had spoken, but what Jesus and Paul also said. How does a minister get to the place that the word of God carries so little weight in what they believe and preach? Doesn’t it still matter what the word of God actually says?

There are two vital factors to “*rightly dividing*” the word of God. The first is simply “What does the scripture say?” The other is to recognize what the scripture DOES NOT SAY. When we attempt to fill in what the scripture does not say, we have to make assumptions. These such doctrines are sometimes called theories. It is important for all of us to recognize that although we may believe something with all our heart, if the scripture does not clearly state it, from a scriptural standpoint IT IS A THEORY! Some of these theories “**may be true,**” but we must know that which the scripture specifically says, “**IS TRUE!**” One is an assumption of truth; the other is the truth! A problem arises when these contradict each other. When this happens, one must be discarded. Which should we discard? That which

“may be true,” or that which IS TRUE? Let us look at some conflicts between traditional doctrinal theories and the record of God’s word.

Theory: The blood of Jesus covers sin.

It is true the scripture tells us that *“charity will cover the multitude of sins”* | Peter 4:8. David also, describing his own repentance and the forgiveness he found after turning from and confessing his sin Psalms 32:1-5, spoke of the blessedness of the man whose sins are covered. Yet there is not a single verse of scripture in the Bible that says the blood of Jesus covers sin. Here is what the scripture does say about the blood of Jesus: The blood **sanctifies** the people. Hebrews 13:12. The blood **cleanses** from all sin and unrighteousness. | John 1:7, 9. The blood **washes** us from our sin. Revelation 1:5. The blood **makes us perfect** (complete) in every good work to do his will. Hebrews 13:20-21. The blood **purges** our conscience from dead works. Hebrews 9:14. The scripture is loud and clear concerning the work of the blood of Jesus Christ, yet people cling to the assumption that it covers sin, which theory is not mentioned even once by the Lord or his Apostles.

Theory: Jesus died to take the penalty for our sins.

This theory certainly has a beautiful and powerful emotional grip on the minds of many, but there is actually no scriptural foundation for it at all. Some point to the words *“the chastisement of our peace was upon him”* Isaiah 53:5, but one would have to make some enormous assumptions to declare this means he died to take the penalty for sin. Jesus and the apostles never presented the gospel that way. They always presented Jesus’ sufferings as that which delivers us from sin and Satan. Peter quoted Isaiah 53 when he wrote, *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed”*** | Peter 2:24. John said Jesus is *“...the Lamb of God that **takes away the sin of the world”*** John 1:29, and Paul says he *“...gave himself for our sins, **that he might deliver us from this present evil world.”*** Galatians 1:4. The book of Hebrews confirms these things, saying, *“...he appeared to **put away sin by the***

sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 9:26. Where does any writer in the Bible say Christ died to take a penalty? Christ did not die to take your penalty; he died to take away your sin! John 1:29.

Theory: Jesus died to pay a debt we owed for our sins.

Where in all the Bible does the scripture speak of Jesus paying a sin debt or God demanding a payment? In the one parable that speaks of a paying a debt, it was the evil servant who demanded payment, as contrasted with the Lord who freely forgave the debt. Matthew 18:23-35. If a person is forgiven a debt, the debt is not paid, otherwise forgiveness is not forgiveness. John said, “...*he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” I John 1:9. God certainly forgives your sins when you come to Christ, but the blood of Christ washes it out of your heart and nature!

Theory: Jesus’ sinless life is imputed to the believer.

Many times when “*justification by faith*” is mentioned, this statement follows, “*Jesus lived a perfect life so you don’t have to, and his perfect life is credited to you when you put your faith in Him.*” As much as anything I have ever heard, this teaching qualifies for what Paul calls a fable. Not even one verse of scripture in the entire Bible comes close to saying such a thing.

Theory: Jesus’ righteousness is imputed to the believer.

This is one of those teachings you hear so often that it just feels like the truth, but I have never found a scripture that says the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us. People use Abraham’s experience to attempt to prove this, but remember, Abraham “*died in faith, not having received the promises ... God having provided some better thing for us...*” Hebrews 11: 13, 40. Abraham’s “*justification*” was not the same as our salvation! Abraham’s discovery about faith was that “*believing God*”, and not religious works, is what qualifies you to receive the promises of God. Paul then used Abraham’s experience to show there is something God cherishes more in those who approach him than being a Jew, or being circumcised, or doing religious works. Anyone can come to God if they will believe the gospel record

God gave of His Son! Believing the gospel is the “*righteousness of faith*” by which any person, anywhere, can approach God. Yet the person who is brought into Christ is not just “counted as righteous.” They are in fact “*made righteous.*” The Bible says, “...so by the obedience of one shall many be **made righteous.**” Romans 5:19. Christ is not our righteousness because he is imputed to us, but because he lives in us and fills us with righteousness!

It may seem wise to some for me not to write about beliefs which are cherished by so many. Yet these teachings have become great blinders upon the eyes of the people. They cannot see the truth of Christ because they are hypnotized by religious fables. There are certainly people of God who may believe some of the things I mentioned above, but there are many, many more people who are held captive by sin in their heart, mind, and nature, thinking their sins are covered, their penalty is paid, and God sees them as having the righteousness of Christ. It is for their sake that I write these things. Because if they never know the truth, how will they ever be free?

HE DID NOT FAIL

In Isaiah 42:1-9, God gave an amazing and wonderful prophecy of Christ, whom he called “my servant.” God promised he would hold his “servant’s” hand and give him “... for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;” Isaiah 42:6. His mission among us would be “...to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” Isaiah 42:7. It was so important that we understand the surety of this promise, that God declared, “**He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth...**” Isaiah 42:4.

This is not the only passage where God gave absolute assurance that Christ would not fail in what he was sent to do. When the Apostle John writes, “**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...**” John 1:14, he must have been thinking of Isaiah’s prophecy where God said, “**so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall**

accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Isaiah 55:11.

In this great prophecy of Christ, God reminds the people that many of the things he had spoken were already fulfilled. He wants them to know that his words concerning what Christ would accomplish were just as sure and steadfast. He said, *“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.”* Isaiah 42:9. Almost no one would believe the things God spoke about Christ, but they would certainly come to pass!

The clearest and most complete prophecy of what Christ would accomplish when he came, was personally spoken to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. Daniel 9:24-25. This prophecy pinpointed the year Christ would appear in ministry, and the year he would be slain upon the cross. This prophecy also gave six things that would be fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. These are listed by the prophet Daniel: *“...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”* Daniel 9:24. These had to be accomplished within seven years of when Christ appeared, or he would have failed in what he was sent to do. But remember, God said, ***“he shall not fail!”***

“Finish the transgression.” The Law of Moses was added to Israel because of their transgression Galatians 3:19 against God when they rejected his voice in the wilderness. The scripture says it was *“imposed on them until the time of reformation.”* Hebrews 9:10. Only when their Messiah came would this bondage under the Law be lifted. When this *“time of reformation”* came, Jesus Christ redeemed Israel Galatians 4:4-5 from the Law and its curse by taking the curse upon himself. Galatians 3:13. Finally, the judgment of their original transgression was finished!

“Make reconciliation for iniquity.” Almost universally those who profess faith in Jesus Christ believe he did not fail to accomplish this. When he offered himself as a sinless sacrifice upon the cross, he did everything necessary to reconcile us all to God.

“Anoint the Most Holy.” This was accomplished when *“the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”* ^{Luke 3:22.} Jesus later confirmed this as he read from Isaiah in the synagogue, saying, *“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. ...And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.**”* ^{Isaiah 4:18-21.}

“Make an end of sins.” This is where many professing believers stumble. We can believe Christ made reconciliation for iniquity, but reject that he made an end of sins. It denies our experiences and our most cherished doctrines. Yet this is exactly what Christ accomplished upon the cross. John reminds us *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...”* ^{1 John 3:5-6.} If Christ failed to make an end of sins in those he reconciled to God, then he failed to accomplish what he was sent to do.

“Bring in everlasting righteousness.” A child of God is not an empty container. They have been washed from all sin, but they are also filled with the righteousness of God. This righteousness flows through every part of their being. It is indeed *“everlasting righteousness”*, and it is *“a city set upon a hill”* that cannot be hidden!

“Seal up the vision and prophecy.” The words used for *“seal up”* are the same Hebrew words used for *“make an end”* of sins. Before his ministry on earth was completed, Christ would have to fulfill every vision and prophecy of redemption and reconciliation before he could say *“It is finished.”* If he did not, he would have failed. Jesus recognized this while hanging upon the cross. Here is the record the scripture gives of the final moments before his death: *“After this, **Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. ...When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he***

bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” John 19:28-30. In that moment, Jesus knew everything he was sent to do had been accomplished.

The work of your salvation is finished! If you are looking for it to be accomplished in the future, you are looking in the wrong direction. Jesus Christ made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Everyone who believes the report receives everything that Christ accomplished. You can be free, because he did not fail. You can be free from sin! Free from Satan! Free from every bondage! The only reason that you cannot be free is if you fail to believe the truth of what Christ was sent to do! Those who believe Jesus failed to accomplish these things on the cross will continue in the eternal struggle with sin, but you can be free if you will believe *“the record God gave of his Son,”* Jesus Christ! | John 5:10. **He did not fail!**

THE MIND AND THE HEART

Recently, Bro Leroy Surface shared a dream in which he saw a congregation of people worshipping God. As he listened closer he realized something was very strange. The words they spoke and the music they sang to were very beautiful, but their voices were mechanical, such as how robotic voices were portrayed in 70’s and 80’s movies. There was no true worship at all. It was all training. It was all programmed like it was generated by a computer.

Many view the human mind to be basically a highly advanced data processor. If you input good data, you get good results out of it. If you input bad data, you get bad results. There are certain truths to this view of the mind and in limited measure it can be proven in every area of society, but an accumulation of *“many truths”* do not add up to *“the truth,”* which Jesus said *“shall make you free.”* John 8:32.

As a whole, the church has embraced this same view of the Christian mind. When a person makes a profession of faith in Jesus Christ they are immediately declared by the church to be a new creation in Christ Jesus. They are told that they are now righteous

in the eyes of God and will never be judged for their sins. This profession has supposedly changed everything about their standing with God and their eternal destiny, but for some reason their thoughts and desires are as unrighteous as ever. “This is just normal” they are told, “You will not see the manifestation of being a new creature until you have gone through the process of “renewing your mind.”

So the process begins of reprogramming our “data processor.” Start deleting the bad and inputting in the good. Principles, precepts, confessions, etc. The list of “recovery programs” seems to increase by the day. It all makes sense. The mind must be “reprogrammed” before the good fruit of Christ can be manifest in our experience as it ought to be. There seems to be only one dissenting voice to this view of the mind. It came from one named Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus said, *“For from within, **out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**”* Mark 7:21-23. He is clear that “evil thoughts” in the mind are not merely a result of incorrect data input. The things that work in your mind proceed from your heart. In fact, everything that defiles a person comes from their heart; ...and not their mind. The nature of sin in the heart is like a generator, which produces the evil which is stored there. The heart distributes its contents to the mouth, the mind, the hands, and the eyes. It fills the entire person with what it possesses. This will never change until sin in the heart is *“taken away.”* John 1:29.

Jesus confirms this saying again, *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**”* Luke 6:45. What you speak, what you think, and what you do, all depend upon what is stored in your heart. You can attempt to change your speech, your thoughts, and your actions, but these endeavors are the “filthy rags” of human “righteousness-es” if the heart has not been washed from sin by the blood of Christ. Yet when your heart

is changed, everything changes. This also includes your words, your thoughts, and your actions.

The terms of redemption were revealed when God said, *“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 what happens in true salvation. You have a different “generator” within. It is a new heart. It is Christ in you!

This receiving a new heart is not a process. It is the miracle of salvation! According to the Apostle Peter, the hearts of Cornelius and those with him were purified by faith in the moment they believed, immediately before the Holy Ghost fell upon them. Acts 15:8-9. A child of God is not made up of the data that is programmed into them. They are new creatures, with a new heart, a new spirit, and the life of God springs up from within, filling their entire being!

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