

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #6

COMMENTARY ON: 1:18-20

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

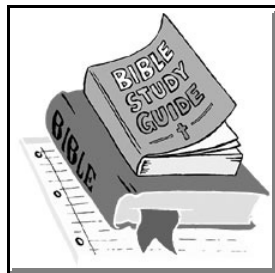
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

NOT "YES" AND "NO"

There is a certain godly philosophy that drives real preaching – something that properly motivates the preacher. There is also an underlying message and direction in sound preaching. It is essential for these things to be known and practiced, for the experience of salvation is Divinely hinged to preaching – it is the means by which men are saved. We should not expect the reasoning that drives preaching to conform to the wisdom of this world. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and hence the message of proclamation cannot be of this world. In this passage, Paul summarizes what and why he preached. You will find his reasoning to be characterized by a sweet heavenly aroma that is most refreshing.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 6



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible 1833, YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

NOT "YES" AND "NO"

“ 1:18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” ^{KJV} (2 Corinthians 1:18-20)

INTRODUCTION

There is a certain godly philosophy that drives real preaching – something that properly motivates the preacher. There is also an underlying message and direction in sound preaching. Properly viewed, “preaching” is not a mere profession, or an austere religious career. It is not something that can successfully be exploited by men.

It is a sacred stewardship appointed by God. It is essential for these things to be known and practiced, for the experience of salvation is Divinely hinged to preaching – it is the means by which men are saved. As it is written,

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21).

THE CONTENT OF PREACHING

As used in the above text, “preaching” is a noun, not a verb. It refers to the content of preaching rather than the act of preaching. This form of the word is used elsewhere in the Scriptures. In each of these cases, the point is not what the men were doing, but what they were saying!

• *“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and*

shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching (κῆρυγμα) of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Matt 12:41; Lk 11:32).

• *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching (κῆρυγμα) of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom 16:25).*

• *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21).*

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- ☛ "And my speech and **my preaching** (κῆρυγμα) was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4).
- ☛ "And if Christ be not risen, then is **our preaching** (κῆρυγμα) vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor 15:14).
- ☛ "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me **the preaching** (κῆρυγμα) might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim 4:17).
- ☛ "But hath in due times manifested his word **through preaching** (κηρύγματι), which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior" (Tit 1:3).

This precise form of the word "preaching" is also found in the prophets. Of particular note is God's commission to Jonah. "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it **the preaching** that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2).

In all of these verses, "preaching" means **what is proclaimed** – the message, content, the proclamation, or the annunciation.

THE RELEVANCE OF "PREACHING"

If, in fact, we are "saved" by WHAT is preached, or proclaimed (1 Cor 1:21), then the content of the message being delivered is critical. **God will not implement His purpose through a message that He has not ordained!**

As elementary as they may appear, it is most apparent that this has not yet dawned upon the religious community. When such things as hermeneutics (methodological principles of interpretation), etymology (language expertise), homiletics (the art of preaching), and theories of preaching (such as inductive and deductive) become the emphasis, the message itself necessarily falls to the ground. This is because such approaches tend to vaunt men, causing confidence to be misplaced, and faith to become less important.

None of the above technics enhance or clarify the message itself. Take, for example, the holy angels. They are noted for their wisdom (2 Sam 14:20). Yet, when it comes to the "glorious Gospel of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4), they can but "desire" to "look into" it (1 Pet 1:12). Its message is not readily apparent to them, because it does not primarily pertain to them. This being the case, what kind of imagination moves men to suppose the wisdom of men can open up a Gospel that holy angels cannot of themselves comprehend?

Insist On Solid Preaching

It is imperative that the people of God insist upon solid and firm preaching – a right message, and a proper emphasis. That message must be reflected in every aspect of godly communication. It is to be found in every sermon, every song, and every testimony. Our literature is to be marked by soundness, whether it is addressed to children or seasoned veterans in the faith. If we choose to use slogans, the Gospel message must dominate them. If we elect

to have seminars, workshops, and the likes, the message God has delivered – "the record He has given of His Son" – must be their thrust. If we find it necessary to have "Christian education," the God-ordained message must be both its pillar and ground.

While this may be very evident to you, it is apparent that this is **not** the experience that is most common in the religious community. If, this very day, we were to remove from public access all religious literature, audio media, and video media, countless retailers would have to close their doors. Many "Christian" publishers would go out of business overnight. Countless purported "Christian schools" would have to close their doors. Vast numbers of "preachers" would have to change their careers.

Do not for one moment doubt that this is the case. Many of us are ourselves victims of a Christless Gospel – a primary message that did not center in what God has done, and is doing, through His exalted Son.

IS THIS TOO STRONG?

Is this sort of word too strong? Is it a kind of overreaction to current trends and conditions? Indeed, it is not! If anything, it is actually an understatement. God has affirmed that everything hinges on a message – the message He Himself has ordained. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not **the record** that God gave of his Son. And this is **the record**, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11). This is "the preaching" by which God is saving those who believe: "For **the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God**" ^{NEJV} (1 Cor 1:18).

We Need A Savior

Many of us are ourselves victims of a Christless Gospel – a primary message that did not center in what God has done, and is doing, through His exalted Son.

No one of sound mind will contest the statement that another person must actually “save” us!

- Jesus is referred to as “*the Savior of the body*” (Eph 5:23), “*our Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Tim 1:10), “*Christ our Savior*” (Tit 1:4), and “*the Savior of the world*” (1 John 4:14).
- God the Father is referred to as “*God our Savior*” (1 Tim 2:3; Tit 1:3; 2:10), and “*the Savior of all men*” (1 Tim 4:10).

If God, through Christ, does

- The “*hope*” by which we are saved is **produced** by “*the Gospel*” (Col 1:23).

- The Gospel was “*preached*” to us “*with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven*” (1 Pet 1:12).

The Necessity of the Gospel

Let it be clear, no aspect of the salvation of God will be realized independently of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – which is “*the record*,” “*the preaching*,” and “*the power of God*.” If the message that is proclaimed is **not** ordained by God, you may be sure, He will

Another Gospel

In all of these cases, people were moved to a wrong conclusion about the Law **by a message** – by what was preached. They had, in fact, heard “*another gospel*,” “*which is not another*,” but was nothing more than a perversion of the Gospel (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6).

The impact of an incorrect message upon its hearers is affirmed in Scripture. No child of God should take lightly the erroneous messages, or “*preaching*,” that are being hawked in the churches. Such messages are spiritually sterile, but have a calculating effect upon the minds of men.

If, for example, one chooses to deliver a message of salvation by means of Law, or the realization of God’s righteousness by means of a code, that very message will not allow for the realization of those benefits. God has spoken clearly on this matter, and there is no reason for any of us to be confused.

not save us, we will not be saved. About this, there can be no question! As regarding our text, the issue resolves around HOW God has chosen to save us. That also has been clearly affirmed. **It is through a message** – “*the preaching*” (1 Cor 1:21).

- We Gentiles, for example, partake of the promise of God “*by the Gospel*” (Eph 3:6).
- We have been begotten “*through the Gospel*” (1 Cor 4:15; James 1:18).
- Life and immortality have been brought to light “*through the Gospel*” (2 Tim 1:10).
- True service to God is accomplished “*in the Gospel of His Son*” (Rom 1:9).
- The Gospel is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom 1:16).
- The “*fulness of the blessing*” comes **through** “*the Gospel of Christ*” (Rom 15:29).

not support or empower it! **None of the promises that He has given can be realized through a basically flawed message.**

If, for example, one chooses to deliver a message of salvation by means of Law, or the realization of God’s righteousness by means of a code, that very message will not allow for the realization of those benefits. **God has spoken clearly on this matter, and there is no reason for any of us to be confused.**

- “*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*” (Gal 2:21).
- “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” (Gal 5:4).
- “*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*” (Gal 5:2).

- “*But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness*” (2 Tim 2:16).
- “*And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some*” (2 Tim 2:17-18).
- “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” (2 Tim 3:13).
- “*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*” (Mat 15:14).
- “*Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. . . . Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*” (Mat 16:6-12).
- “*For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake*” (Titus 1:10-11).
- “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that*

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Pet 2:1-2).

Flawed Messages

Flawed messages produce flawed Christians. Deficient messages bring forth deficient followers. Off-centered preaching yields off-centered living. There is a reason for this: **God does not work for good through flawed messages.** He has developed and delivered His own message, or “*record*,” and that is the exclusive message through which He blesses and profits the people.

A Current Fad

In our day, a new perversion has arisen, quickly vaulting into the place of religious prominence. It is a corrupt concept, attempting to merge Old Covenant manners with New Covenant blessing. I am speaking of the modern trend of “praise and worship.” This is not a mere hobbyhorse that I again wish to ride. It does have to do with the text before us.

Here is a “fad” that purports to be a sort of secret to obtaining great benefits from the Lord. People are told that their praise inducts them into the presence of God. This is a “*message*” or a “*preaching*” that is being strongly affirmed. It is largely based on Psalms 22:3; “*But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*” (Psa 22:3). The idea that is being taught is that as soon as praises go up to the Lord, He comes and inhabits them. Thus “*praise*” is thought to be a sort of guarantee the presence of the Lord. For this reason, “praise” (or at least, what men refer to as “praise”) has become the most prominent part of many public gatherings. This emphasis has also been the platform on which all manner of religious careers have been developed. The question is whether or not that is the meaning of this Psalm.

The point of the Psalmist is not the offering of praise itself, but the PLACE where it was being offered. In those days, praise was offered in the Temple, where God is said to have dwelt – “*between the cherubims*” (Ex 25:22; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Kgs 19:15; Psa

80:1; 99:1).

The praise that God inhabited, therefore, was the praise that was offered where He was dwelling. God Himself was the Subject of the praises, and is thus said to be enthroned upon them – not because He came to sit upon the praises, but because they were offered insightfully, and within

It is because God dwells within those who are in Christ that He is said to occupy their praises. To teach men that God comes to us because we praise Him is nothing more than another approach to God based upon works. It is a wrong message – wrong to the core. Praise is nowhere presented in this way to the saints – nowhere.

an acute consciousness of God.

A parallel for these New Covenant times would be praise offered in “*the heavenly places*” in which God has placed us in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6).

It is because God dwells within those who are in Christ that He is said to occupy their praises. **To teach men that God comes to us because we praise Him is nothing more than another approach to God based upon works.** It is a wrong message – wrong to the core. Praise is nowhere presented in this way to the saints – nowhere.

In its varied forms, the Epistles contain nineteen references to “*praise*” (Rom 2:29; 13:3; 15:11; 1 Cor 4:5; 11:2,17,22; 2 Cor 8:18; Eph 1:6,12,14; Phil 1:11; 4:8; Heb 2:12; 13:15; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:9,14). The Gospels contain nine references (Matt 21:16; Lk 1:64; 2:13,20; 18:43; 19:37; 24:53; John 9:24; 12:43). The book of the Revelation contains a single reference (Rev 19:5).

If a very gifted logician should treat all of these verses (twenty-nine) as building blocks, he could not construct a premise that states “*praise*” is the way for us to enter into the presence of God. How is it, then, that this is such a common

notion? **It is because of a message that is being preached – a message that God has not ordained, and through which He does not work.**

I have heard people say their lives have been changed by “*praise*” – that it has been the key that unlocked a profound love for the Lord. As convincing as their testimony may appear, it is not the truth.

They have ascribed to “praise” what the Holy Spirit has ascribed to faith. This should not be difficult to receive. The phrases “*by faith*” and “*through faith*” are mentioned fifty times in Scripture – all of them being in Acts to the Revelation. We are categorically told, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*” (Heb 11:6).

WHY SAY THESE THINGS?

It is necessary to say these things because of nature of our text, and the characteristics of the times in which we live. Paul is explaining what he preached among the Corinthians. It was a sound and God-blessed message. He did not preach “*another Jesus*” (2 Cor 11:4) or “*another gospel*” (1 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6).

We must be able to relate this to our own times, else the benefit of it will be lost. That is, this text contains things that illuminate the conditions we are facing within the professed church. **When there are uncomely responses among professed believers, the message they have heard must be examined.** Either they have heard and embraced a wrong message, or they have heard a rejected a true one. Paul, therefore, declares the message he has declared. He confirms it

was NOT a message that could possibly have produced the indecorous conditions that were found in Corinth.

UNIQUE REASONING

We should not expect the reasoning that drives proper preaching to conform to the wisdom of this world.

Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, and hence the message of proclamation, and the reason for its proclamation cannot be of this world.

In this passage, Paul summarizes what and why he preached. You will find

his reasoning to be characterized by a sweet heavenly aroma that is most refreshing to the “new man.” It will not, however, make any sense to those in the flesh, for they have no ears to hear these wondrous words. Only those who have chosen to traffic in heavenly realms will discern what he is saying.

THE GRAND DISJUNCTIVE

“ 1:18a **But . . .** ” Other versions read, “*As surely,*” NRSV “*As,*” BBE and “*Now,*” DARBY

This word is translated from a single Greek word (δέ). In Greek, this is a disjunctive meaning “but, to the contrary, rather; now; now, then, so; but also, but even, and on the other hand.” BARCLAY-NEWMAN Lexically, it means “by way of opposition and distinction; opposed to a preceding statement,” THAYER “a contrast” through which a “transition” is made by “emphasizing a contrast.” FRIBERG It is a word of “adversative force that expresses antithesis, opposition, and even

We occupy in a moral universe – one in which there are competing influences that are hostile toward one another. Ultimately, we have to do with the corrupting “*prince of the power of the air*” (Eph 2:2), and the Holy Spirit, who noted for striving with men (Gen 6:3). Each of these spirits employs a message Gal 1:6; 1 Pet 1:12). Each use “*words*” (1 Cor 2:4,13). Each employs a special “*wisdom*” that promotes their purpose, or assists in fulfilling their agenda (James 3:15-17).

is false. One set of “*words*” is right and the other is wrong. One form of wisdom is legitimate, and the other is illegitimate.

WHAT PAUL IS SAYING

Paul has just affirmed that he was not vacillating and indecisive in determining to come to Corinth. Those were characteristics of a competing kingdom from which he had been delivered. He did not purpose “*according to the flesh,*” being motivated by the Adamic nature, and driven by temporal considerations. Neither, indeed, did he glibly say “*Yes*” and “*No,*” tending to alter his plans for mere personal advantage. Such motivations were from the domain of flesh and blood – the world that is perishing, and the flesh that has been summarily rejected by God.

The word “BUT” stands between to alternatives that cannot be reconciled or made to fit together.

This manner of reasoning serves to clarify the truth that makes us free (John 8:32). It expands our understanding by way of contrast. **That contrast is so sharp and unbending that the nature of truth itself is confirmed to our hearts.** A few examples of the Spirit’s employment of the word “*but*” will serve to corroborate this observation. In each of the following examples, the contradicting conditions are separated by the word “*but.*”

- ☛ Rarely would a person dare to die for a righteous man, **BUT** God commended His love in Christ dying for sinners (Rom 5:7-8).

- ☛ We were the servants of sin **BUT**



contrary circumstance.” LIDDELL-SCOTT

My purpose here is not to burden you with linguistic considerations and mere academia. There is a reason why this word is used, and why Paul introduces his thought with “*but.*”

A MORAL UNIVERSE

These messages, words, and wisdom, are not simply different. **They are hostile toward one another – so much so, that they cannot be embraced simultaneously.** In order to adopt one message, you must reject the other. In order to employ one vocabulary, you must refuse the other. In order to employ one wisdom, you must deny the other. One message is true and the other

now, in Christ, we have become servants of righteousness (Rom 6:17-18).

- Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and the heart has not conceived the things God has prepared for those who love Him, **BUT** God has revealed

them to us by His Spirit (1 Cor 2:9-10).

- Prior to being in Christ, we were children of wrath, **BUT** God, who is rich in mercy, in love quickened us together with Christ (Eph 2:3-4), changing our position and status.

Now Paul will affirm his manner of ministry was in accord with the nature of God and the manner of the heavenly Kingdom. His labors were not in competition with God, but were rather together with Him (1 Cor 3:9). He declared a clear and unwavering message.

GOD IS TRUE

^{18b} . . . as God is true . . . ”

Other versions read, “God is faithful” NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV “God is trustworthy.” NJB

The word “true” is taken from the Greek word πιστός (pis-tos). It is similar to the word that is frequently translated “faith” (πίστις, pis-tis), but not identical with it. As used in our text, the word means “trustworthy, faithful, worthy of trust, to be relied on, dependable, and sure.” THAYER Other lexical definitions are, “trustworthy, faithful, dependable,” FRIBERG, “sure, true, unfailing,” UBS and “trustworthy, worthy of credit.” LIDDELL-SCOTT

CHRIST’S WORD

The Lord Jesus made this very statement when declaring the veracity of what He declared: “He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that **God is true**” NKJV (John 3:31-33). **The idea is that God’s truthfulness and faithfulness is confirmed in those who receive and rely upon what He has said.**

We know God is true by what He has said, which stands any and every test, for God “cannot lie” (Tit 1:2). The same is true of the words of Christ Jesus, whom God sent into the world. The validity of Christ’s word is not to be determined by those who have not received it, but by those who have embraced it.

PAUL’S PREACHING

In this passage, Paul is declaring that his preaching was as faithful as God is true. That is, he did not preach a shaky and unstable Gospel. He calls God to witness concerning the stability of the

word that he preached.

Paul was not caught up in faddish preaching – the latest methods and techniques, contemporary buzzwords, and the issues of the day. However valuable

of his own, but that which is from God by faith (Phil 3:9). That is why his preaching was sound, dependable, and unchanging.

Some, looking upon Paul’s unfulfilled commitment to come to Corinth, concluded that he was not

The American church would profit from a good dose of godly certainty from the pulpit and the teacher’s desk – something that faith can grasp, and upon which holy lives can be built.

such messages may appear to be, they are not what God uses: they are not “the power of God unto salvation.” What he preached was as sure and dependable as God is faithful: “*AS God is true . . .*” That is, God is faithful. He never deceives or fails to do what He has promised. The message that Paul preached was in that category. It did not have to be altered or updated, and at no point became obsolete or irrelevant. It did not have to be shaped to fit the culture of the times.

This means that Paul spoke with Lord in mind. He knew what God was doing, and spoke in concert with it. He did not allow himself to be swayed by the will of the people, or what men considered to be timely and crucial. He was primarily the servant of God, not the servant of men (Gal 1:10). His knowledge of God and His will was woven together with a love for Christ and a quest to be found in him not having a righteousness

dependable, and hence could not be an Apostle. However, Paul made clear to them that his intentions to visit them was subject to the will of God (1 Cor 4:19). Additionally, no such vacillation accompanied his preaching. **The message that he declared was the result of knowing the will of the Lord.** It sprang from the knowledge of the unchangeable purpose of God.0

A NEED OF OUR DAY

Much of the preaching of our day is unstable, to say the least. If it was not for national holidays and contemporary issues, some men would have little to preach about. **The American church would profit from a good dose of godly certainty from the pulpit and the teacher’s desk – something that faith can grasp, and upon which holy lives can be built.** We need to hear more messages that reflect the mind of the Lord and declare His purpose. We have had

enough preaching that has little or nothing to do with the world to come – a

world that is the subject of inspired communication (Heb 2:5)! My heart longs

to hear powerful preachers who can call God to witness to their veracity!

OUR WORD TOWARD YOU

^{18c} . . . *our word toward you was not yea and nay.*"

OUR WORD

" . . . our word . . . " Other versions read, *"our message,"*^{NIV} *"for our preaching for our,"*^{DOUAY} and *"what we say."*^{NJB}

Paul now focuses upon what he preached – what he proclaimed, his

fellowship of the mystery" (Eph 3:9).

- The Person and accomplishments of Christ: *"the Gospel of Christ"* (Rom 15:19).
- The beneficent purpose of God: *"the Gospel of God"* (2 Cor 11:7).
- The vicarious death of Jesus: *"Christ*

is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom 10:15). **The Kingdom of God knows nothing about a messenger that has no message, or preachers that are without a preaching!**

Paul's message was consistent, and was at the root of everything he taught. He built upon a Gospel foundation, always bringing people to the point of considering what the Lord has accomplished in Christ Jesus.

This nucleus message is what he calls *"our word."* It was a word so apparent that everyone caught his emphasis.

TOWARD YOU

" . . . toward you . . . " Other versions read, *"to you,"*^{NKJV} *"which was to you,"*^{DOUAY} and *"what we say to you,"*^{NJB}

Powerful preaching is personal – *"toward you."* This does not mean it focuses on purely personal difficulties or challenges. Rather, it takes the things of God and brings them to bear upon the individual. The *"record God has given of His Son"* is applicable to every person, and it is to insightfully preached with that perspective.

The messengers of God do not bring a message for human evaluation, but one that is to be received and imbibed. The Gospel announces a real Savior that has addressed man's real need, and provides a real salvation. Any other gospel is really *"not another"* (Gal 1:6-7).

It ought to be noted that the Gospel does not need to be "applied," or fortified with anecdotes and illustrations that supposedly make it more personal. The very thought of blending an *"everlasting Gospel"* (Rev 14:6) with the fluctuating wisdom of men is an

The weakness of the modern church lies in the absence of a sanctifying, clarifying message. Too often a message is adopted that does little more than promote a group, and set before the people a humanly developed concept, falsely called a "gospel." There is also an evident

message. **He did not travel about as a sort of spiritual problem-solver or counselor.** He was not merely a Bible answer man – although he did answer inquiries, bringing the truth to bear upon the difficulties and challenges believers faced.

"Our word" had to do with **his message** – the essential content of what he declared. Paul referred to this core message in a variety of ways.

- The Centrality of the cross: *"the preaching of the cross"* (1 Cor 1:18).
- The announcement of Good News: *"the Gospel which I preached"* (1 Cor 15:1).
- Opening up the mystery: *"the revelation of the mystery"* (Rom 16:25).
- Provision for participation: *"the*

and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

- A message of sanctifying glory: *"the riches of the glory of this mystery"* (Col 1:27).
- The sin-bearer: *"Christ crucified"* (1 Cor 1:23).

The weakness of the modern church lies in the absence of a sanctifying, clarifying message. Too often a message is adopted that does little more than promote a group, and set before the people a humanly developed concept, falsely called a *"gospel."* There is also an evident propensity for majoring on social issues. I sometimes get the impression that if was not for national holidays, special events, and the daily newspaper, some ministers would have little to talk about. This is **not** the case with messengers sent from God. That is why Paul says elsewhere, *"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it*

absurdity. The Gospel is, in every sense, *“toward you.”* The insightful preacher knows this, and therefore does not get caught up in impersonal and distracting fads.

NOT YEA AND NAY

“... was not yea and nay.” Other versions read, *“was not yes and no,”*^{NKJV} *“was not, It is, and It is not,”*^{DOUAY} *“is not both Yes and No,”*^{NJB} and *“I am not that sort of person. My yes means yes.”*^{NLT}

The words *“yea and nay,”* or *“yes and no,”* do not mean “positive and negative,” or “blessings and curses.” They rather denote a stable and consistent message. The Gospel is not *“Yes”* to men, and *“No”* to women. It is not *“Yes”* to the Jew, and *“No”* to the Gentile. It is not *“Yes”* to the free, but *“No”* to the bond, or slave. That is why it is written, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal 3:28).

There were other messages being submitted to the people – messages that declared *“another Jesus,”* and offered *“another spirit”* to be received (2 Cor 11:4). By their very nature, those spurious messages were “sometimes yes,” and “sometimes no.” They were not consistent, and therefore required continual updating, explanation, and application.

In our day, there are gospels that are for men, others for women, and still others for young people. There are gospels that are tailored for single people, others for married people, and even some for those who have been divorced. These are all messages that are *“yea and nay.”*

What is more, any approach to preaching that relies on the wisdom of this world and the expertise of men will, by that very circumstance, be characterized by change – by “Yes and No.”

There is also a gospel of the Holy Spirit, a gospel of the true New Testament Church, and a gospel of prosperity and health. But they are all *“Yes and No”* messages. They have restricted theological fences around areas that are intended to be open and free, and they have assigned freedom to areas where the Spirit has said *“No”* (Tit 2:11-12). They are *“Yes and No”* messages, and consequently cannot be called *“Gospel.”* They are to be rejected by the people of God.

Because the Gospel deals with an *“eternal inheritance”* (Heb 9:15), *“eternal salvation”* (Heb 5:9), *“eternal life”* (1 John 5:11,13), *“eternal glory”* (2 Tim 2:10), an *“eternal weight of glory”* (2 Cor 4:17), *“things”* that are *“eternal”* (2 Cor 4:18), and an *“eternal purpose”* (Eph 3:11), its message cannot be inconsistent, or “sometimes yes and sometimes no.” **An “eternal purpose” cannot be implemented by changing means and an unstable message.**

What is more, any approach to preaching that relies on the wisdom of this world and the expertise of men will, by that very circumstance, be

characterized by change – by *“Yes and No.”* Such approaches are buttressed by historical findings, statistics, language expertise, psychological principles, motivational technics, and the likes.

However valuable such things may appear, they must not be a part of the message itself. The addition of these things is like leaven that corrupts. It causes men to preach a message that is subject to constant change – *“Yes and No.”*

Also, there are several valid perspectives of this verse.

- ☛ Paul’s preaching was in strict harmony with the revealed purpose of God.
- ☛ He declared a message marked by clarity – one that was not ambiguous.
- ☛ He did not center in temporal issues, thereby necessitating a message that was constantly changing.
- ☛ All of his communications, whether oral or in writing, were characterized by unchangeableness and constancy.

THE SON OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST

^{19a} ***For the Son of God, Jesus Christ . . .*** ”

Paul now takes us to the heart and the core of his message – *“the preaching”* that he preached. This will account for the stability and constancy of his message. **Everything that he preached was**

ultimately traced back to Jesus Christ. He was the fundamental premise of his preaching – the primary fact of it. Preaching – any preaching – is only as stable and dependable as its major premise – its basic foundation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPHASIS

What is emphasized in our preaching is our message. **To put it another way, preaching takes on the character of its emphasis.** All of this may seem rather incidental, and unworthy of mention. However, this is a more critical issue than appears on the surface.

Allow me to recall to your mind some of the varied emphases in the Christian world – emphases that determine the message that is being proclaimed.

- **AUTHORITY.** Emphasizing the strata of official human authority within the church.
- **CHURCH.** The Church emphasis.
- **ORGANIZATION.** The organizational emphasis.
- **PROBLEM RESOLUTION.** The Christ-can-solve-all-of-your-problems emphasis.
- **PROSPERITY.** The prosperity emphasis.
- **SABBATH.** The Sabbath day emphasis.

their stress. They even divide the body of Christ over these issues, forming denominations around these matters.

However, after all of these emphases, and others, have been declared, **God has placed the stress upon the Lord Jesus Christ.** Remove Him from the theological equation, and all religion topples to the ground, powerless and useless in every sense of the word. Perceive and declare Christ Jesus as the Cornerstone of everything spiritual and theological, and you are tapping into Divine power. You will also experience some degree of variance with, what is called, “Christendom.”

THE EXPRESSION

Here is the embodiment of sound theology: *“The Son of God, Jesus Christ.”* Here is the avatar of salvation: *“The Son of God, Jesus Christ.”*

He dwelt among men He was *“God with us”*(Matt 1:23) and *“God manifest in the flesh”* (1 Tim 3:16). The debate concerning Christ’s Divinity is a foolish one, for God has left no doubt about that matter.

However, we are saved by Christ’s humanity, not His Deity! He died as a Man. He was buried as a Man. He rose from the dead as a Man. He ascended into heaven as a Man. Now He is mediating the New Covenant as *“the Man Christ Jesus”* (1 Tim 2:5). As the federal head of a new generation, He is *“the Second Man”* (1 Cor 15:47). In His identity with the fallen race, He is *“the Son of man”* (Matt 8:20 – this phrase us used 83 times in the Gospels).

The confession of the humanity of Christ is an foundation upon which Divine acceptance is based. *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world”* (1 John 4:2-3). **Among other things, this means Jesus was really tempted, really died, really was raised, really ascended into heaven, and was really exalted.**

However, we are saved by Christ's humanity, not His Deity! He died as a Man. He was buried as a Man. He rose from the dead as a Man. He ascended into heaven as a Man. Now He is mediating the New Covenant as “the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). As the federal head of a new generation, He is “the Second Man” (1 Cor 15:47). In His identity with the fallen race, He is “the Son of man”

- **SECURITY.** The eternal security emphasis.
- **SPIRIT.** The Holy Spirit emphasis.
- **SOUL WINNING.** The soul winning emphasis.
- **WORKS.** The works emphasis.
- **PROCEDURAL.** There are also those who emphasis proper procedures: (1 What the church is to be called, (2 What believers are to be called, (3 What the preacher is to be called, (4 What we say when a person is baptized, (5 What “the day of worship” is called, etc.

Some of these may appear rather foolish to you, but there are some professed believers who make such things

First, **this is a redemptive view of the Lord** – a description of the *“Savior of the body”* (Eph 5:23), or *“the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior”* (Tit 1:4). Elsewhere He is called *“the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”*

Let it be clear, this is how we are to view the Savior: *“the Son of God, Jesus Christ.”* When I first moved to the Joplin area, the hot topic of discussion among the Bible College students was whether or not Christ was God. It was not uncommon to see tee shirts displaying the words “Jesus is God.” There is, of course, no question about the Savior’s Divinity. He is categorically referred to as *“the great God”* (Tit 1:4), and His name is *“the Mighty God”* (Isa 9:6). The Father Himself said to Jesus, *“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”*(Heb 1:8). When

The Son of God

Jesus was uniquely begotten of God (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9), and is therefore called *“the Son of God.”*

- The perception and confession of this is the rock upon which the church is founded (Matt 16:16-18).
- This is the very point Satan challenged in Christ’s wilderness temptation (Matt 4:3,6).
- When Jesus was tried, this was the issue with his Jewish accusers (Matt26:63; Lk 22:70).
- Those who mocked Him when He was on the cross challenged Him on this very point (Matt 27:40,43).
- This is the fact perceived by a certain centurion when Jesus died (Matt

27:54).

- The very Gospel itself is called “the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mk 1:1).
- When Jesus invaded the world of darkness during His ministry, unclean spirits confessed this truth (Mk 3:11; Lk 4:41).
- When Gabriel announced to Mary that the Savior was to be born through her, he said He would be called “*the Son of God*” (Lk 1:35).
- John the Baptist bare record that Jesus was “*the Son of God*” (John 1:34).
- After healing a man born blind, Jesus asked him “*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*” (John 9:35).
- John wrote His gospel that we might believe “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*” (John 20:31).
- This is the truth that, when confessed, qualified the Ethiopian eunuch to be baptized (Acts 8:37).
- When Saul of Tarsus was converted, this is the message that he immediately began to preach: “*that He is the Son of God*” (Acts 9:20).
- When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was “*declared to be the Son of God with power*” (Rom 1:4).
- God dwells in the person who confessed this truth, and that person dwells in God (1 John 4:15).
- The person who believes that “*Jesus is the Son of God*” overcomes the world (1 John 5:5).
- The Gospel is referred to as “*the record God that God gave of His Son*” (1 John 5:10).

I hardly see how anything can be emphasized more strongly.

Jesus was not, as some theology affirms, “the eternal Son of God.” There was a unique juncture in time when He was “*begotten*.” Scripture

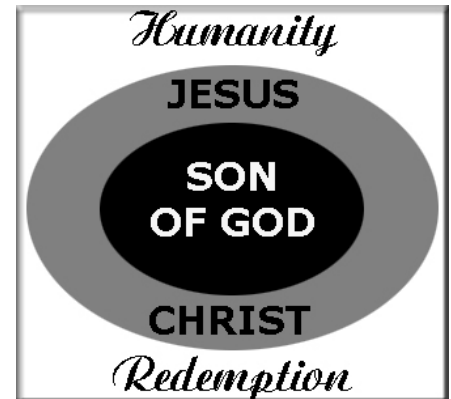
states it this way, “*Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee*” (Heb 1:5). This was true when He was born of Mary. It was also true when He was raised from the dead. As it is written, “*God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee*” (Acts 13:33). In His birth He was begotten to be identified with the ones He came to save, and to ultimately die in their stead. In His resurrection He was begotten to return to heaven and ever live to intercede for those coming to God through Him, saving them “*to the uttermost*” (Heb 7:25).

“*The Son of God*” refers to Christ’s Manhood – an identity that was essential to the salvation of men. Since the fall came by a man (Adam), the recovery from that fall must also come from a man (Rom 5:12-19). As it is written in the book of Hebrews, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (Heb 2:14-15).

The humanity of the Savior required a remarkable condescension – beyond all human comprehension. The time when “*the Word became flesh*” (John 1:14) is referred to as the Savior emptying Himself, OR MAKING Himself “*of no reputation*” (Phil 2:7). Technically, He did not cease to be God, for that was His inherent nature. **However, He sheathed His Deity, refusing to use it to assist Him in being tempted, suffering, and laying down His life a ransom for many.** Instead of being framed, as it were, with Deity, He “*took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Phil 2:7-8).

Jesus did not overcome Satan as God, but as a man – “*the Man Christ Jesus.*” **Had He defeated the devil as God, it would not have been applicable to men.** In such a case, it

would only have counted for Himself. Further, He did this as the Man ordained by God for that task.



All of this is involved in Jesus being “*the Son of God.*” **In my judgment, the modern church has not done well in their proclamation of this pivotal truth.**

Jesus

Whereas the Savior was known as “*the Word*” prior to His incarnation (John 1:1,14), He was known as “*Jesus*” when coming into the world. **That was His human name.** The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, making known the manner of child that was to be birthed by Mary, his wife. He strictly charged Joseph, “*thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins*” (Matt 1:21).

The name “*Jesus*” means “*Jehovah is salvation,*” and is the Greek form of “*Joshua.*” Just as Joshua led the people into the promised land (John 1:2-3), so the Lord Jesus “*will save His people from their sins,*” leading them to glory to possess their promised inheritance (Heb 2:10).

Whereas the term “*Son of God*” emphasizes the One who send the Savior into the world, “*Jesus*” emphasizes the ones with whom He was identified (Heb 2:14). **As one of us, He would lead us. He would gain the victory as a Man, represent us before the Father as a Man, intercede for us as Man, and bring us to glory as a Man.** Therefore, it is “*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*” (Phil 2:10).

Christ

"Christ" means "the Anointed," and is the equivalent of the Old Testament word "Messiah" (Dan 9:25-26). The Lord Jesus is "THE Christ" (Matt 16:16,20; 26:63; Mk 8:29; 14:61; Lk 3:15; 9:20; 22:67; John 1:20,41; 3:28; 4:29,42; 7:41; 10:24; 11:27; 20:31; 1 John 2:22; 5:1). **He is uniquely anointed as the solitary hope of humanity.** He is the "nail" that was fastened in "sure place," upon which everything was suspended (Isa 22:22-25).

- If anyone was going to "save His people from their sins," He would have to do it (Matt 1:21).
- If the sin of the world was going to be

Him (Gal 3:13).

- If anyone was going to bring us to God, **He** would have to do it (1 Pet 3:18).
- If anyone was going to bring the sons to glory, **He** would have to do it (Heb 2:10).
- If anyone was going fully please God, it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:11; Matt 3:17).
- If anyone was going to lay down His life, and take it up again, it would have to be **Him** (John 10:17-18).
- If anyone was going to be "tempted in

(Isa 53:5b).

- If the chastisement of our peace was going to be placed on anyone, it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:5c).
- If we were going to be healed by the stripes of anyone, it would have to be the stripes that fell upon **Him** (Isa 53:d).

The hopes of the world were totally dependent upon one Man – one Messiah – One Christ – one Anointed One. The prophets told us this was the case. Foreseeing the time of the Christ Isaiah wrote, "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa 32:2). That "Man" is the one anointed by God (Acts 10:38) – the Christ.

If you want to receive something from God, it has to come from Christ. If you want God to receive you, it has to be through Christ. If you want to come to God, it has to be through Christ.

Jesus is not our Christ, but God's Christ – His "Anointed One." He is therefore called "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20), "the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26), and "His Christ" (Acts 4:26; Rev 11:15; 12:10). The Lord Jesus is God's "chosen" (1 Pet 2:4) and "elect" (1 Pet 2:6) – **the solitary Person charged with the responsibility of bringing the sons to glory.**

The "Christ" is the only one who can save. The church cannot save us. The Law cannot save us. The wisdom of men cannot save us. Rules and disciplines cannot save us. **Jesus is "THE Christ" – the ONLY one who is anointed and sanctioned to accomplish salvation.** If our preaching and teaching leads people to any other conclusion, they are skewed in the wrong direction, are off center, and are in every way powerless.

"The Son of God, Jesus Christ" is the hub of sound doctrine and the core of all acceptable preaching. All "sound doctrine" – every syllable of it – is founded upon Christ. Once again, let me emphasize that **these**

If you want to receive something from God, it has to come from Christ. If you want God to receive you, it has to be through Christ. If you want to come to God, it has to be through Christ.

taken away, **He** would have to do it (John 1:29).

- If the devil was going to be destroyed, **He** would have to do it (Heb 2:14).
- If the principalities and powers that held humanity captive were to be destroyed, **He** would have to do it (Col 2:15).
- If the sins of the world were going to be laid on anyone, it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:6).
- If anyone was going to bear our sins in His body, it would have to be **Him** (1 Pet 2:24).
- If anyone was going to be "made sin for us," it would have to be **Him** (2 Cor 5:21).
- If anyone was going to be "made a curse for us," it would have to be

all points as we are, it would have to be **Him** (Heb 4:15).

- If anyone was going to build the church, it would have to be **Him** (Matt 16:16).
- If anyone was going to effectively intercede for those coming to God, it would have to be **Him** (Heb 7:25).
- If anyone was to bare our griefs and carry our sorrows, it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:4a).
- If anyone was going to be stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:4b).
- If anyone was going to be "wounded for our transgression," it would have to be **Him** (Isa 53:5a).
- If anyone was "bruised for our iniquities," it would have to be **Him**

terms refer to Christ's humanity. They apply to Him **AFTER** He entered into the world, being applicable now, and in the world to come. His identity with us is as one of us – both now and then.

The frequency of these references are shown below.

☛ "Son of God" – 47 times.

☛ "Son of the Living God" – 2 times.

☛ "Son of the Highest" – 1 time.

☛ "Son of the most high God" – 1 time.

☛ "Son of the Blessed" – 1 time.

☛ "Only begotten Son" – 4 times.

☛ "His Son" – 14 times.

☛ "His Son Jesus" – 7 times.

☛ "His own Son" – 2 times.

☛ "His dear Son" – 1 time.

☛ "The Son" – 13 times.

☛ "Beloved Son" – 7 times.

☛ "My Son" – 3 times.

☛ "A Son" – 2 times.

☛ "Son of Man" – 88 times.

☛ "Jesus" – 980 times.

☛ "Christ" – 555 times.

PREACHED AMONG YOU

"^{19b} . . . who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus . . ."

Paul now extends himself to remind the Corinthians of the substance of his preaching. **They had not been subject to spiritual fluff, and therefore their meager spiritual condition was inexcusable.** Paul had not preached himself, and therefore it was absurd for them to be questioning His Apostleship and doubting what he had said. He had preached the message through which God works – the message that is *"the power of God unto salvation"* (Rom 1:16). If, therefore, their views and conduct were deficient, it was owing to their own unbelief, not the Gospel that Paul preached. Later he will confirm this by saying, *"You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections"*^{NKJV} (2 Cor 6:12).

WHO WAS PREACHED

" . . . who was preached among you . . ." Other versions read, *"whom we proclaimed among you,"*^{NRSV} *"whom we were preaching,"*^{BBE} *"who has been preached."*^{DARBY}

Paul now comes to the heart of his argument. **"The Son of God, Jesus Christ," was the sum and substance of His preaching.** His purpose was to clarify and expound Christ Jesus and His accomplishments. It is as though everything he declared was in a sort of mathematical column, the sum of which

was Jesus. **In other words, everything that he preached was immediately associated with Jesus, and nothing that he preached was disassociated from Him.**

☛ Philip went down to the city of Samaria and *"preached Christ"* (Acts 8:5).

☛ When converted, Saul of Tarsus

suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:3).

☛ Later Paul will reaffirm to the Corinthians, *"we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"* (2 Cor 4:5).

☛ Paul referred to the Gospel as *"the*

Here is something that cannot be overstated: proper preaching centers in, and finds its summation in, the Lord Jesus Christ! It is wrong to preach anything that detracts from Christ, distorts our view of Him, or makes Him seem irrelevant.

"preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

☛ Paul told the Corinthians he *"preached Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Cor 1:23).

☛ Early in the history of the church, the Apostles *"ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"* (Acts 5:42).

☛ In Thessalonica, Paul opened and alleged *"that Christ must needs have*

preaching of Jesus" (Rom 16:25).

☛ Paul told the Ephesians that he preached *"the unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Eph 3:8).

☛ Proper preaching is said to be *"Christ,"* who in us constitutes *"the hope of glory"* (Col 1:27-28).

☛ Paul came *"preaching the Gospel of Christ"* (2 Cor 10:14).

Here is something that cannot be

overstated: **proper preaching centers in, and finds its summation in, the Lord Jesus Christ!** It is wrong to preach anything that detracts from Christ, distorts our view of Him, or makes Him seem irrelevant. If we end up talking about anything more than Jesus, or placing our stress upon anything other than Jesus, we are immediately on the broad road that leads to destruction.

Ponder some of the things that are said of **Christ**. It will confirm that every good and perfect gift, and all blessing, hinges upon Him, and Him alone.

- **HE IS OUR LIFE.** *“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”* (Col 3:4).
- **HE IS OUR HOPE.** *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col 1:27)
- **THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE.** *“I*

partition between us” (Eph 2:14).

- **THE BREAD OF LIFE.** *“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst”* (John 6:35).
- **OUR PROPITIATION.** *“And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:2).
- **THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.** *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12).
- **THE MEANS OF ENTRANCE.** *“I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”* (John 10:9).
- **OUR SHEPHERD.** *“I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”* (John 10:11).

clearly, we cannot have a proper view of salvation. Everything pertaining to life and godliness fits within the context of Jesus. **Jesus Himself is the embodiment of the truth** (John 14:6). It is He Himself who sheds light on everything else, whether Moses, the Prophets, the Gospel, or Apostolic doctrine.

If it is true that *“the fulness of the Godhead”* dwells *“bodily”* in Christ, and that this arrangement has *“pleased”* the living God (Col 1:17; 2:7), then **nothing from God can be received apart from Christ Jesus.**

All theological ignorance and error springs from a misapprehension of Christ. As strong as it may appear, **you cannot be wrong in your doctrine unless you are wrong about Jesus.** For example, distorted views of the return of Jesus come from a distorted view of the Person of Jesus. Erroneous conceptions of what is entailed in salvation are the result of erroneous views of the Captain of that salvation. Flawed views of the church are the offspring of flawed views of the One who is building that church.

Salvation can be no more sure to us than our perception of the Person of Christ. If we do not see Jesus clearly, we cannot have a proper view of salvation. Everything pertaining to life and godliness fits within the context of Jesus. Jesus Himself is the embodiment of the truth

Religious human tradition is developed when truth is separated from Jesus. **It is Jesus Himself, or the view of Him that is gendered by faith, that breathes life into theology.** Any religion, however cherished it may appear, that does not have its locus in the Person and accomplishments of Jesus, is dead. It **cannot** free us from sin, or bring us to God. It **cannot** foil the Tempter or obtain the blessing. It **cannot** rescue us from the power of darkness, or put us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

You might say there are three cardinal points to sound theology. *“The Son of God,” “Jesus,”* and *“Christ.”*

BY US

“ . . . by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus . . . ”

There is perfect consistency in the preaching of these three men.

- **Paul** – the *“apostle of the Gentiles”* (Rom 11:13), and a *“teacher of the Gentiles”* (1 Tim 2:7). Here is a man noted for receiving *“the abundance of*

am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

- **OUR WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION.** *“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”* (1 Cor 1:30).
- **OUR PEACE.** *“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of*

Those who emphasize a religious movement, however cherished it may be, are wrong. Those who place the stress upon the responsibilities of believers are not emphasizing the proper thing. If God has placed the accentuation upon Jesus, referring to the saving message as *“the record He has given of His Son”* (1 John 5:10-11), and *“the Gospel of Christ”* (Rom 1:16), who is the person who will dare to place the accent on anything or anyone else? Such a person is in eternal jeopardy!

Salvation can be no more sure to us than our perception of the Person of Christ. If we do not see Jesus

revelations" (2 Cor 12:7), to whom God especially gave "knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph 3:3).

• **Silvanus** – Generally understood to be "Silas," which is the contracted form of that name. He was among the "chief men" of the early church (Acts 15:22), and was a "prophet" (Acts 15:32). Paul chose this man to journey with him following his breakup with Barnabas (Acts 15:40). He was prominent in preaching to the Corinthians (2 Cor 1:19) and joined

Paul in writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1; 2Thess 1:1). Peter describes him as a "faithful brother" (1 Pet 5:12).

• **Timothy** – Timothy was called to labor with Paul when rather young (Acts 16:1). He is described as a "yokefellow" (Rom 16:21), Paul's "beloved son" (1 Cor 4:17), was called to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:15), and was described as one who "will naturally care for your state" (Phil 2:19).

Here was an Apostle (Paul), a prophet (Silvanus), and an evangelist (Timothy). **Yet they all had the same message, laboring together harmoniously for the Lord.** They stand as a noble example the uniting power of "the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph 4:13), and the effective working of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:3). They confirm that Christ is not divided, and those who labor in Him are also undivided. May the Lord raise up such kindred and united spirits in our day. They are sorely needed.

IN HIM WAS "YEA"

"^{19c} . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea."

NOT YEA AND NAY

" . . . was not yea and nay . . . "

Other versions read, "was not Yes and No,"^{NKJV} "did not become yea and nay,"^{DARBY} "was not: It is and It is not,"^{DOUAY} and "was never Yes-and-No."^{NJB}

The message that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy preached had no contradictions or inconsistencies in it. To put it another way, it started and ended with Christ Jesus. He is, after all, "the Beginning and the Ending" (Rev 1:8), "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" (Rev 21:6), "the First and the Last" (Rev 22:13), and "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2). The work that God has "begun" in Christ will be "performed" in Him until "the day of Christ" (Phil 1:6).

The Gospel does **not** announce a work that is started by Christ and finished by us. It does **not** herald something that is started by us and finished by God. From beginning to end "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9; Psa 37:39). It belongs to Him (Psa 3:8), and "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Salvation is not partly by grace and partly by Law. At the foundational level, it is not a mixture of

faith and works. It is not for some sinners, yet not for others. It does not announce benefits for men, but not for women, or advantages for the Jew, but not for the Greek. It does not announce blessings for masters, but not for slaves. The Holy Spirit is not given to some who are in Christ Jesus, but not to others. The

Divinely appointed Means to salvation in all of its facets. **Through Him, the Gospel does not announces some things that you can have, and some things you cannot have.** It is true, there are things that are "not" to be touched (2 Cor 6:17) – but that is not the message of the Gospel of Christ!

"The Son of God, Jesus Christ" is the Door of entrance to every blessing from God. He, and He alone, is the Divinely appointed Means to salvation in all of its facets. Through Him, the Gospel does not announces some things that you can have, and some things you cannot have. It is true, there are things that are "not" to be touched (2 Cor 6:17) – but that is not the message of the Gospel of Christ!

message is **not** "Yes and No."

IN HIM WAS YEA

" . . . but in Him was yea." Other versions read, "but in Him was Yes,"^{NKJV} "but is Yes in Him,"^{NASB} "but in Him it has always been 'Yes,'"^{NIV} "but in Him is always Yes,"^{NRSV} "but It is, was in Him,"^{DOUAY} "He is the Divine Yes – God's affirmation,"^{NLT} and "but in Him it hath become Yes."^{YLT}

"The Son of God, Jesus Christ" is the Door of entrance to every blessing from God. He, and He alone, is the

The Good News is **NOT** "touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col 2:20-21). It is the word of a "better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6), not better prohibitions. It does not offer a license to sin, to be sure. However, the Law deals with sin, **the Gospel announces remission and righteousness.** The "power of God unto salvation" does not announce what God does not offer, but what He does offer.

When Jesus first proclaimed His mission, it was not a "Yes and No" message. Opening the Scripture, He found

the place that most precisely declared His mission. *"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). That is essentially a "YES" message, and it is glorious! It announces what can be gloriously possessed!

ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE "YEA"

" 20a For all the promises of God in Him are yea . . . "

Paul now elaborates on the role of Jesus in the salvation of God. He will affirm that life in Christ is not a mere routine, or disciplinary form of life. **Rather, it is primarily the enjoyment of Divinely appointed benefits that are vouchsafed to men exclusively through "the Son of God, Jesus Christ."**

Do not take for granted that this is common knowledge among those wearing

"exceeding great and precious promises" by which we become *"partakers of the Divine nature"* (2 Pet 1:4). They have to do with what God *"promised"* concerning the Gospel (Rom 1:2). They relate to *"eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began"* (Tit 1:2). In fact, the promises of which He speaks are summarized in this single promise: *"And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life"* (1 John 2:25).

Under the Old Covenant

There were promises attached to

Scriptures (Genesis through Malachi), and rarely refers to a Divine commitment. It generally means something that God has said, whether a commandment (Gen 8:15-16), or of God simply *"talking"* with someone (Gen 17:3). There were individual promises made during the Old Covenant – such as God promising a land to Israel (Num 14:40; Deut 9:28), the numerical increase of Israel (Deut 1:11; 12:20), and bringing Israel into the land of promise (Neh 9:23).

Under the Law, there were blessings that would be realized **if the Law was perfectly kept at all times, with no deviation from that perfection.** They were quite extensive. If the people hearkened *"diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day,"* (Deut 28:1), the Lord would set the people *"on high above all nations of the earth."* These blessings would come upon the people, overtaking them, **IF** they would *"hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God"* (Deut 28:2). They would be blessed in the city and in the field. A blessing would be upon the fruit of the body, the fruit of their cattle, the increase of the kine (oxen), the flocks of their sheep, their basket and their store. They would be blessed coming in, and blessed going out (Deut 28:1-6). The Lord would smite their enemies (Deut 28:7). He would *"command a blessing upon their storehouses, and all"* they set their hand to do. He would bless them *"in the land"* which the Lord gave them, and *"establish"* them as a *"holy people unto Himself, IF"* they would *"keep the commandments of the Lord,"* and *"walk in His ways"* (Deut 28:8-10).

These blessings did not depend upon Jesus, but upon the perfect obedience of the people. They were never associated with a coming Savior, or a New Covenant – **NEVER!**

Under the Law, there were blessings that would be realized if the Law was perfectly kept at all times, with no deviation from that perfection. They were quite extensive. If the people hearkened "diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day,"

the name of Jesus. A considerable percentage of professing Christendom is neither proclaiming nor relying upon Jesus – a circumstance that began to creep into the church while the Apostles were still among men.

ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD IN HIM

"For all the promises of God in Him . . ." Other versions read, *"For in Him every one of God's promises,"* ^{NRSV} and *"whatever promises of God there are."* ^{DARBY}

What are *"the promises"* to which this text refers? **These are the "better promises"** (Heb 8:6) **related to the New Covenant, and associated with the coming Redeemer.** They are the

the Old Covenant itself. **They did not relate to the coming Savior, nor were they intended to be part of the New Covenant.** The New Covenant was established upon *"better promises"* – *"better"* than those attending the Old Covenant.

First, the word *"promises"* is not found in Genesis through Malachi (KJV, NKJV, ASV, BBE, YLT). The NASB version uses the word "promises" one time: *"Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass"* (Josh 21:45). Here *"promises"* is translated from the Hebrew word "daw-bawr," which means "a matter of thing that is spoken." ^{STRONG'S} This word is used 2,582 times in the Hebrew

Jesus never appealed to these promises as an incentive, and neither did the Apostles. These were **not** the “*better promises*” upon which the New Covenant was founded.

Those who hold out these promises to the people of God are in great error. All of them are centered in this world. **None of them can transfer into glory.** All of them become obsolete when one dies.

Some of the Better Promises

Prior to Christ, many of these “*better promises*” were given. **They were not tied to the Old Covenant**, but spoke of a time that would follow the era of the Old Covenant. None of these promises were realized prior to Christ coming into the world, suffering death, being raised from the dead, ascending into heaven, and being enthroned at the “*right hand of the Majesty on high*” (Heb 1:3).

- The people would hearken, or pay attention, to the real Prophet, Jesus Christ – “*unto Him ye WILL hearken*” (Deut 18:15).
- The Lord would circumcise the heart of the people in order that they would love Him, thereby making them different – “*And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul*” (Deut 30:6).
- God would give them a new heart and a new spirit, thereby changing their motivations – “*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*” (Ezek 36:26).
- They would walk in His statutes and keep His judgments, being noted for their obedience – “*And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them*” (Ezek 36:27).
- His laws would be written on their hearts and put into their minds, causing them to be in fundamental agreement with God – “*I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*” (Jer 31:33).
- Their stony heart would be removed, and they would receive a heart of flesh, making them to be noted for tenderness instead of hardness and rebellion – “*and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh*” (Ezek 36:26).
- They would have one heart, producing

undeniable unity among them – “*And I will give them one heart*” (Ezek 11:19).

- **God would put His Spirit in the people, and cause them to walk in His statutes** – “*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*” (Ezek 36:27).
- **They would all know the Lord, being acquainted with His Person and ways** – “*they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD*” (Jer 31:34).
- **Because of their cognition of their salvation, they would obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing would flee away** – “*And the*

tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly” (Isa 32:4).

- **With joy they would draw water out of the wells of salvation, rejoicing in their acceptance by God** – “*Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*” (Isa 12:3).
- **There would come a time when salvation and safety would be realized** – “*In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Jer 23:6).
- **A Divinely appointed exchange program would be put into place** – “*The spirit of the Lord GOD is*

Prior to Christ, many of these “better promises” were given. They were not tied to the Old Covenant, but spoke of a time that would follow the era of the Old Covenant. None of these promises were realized prior to Christ coming into the world, suffering death, being raised from the dead, ascending into heaven, and being enthroned at the “right hand of the Majesty on high”

ransomed of the LORD . . . shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa 35:10).

- They would have a heart to know Him, preferring Him above all else – “*And I will give them an heart to know me*” (Jer 24:7).
- They would have a pure language, and serve the Lord with one consent, not borrowing from the world, and living in the wrong direction – “*For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent*” (Zeph 3:9).
- Their eyes would not be dim, and their ears would hearken, making them perceptive of the things of God – “*And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken*” (Isa 32:3).
- The heart of the rash would understand, and the tongue of the stammers would be ready to speak plainly, giving them the ability to express themselves properly – “*The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the*

upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified” (Isa 61:1-3).

- The sins and iniquities of the people would no more be remembered – “*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*” (Heb 8:12).
- A righteousness would be given by God to people, so that no condemnation of them would be possible – “*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith*

the LORD" (Isa 54:17).

None of these promises were contingent upon keeping the Law. All of them would be realized in the coming Messiah, or Anointed One.

ARE YEA

"... are yea..." Other versions read, "are Yes,"^{NKJV} "is a 'Yes,'"^{NRSV} "find their Yes in Him,"^{RSV} "made certain and put into effect,"^{BBE} and "have been fulfilled in Him."^{NLT}

The above promises, and more, are

Jesus Christ."

This is categorically stated by Peter, and with great pungency. "Whereby are given unto us **exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust**" (2 Pet 1:4). Other versions read, "through these,"^{NKJV} "by them,"^{NASB} and "through them."^{NIV} That is, the promises are the appointed means through which we "participate in the Divine nature,"^{NIV} become more and more like Jesus.

angels" (Rev 3:5).

- ☛ "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev 3:12).
- ☛ "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev 3:20).
- ☛ "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev 3:21).
- ☛ "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Rev 21:7).

When Jesus is "received" (John 1:12), these promises are also received. Their fulfillment is realized by those in whom Christ dwells by faith (Eph 3:17). None of them are contingent upon flawless obedience to the Law. All of them are dependent upon faith, for Christ dwells in our hearts "by faith."

Ponder the exceeding great and precious promises that Jesus gave the beatitudes.

all "YES" in Christ Jesus. "All the promises of God" begin with the promise of the conquering Seed of the woman (Gen 3:15), and conclude with the second to the last verse in the Bible: "Surely I come quickly" (Rev 22:20). All of them accrue to us in Christ Jesus. None of them are excluded for those who are in fellowship with the Son of God.

These promises are to be possessed and enjoyed in Him. When Jesus is "received" (John 1:12), these promises are also received. Their fulfillment is realized by those in whom Christ dwells by faith (Eph 3:17). **None of them are contingent upon flawless obedience to the Law.** All of them are dependent upon faith, for Christ dwells in our hearts "by faith."

Partaking of the Divine Nature

The unchangeable purpose of God is to conform us to the image of His Son – thus becoming partakers of the Divine nature (Rom 8:29). **On a practical level, this purpose is realized by means of the promises of God** – the ones that are "Yes" in the "Son of God,

When Jesus addressed the seven churches in Asia, He gave them some "exceeding great and precious promises" – precious incentives through which they could be conformed to His image.

- ☛ "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev 2:10).
- ☛ "He that overcometh will not be hurt of the second death" (Rev 2:11).
- ☛ "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev 2:17).
- ☛ "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Rev 2:26-28).
- ☛ "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His

- ☛ "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3).
- ☛ "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt 5:4).
- ☛ "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5).
- ☛ "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt 5:6).
- ☛ "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt 5:7).
- ☛ "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt 5:8).
- ☛ "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt 5:9).
- ☛ "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:10).
- ☛ "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt 5:12).

Those who take these promises seriously will realize their fulfillment, for they are all “YES” in Christ Jesus.

FULFILLED IN CHRIST

All of the promises of God are actually realized in Christ. It is not that they CAN be fulfilled – they ARE fulfilled: i.e. they are “YES!” **To the degree that we enjoy the fellowship with Christ, into which we have been called (1 Cor 1:9), we will also enjoy the promises that are “Yes” in Him.**

These promises are “in Christ” – that is the locus in which they are confined. The actual realization of them comes through our faith, which is the appointed means of obtaining all of the benefits of the New Covenant.

If Christ is shoved into the background of our thinking, or if faith is not kept and fought to maintain, the “promises of God” fade from view, and no longer are a prominent part of thought of objective.

An Explanation

I will wax bold and affirm this explains the condition of countless churches, where disinterest in the things of God prevails and “the flesh” sits upon

This explains the penchant for brevity and infrequency. It sheds light on spiritual shallowness, and the state of prevailing spiritual immaturity. This is why immorality has crept into the church, and the spirit of entertainment has capture the attention of the people.

the throne of human affection and objective. This explains the penchant for brevity and infrequency. It sheds light on spiritual shallowness, and the state of prevailing spiritual immaturity. **This is why immorality has crept into the church, and the spirit of entertainment has capture the attention of the people.**

If people are not participating in the Divine nature, it is because God’s “exceeding great and precious promises” are not in the foreground of their thinking. We know this is the case, because those promises are the appointed means of participating,^{NIV} or sharing,^{NLT} in the Divine nature. We further know that all of those promises are “YES” in Christ Jesus, so that **none of them are out of reach to those who live by**

faith,^{Heb 10:38} **walking in the light,**^{1John 1:7} **and in the Spirit.**^{Gal 5:25} Knowing this, it is no wonder that Paul spoke of the “deep concern for all the churches” which came upon him “daily”^{NKJV} (2 Cor 11:28).

THE PROMISES MUST BE DECLARED

If it is true that we become partakers of the Divine nature by means of the promises of God, then they are to placed clearly before the people. If “all of the promises of God are in Him ‘YES,’” then they are to be proclaimed with power from the housetops. **These incentives must not be withheld from the people.** To do so is to deprive them of the appointed means by which they will be conformed to the image of God’s Son. Such deprivation causes life to be an unbearable burden.

ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE “AMEN”

“^{20b} . . . and in him Amen . . . ” Other versions read, “wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us,”^{NKJV} “And so through Him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God,”^{NASB} “For this reason it is through Him that we say the ‘Amen,’ to the glory of God,”^{NRSV} “That is why we utter the Amen through Him, to the glory of God,”^{RSV} and “That is why we say ‘Amen’ when we give glory to God through Christ.”^{NLT}

“YES” is what God says to us. “AMEN” is what we say to God – and both are “in Christ.” Both the dialog and the experiences are only “in Him.” Outside of Christ, or apart from fellowship with Him, we can never be assured that “all the promises of God” are

for us. And, part from being in fellowship with “the Son of God, Jesus Christ,” we are not capable of saying the responsive “Amen” to God. **Christ Jesus is the door through which everything from God comes to us, and everything from us goes to God.**

The word “Amen” means “firm, faithful, surely, and truly.”^{STRONG’S} At the beginning of a sentence it means “surely, of a truth, truly.”^{THAYER} In the Gospel of John, a double usage of this word occurs twenty-five times. This double use is translated “Verily, verily” in the KJV. Other versions translate this double use “Most assuredly,”^{NKJV} “Truly, truly,”^{NASB} “I tell you the truth,”^{NIV} “Verily, truly,”^{NRSV} and “Amen, amen.”^{DARBY/NAB} This is a word of certainty, persuasion, and firmness.

At the close of a sentence the word “Amen” means “so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled.”^{THAYER} It carries the idea of “this is indeed true,” and “that is the way it should be.”^{ROBERTSON}

Under the Old Covenant, some oaths were confirmed by saying “Amen, amen” (Num 5:22; Neh 8:6). When the curses of the Law were read, all of the people were to say “Amen” following each one of them (Deut 27:15-26). The expression “Amen and amen” is found in the Psalms (Psa 41:13; 72:19; 89:52). When David brought the ark of God back, and blessed God with insightful words, “all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord” (1 Chron 16:36). When Nehemiah restored godly practices, taking an oath from the people, He called God to witness the solemn occasion. Following

his sobering words, *“all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord”* (Neh 5:13). When Ezra blessed the Lord during the renewal of that time, the people answered, *“Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands”* (Neh 8:6). **“Amen” is a word rich with Scriptural glory.**

Jesus Himself is called *“the Amen, the faithful and true witness”* in Revelation 3:14. That is, He is the embodiment of faithfulness and certainty.

In this text, this is a word that speaks not only of certainty, but of certitude that is **perceived**, and with which the individual joyfully acquiesces.

The meaning is that God has made all of the promises certain in

Christ Jesus. They are actually fulfilled in Him – in fact, there is no chance that they will not be fulfilled in Him. It is therefore our duty to concur with that certainty, and heartily embrace the promises. As we do this, the *“Amen”* will come from our hearts and lips. The *“Amen,”* however, is uttered *“in Him,”* which is Christ. **It is out of our fellowship with Him what we utter our “Amen” to God. This is not a mere formality.**

We will find the promises are everything God said they were, and more. **None of the promises of God are overstated.** Once realized to any measurable degree, none of them produce disappointment or dissatisfaction. The soul that tastes of the Lord will, indeed,

find Him to be *“good”* (Psa 34:8). **Believers find that what God has promised is precisely true.** The promises prove to be a pledge of the even greater promises that are to be fulfilled in the world to come. **There is an “eternal inheritance” that is as sure in the next world as justification is in this one.**

What is more, there is an appointed association between our present justification and receiving our future inheritance. **The more we ponder the inheritance, the more precious justification becomes. The more we consider our justification, the more we long for the inheritance.** That is one of the ways we say *“Amen”* to the promises.

UNTO THE GLORY OF GOD

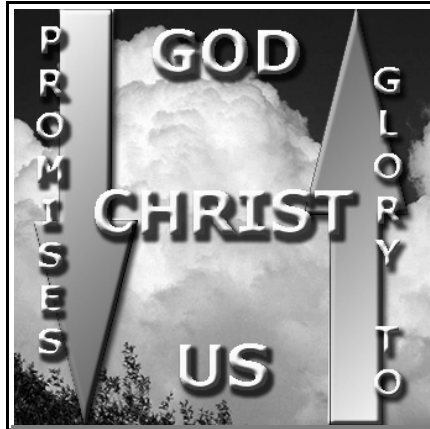
^{20c} *“... unto the glory of God by us.”* Other versions read, *“to the glory of God through us,”* ^{NKJV} *“is spoken by us to the glory of God,”* ^{NIV} *“goes through Him to God for glory,”* ^{NAB} and *“We answer ‘Amen’ to give praise to God.”* ^{NJB}

While the redeemed are the recipients of the promises, the ultimate glory does not go to them. **Salvation is, in fact, an economy of glory – Divine glory.** When sin entered into the world, man not only entered into a condition described as coming *“short of the glory of God”* (Rom 3:23), **he became incapable of properly returning glory back to God.** Apart from His own working within men, God is not glorified by humanity. Outside of Christ, all men are in a state of enmity against God – hostility and alienation. **It is only when Christ receives us that we can bring true glory to the Father in heaven.** As it is written, *“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God”* (Rom 15:7).

Now, in Christ Jesus, we are enabled to *“do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31). That is, God becomes evident in what we do – evident to angelic hosts, and to those who have the knowledge of God in the earth.

THE GLORY OF GOD

The stimuli for this glory are the promises of God. *“For all the promises of*



God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through Him [Christ] that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” ^{ESV} **No more glory is brought to God than when His exceeding great and precious promises are appropriated.** Such an appropriation justifies God by demonstrating His truthfulness and faithfulness.

Setting to One’s Seal

Speaking of this facet of the

kingdom, Jesus said this of the person who received His testimony. *“And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true”* (John 3:33). Other versions read, *“has certified that God is true,”* ^{NKJV} *“sets his seal to this, that God is true,”* ^{RSV} *“has made clear his faith that God is true,”* ^{BBE} and *“attesting that God is true.”* ^{NJB}

In this text, Christ was extolling the virtue of men believing His own testimony, and doing so when it was not popular to do so. As a general rule, *“no man”* was receiving His testimony. The religious leaders, of whom Nicodemus was one, did not believe Jesus was the Christ. Later it would be confirmed that the majority of the multitudes were willing to follow Him for food – but not because they comprehended who is really was (John 6:26). The multitudes *“wondered,”* or marveled, when they saw His wondrous works (Matt 15:31). They acknowledged that no one ever spoke like Jesus (John 7:46). **However, the multitudes did not ask Him to explain the parables, like His disciples did** (Matt 13:36; 15:15; Mk 7:17). They did not inquire concerning His teachings, as did His disciples (Matt 24:3). They were quite

content to see His miracles, and casually hear His words, but were not willing to hang the whole of their lives upon what He said.

To His own generation, Jesus was a sort of religious novelty. We know this is the case because *“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not”* (John 1:11). As Isaiah prophesied, *“and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men”* (Isa 53:2-3). Thus His own people, to whom He was sent, became His *“betrayers and murderers”* (Acts 7:52).

However, even in that generation

conduct to conform to His words. He had told them to stay in Jerusalem until they were *“endued with power from on high,”* and they did! They said *“Amen”* to that word, and thus brought glory to God.

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Let us get to the heart of the matter. The *“promises of God”* – all of them – are **“YES”** to those who are in Christ Jesus. The fact that He has made such wonderful commitments brings glory to God, confirming His love, mercy, and intention to do good unto His people. But that is not the glory that is intended by this affirmation. **It is the “glory unto God BY US” that is the particular**

I must wax bold at this point, and speak concerning the deplorable spiritual conditions that exist in our time. This is a time when the vast majority of professing Christendom is in a sad and deteriorated state. There is not much confession of being *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth,”* and all insightful believers know it. **Legion is the name of the lifeless churches in our land.** That is why any body of fervent believers, whatever their size, stands out by sharp contrast.

Let it be clear that God is not glorified by this condition! The angels do not sing His praise because of a sanctuary that is packed from 11:00 AM until noon. They do not laud the Lord because of the popularity of *“Christian”* music, or the burgeoning growth of *“Christian”* schools. Heaven is not set to praising the God of all the earth because denomination *“A”* or *“B”* is the fastest growing of all religious sects. **These things may spark a lot of interest among men, but they draw no attention from heaven.**

Jesus said, *“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”* (Luke 15:10). He did not say there was joy among this number when a name was added to the roll of a particular church. **Joy breaks out among the angels when a person sees the rich promises of God regarding provision for sinners, and embraces those promises through repentance.** That is the person who says *“Amen”* to the promises of God, and God is glorified by his response. That *“Amen”* introduced a change of conduct, for **repentance stands between the old life and the new life.**

But what of a generation that does not say the *“Amen”* to God’s promises? What of those who insist on wearing Christ’s name, but have no interest in what has been promised to the children of God? **Such people do not believe the promises, and that is why they are not willing to leave all to obtain them.** It is possible that such people have not even heard the promises. If that is the case, the church will be judged for failing to articulate them, for it is *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim 3:15). If preachers, pastors, ministers, elders, etc.,

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– a generation that will be condemned in the day of judgment (Matt 12:41,42; Lk 11:31,32) – there were some who dared to believe Jesus, *“leave all,”* and follow Him (Mk 10:28; Lk 5:11,28). They were few in number, as indicated by the post-ascension small number of one hundred and twenty that faithfully gathered together, waiting to be endued with power from on high (Acts 1:15). However, by their unwavering acceptance of what Jesus said, they *“set their seal”* to the veracity and faithfulness of Christ’s word. It was that bold action that opened the door of blessing to them personally.

In the language of our text, this is what brings glory to God! Saying *“Amen”* to the promises is like those hundred and twenty disciples who hung on to Christ’s words when others went their own ways. They were, in fact, saying *“Amen”* to what the Savior had said to them. They shaped their lives around His words. They altered their

point. That is, the glory brought to Him when we are convinced of the truth of His promises and embrace them.

This is what those who lived by faith prior to Jesus did with the promises of a coming redemption. It is said of them, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth”* (Heb 11:13). That persuasion and embracement moved them to change their posture in this world. **From the time of their persuasion, they could no longer fit into this world.** From the precise point at which they embraced the promises of God, they acknowledged they were *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”* **Their response was their “Amen” to the promises, and it brought glory to God.** They had perceived what God had promised!

are not declaring the promises of God to the people, they are nothing more than imposters – educated and cultured or not! These are the kind of men of whom God said, “*The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart*” (Jer 14:14). And again, “*Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD*” (Jer 23:32).

Do not think for one moment that this is too strong! If we are made “*partakers of the Divine nature*” through God’s exceeding great and precious promises (2 P:et 1:4), **what can be said of the supposed minister who does not set these promises before the people?** If “*all the promises of God are ‘Yes,’*” what will God do with the preacher who never speaks of them? If God is glorified by the “Amen” that is shouted out to His promises, then what is the effect of the stony silence that prevails where those promises are rarely, if ever, heard?

Does anyone imagine that God is glorified by a polished domestic or social culture that could be produced by independently of faith in Christ and a solid persuasion of the truth of His promises? Is there a sound-minded person in all of the world who is willing to affirm such an absurdity?

Yet, this is the kind of thing that is being hawked among the people of God. Procedures and disciplines are being promoted that have supplanted the “*exceeding great and precious promises of God*.” The consequence of it all is that the people are not being brought to say “Amen” to those promises, and thus God is not being glorified.

GLORY TO GOD IS THE PURPOSE

The ultimate purpose of God is **not** the salvation of men. **His purpose is His own glory, and salvation is the means of producing that glory!** The ultimate glory will occur when the

insightful amalgamation of the redeemed, together with the multiplicity of heavenly hosts, cry out, “*Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*” (Rev 7:10). And again, “*And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God*” (Rev 19:1).

To Principalities and Powers

Right now, in this glorious “*day of salvation*,” God is bringing glory to Himself through His church – the ones who have embraced His rich promises. Of this activity it is written, “*And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and*

(by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:5-7).

The “*ages to come*” relate to “*the world to come*,” not this one. The premier effect of salvation will ripple throughout “*the ages to come*,” as a Divine pebble thrown into the ocean of Divine revelation.

Resident in this great salvation are manifestations of Divine glory that cannot be seen in any other Divine work. **The extent to which they are revealed in Jesus, by grace, and in the Spirit, is unique.** It is too big to be fully disclosed in “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). It is

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powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph 3:9-11).

The embrace of the promises of God, and the consequent “Amen” that comes from the people, causes angelic hosts to see the wisdom of God more clearly.

The Ages to Come

While glory is brought to God through the believers’ participation in His promises now, this is not the end of the matter. There are, what the Scriptures call, “*the ages to come*.” **There is an ultimate purpose for which God has accepted and elevated us in Christ Jesus.** “*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,*

too large to be comprehended by those who remain in tabernacles of clay (2 Cor 4:7). Until Jesus is revealed in all of His magnificent glory, there are things about this “*great salvation*” that remain veiled. Therefore we read about a salvation that is “*ready to be revealed*” (1 Pet 1:5), grace that is to be “*brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 1:13), and “*the manifestation of the sons of God*” (Rom 8:19).

There is a “*change*” that will not occur until “*the end*” (1 Cor 15:51-52). We will not be fully “*like Him*” until we “*see Him as He is*” (1 John 3:1-2). There is a “*righteousness*” for which we yet “*hope*” and are waiting (Gal 5:54), and a time when we “*shall know even as also*” we are “*known*” (1 Cor 13:12).

There is a lot more to the Divine agenda than what has taken place, is

Salvation is essentially an economy in which God is receiving, and will receive, glory and praise. He has not only invested Himself in this salvation, but is revealing Himself in it.

taking place, and will yet take place in this present world. There are *“the ages to come”* in which the glories of the salvation that is *“in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”* will be more fully expounded and more extensively seen. Now, in this world, as we lisp the *“Amen”* to God’s promises, He receives glory. However, both the *“Amen”* and the *“glory”* will be more pronounced in *“the ages to come.”*

The Praise of His Glory

The glory of God is what it is all about. Our own benefit, as marvelous as it is, is only the means by which that glory is brought into more sharp and extensive focus. It all begins *“here,”* but it will conclude *“there.”*

A picture of this is provided in the

Epistle to the Ephesians. *“That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory”* (Eph 1:12-14).

Notice, it is the redeemed themselves who are to be to *“the praise of His glory.”* They are the *“workmanship”* (Eph 2:10) in which the glory of God is to be seen and praised. The perception of the finished product will provoke an unparalleled eruption of praise to God. It will be on a much larger scale than when the angelic hosts *“shouted for joy”* when

the worlds were created (Job 38:7). It will rise to greater heights than when the heavenly host broke forth in praise on night the *“holy Child”* was born (Lk 2:13-14). The *“joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”* (Lk 15:10) will be but a faint whisper in comparison to the waves of glory that will reverberate throughout *“the ages to come.”*

Salvation is essentially an economy in which God is receiving, and will receive, glory and praise. He has not only invested Himself in this salvation, but is revealing Himself in it. Because it *“pleased”* God to have *“all fulness”* dwell in Christ Col 1:19), **more of God, His will, and His purpose are perceived through the Savior.** That fulness is especially perceived in His salvation – the salvation that is *“with eternal glory”* (2 Tim 2:10), and of which the prophets prophesied (1 Pet 1:10). The salvation of God is exceedingly large.

To be even more precise, it is as we actually participate in that salvation, sounding the “Amen” to the exceeding great and precious promises that declare it, that this glory is now brought to God.

CONCLUSION

Paul’s defense of his Apostleship is of a strictly spiritual order and dimension. He does not rush to the defense of his own person, but **affirms the truth of what he has preached.** It was a Gospel that was Christ-centered, not Paul-centered. Ultimately, it accrued to the glory of God, not the glory of Paul. It was a message through which the God of heaven worked. It was a message that was powerful in its effects, and glorious in its results.

Primarily, this Gospel is not a combination of blessings and curses, as was the Law. It does not place before a series of *“Yes and No.”* The law set before the people *“life and death, blessing and cursing”* (Deut 30:19). It placed before the people *“life and good, and death and evil”* (Deut 30:15). Moses

declared, *“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known”* (Deut 11:28).

While some have represented the Gospel as this sort of message, that is emphatically not the case. The Gospel is essentially *“good news”* (Prov 25:25) and *“glad tidings”* (Rom 10:15). It makes known *“the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God”* (Lk 8:1), and *“glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled*

Primarily, this Gospel is not a combination of blessings and curses, as was the Law. The law set before the people “life and death, blessing and cursing.” It placed before the people “life and good, and death and evil”

... in that He hath raised up Jesus again" (Acts 13:32-33). It is the announcement that God has "raised up His Son Jesus," and "sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

It is true, "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk 16:16), and "he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). It is also true that the one who does not believe on the Son "shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). When Jesus is revealed

from heaven in all of His glory, He will "take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1:8). **There is no question about this, and it is to be declared with certitude and conviction.**

However, this is not the Gospel of Christ. It is not the essential message that has been given to the church. It is not the means God uses to effect His great salvation. The Gospel is essentially

"YES!" When Jesus stood to announce His manifesto, He did not proclaim cursing, but blessing (Luke 4:18-20)! He went about preaching "the GOSPEL of the Kingdom" (Matt 4:23; 9:35). That was His all-important message!

Because of this circumstance, the Gospel accents the promises of God. **Praise God, all of these promises are "YES" in Christ Jesus, and none of them are "NO!"** May the Lord raise up labors who will deliver the message He has ordained.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/6/2004. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The seventh lesson will cover verses twenty-one through twenty-four of the first chapter: "HELPERS OF YOUR JOY." The Apostolic ministry, as all other God-ordained ministries, was designed to bring the saints into conformity to the "image" of Christ, assist them in their pilgrimage through this world, and ready them for eternity with Jesus. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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Refreshing Waters Renewal

August 3-5, 2004

Diamond Grove Christian Church

Joplin, Missouri

REFRESHING WATERS RENEWAL Website: <http://wotruth.com/renewal.htm>
Theme, Schedule, Speakers, and Maps are available



Diamond Grove Christian Church

5.7 miles East on 32nd St, from Range Line (Red Lobster Restaurant)

Meetings Tuesday thru Thursday

Breakfast at 8:30 AM, Morning meetings commence at 9:30 AM

Lunch at 12:00 PM, Afternoon meetings commence at 1:30 PM

Dinner at 5:30 PM. Evening meetings commence at 7:00 PM