



THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Lesson Number 5



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), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

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

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

“ 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” ^{KJV} (Colossians 1:12-14)

INTRODUCTION

Having heard of the faith and love of the Colossians, Paul had entered into consistent prayer for them. His prayers were insightful, and in keeping with the objectives of salvation. They were not perfunctory, nor were they earth-centered. He sought for the Colossians filling. For some people, that means something entirely different than what is revealed in this prayer.

A SPECIFIC DIRECTION

The prayer is pointed in a specific direction, and aimed at producing certain results. Being filled with “*the knowledge of*” God’s will, or purpose, is the foundation upon which Paul asks the Lord to build (1:9a). Apart from such

knowledge, spiritual growth is not possible. The “*knowledge*” Paul coveted for the Colossians would result in “*all wisdom, and spiritual understanding*” (1:9b). The saints would be able to navigate in the truth of God, bringing it to bear upon life in “*this present evil world.*”

HOLY INVOLVEMENT

In redemption, the aim is to involve men with God through their lives. This is described as walking worthy of the Lord “*unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work*” (1:10a). In this experience, believers would be “*strengthened with all might*” according to God’s “*glorious power*” (1:11a). This is

the very power that raised Jesus from the dead, and enthroned Him at the Father’s right hand, invested with all power in heaven and earth.

The resulting manner of life is depicted in a glorious summation: “*unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*” (1:11b).

THE FORWARD THRUST

The life of faith has a certain forward thrust. It refuses to settle down in this world, choosing to continue in quest of a “*better country, that is an heavenly*” (Heb 11:16). Faith constrains the one possessing it to “*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of*

OUTLINE

- ▶ **GIVING THANKS (1:12)**
- ▶ **HE HATH DELIVERED US (1:13a)**
- ▶ **HE HATH TRANSLATED US (1:13b)**
- ▶ **REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST'S BLOOD (1:14a)**
- ▶ **THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (1:4b)**

God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14).

Faith has a forward posture. Its eyes are focused beyond this world, and it moves its possessor to place affection on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col 3:2). The objective of the believer is to *"seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"* (Col 3:1). Faith creates a discontent with this world, and a longing for *"the world to come."* It prepares us for an ultimate confrontation with God, and the things He has *"prepared for them that love Him"* (1 Cor 2:9).

A GENUINE PROFESSION

Where these inclinations are not found, faith is not present. That is precisely why Paul gave thanks for the Colossians. They had *"faith in Christ Jesus"* and love *"to all saints."* This attested to the genuineness of their profession.

The absence of a heavenly mind-

set reveals a heart that is at enmity with God. **There is no such thing as a salvation that does not constrain a person to anticipate and prepare for glory.** Where people profess faith, yet are firmly anchored to this world, their profession is worthless.

These are strong statements, yet they need to be heard. Like the Philippians and others before us, we are in the midst of a *"perverse"* generation. Our situation is compounded by the significant corruption of the religious environment. **With seemingly few exceptions, the religious emphasis of this generation has left people thinking friendship with the world is really of no consequence.** A hunger and thirst for righteousness is not at all common in the churches. Most observers know this is the case, but relatively few are willing to say it.

It is imperative that those longing to dwell forever with the Lord make progress toward that objective. This forward motion does not occur automatically, or without the effort of the believer. That is precisely why Paul prays as he does for the Colossians. **His prayer is one that seeks the involvement of the people themselves.** They are the ones being filled with the knowledge of God's will. They are the ones in whom *"all wisdom and spiritual understanding"* are to be found. The people of God are themselves the ones who will walk

"worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." They are the ones who will increase *"in the knowledge of God."* It is the saints who are *"strengthened with all might"* by God's *"glorious power."* They are the ones who will come to own *"all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."* I do not believe any person can establish that salvation is, in any sense, separate from these things.

THE MEANS TO THE APPOINTED END

Our text will confirm the forward attitude of faith. That is the means to the appointed end. **Where the eyes of the individual are not focused upon the revealed goal, none of the above fruits will, or can, be experienced.** If peoples' religion anchors them to this world, it separates them from participation in *"the world to come."* Friendship with this world **IS** enmity with God (James 4:4).

Paul will now touch upon the role of thanksgiving in our journey to glory. It will be very apparent that the focus is the future, not the present. Insightful thanksgiving looks at the present in view of the future. It sees Divine provisions as preparatory for our ultimate confrontation of God and the world to come. **The blessings of the Lord are not intended to rivet us to this world, but to prepare us for leaving it.** This will become very apparent as we consider giving thanks to the Father. The Spirit's approach will be a lofty one.

GIVING THANKS

^{1:12a} *Giving thanks unto the Father...* "Only one major version does not say *"giving thanks"* - *"always thanking."*^{NLT} This is a continuation of the prayer beginning in verse nine. This is also a continued exposition of walking *"worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."* (1:1). That worthy and pleasing walk involves the following.

- ✚ Fruitful in every good work.
- ✚ Increasing in the knowledge of God.
- ✚ All patience or endurance.

- ✚ All longsuffering.
- ✚ With joyfulness (1:10-11).

The religious climate of America does not even recognize the validity of these things. None of these virtues contribute to institutionalism, which has now been placed on the

WITH SEEMINGLY FEW EXCEPTIONS, THE RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS OF THIS GENERATION HAS LEFT PEOPLE THINKING FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS REALLY OF NO CONSEQUENCE

It is Possible for Thanksgiving to be Insightful, and with Great Understanding- by Given O. Blakely

religious throne. Rather than *Christians* being recognized because of their identity with Christ, and fervent love for one another, their organizational affiliation is accented.

You will note the total absence of such an approach in our text – as well as the rest of the Apostolic writings. Paul did not commend the brethren for being members of the Colossian assembly. He did not site their commitment to a certain theological position, or to a written creed. He started by being thankful for their *“faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love”* they had *“to all saints”* (1:4). His prayer for them was designed to strengthen those qualities.

Now he continues to accent the

associated with recognizing and understanding Him, and being determined to please Him.

THANKS

“Thanks” is not only being grateful, but expressing gratitude – putting it into insightful and acceptable words. The word itself involves *“feeling grateful.”* ^{STRONG’S} ***“Thanks” comes from the heart, is accompanied with insight and understanding, and is placed into words. “Giving thanks” cannot be done perfunctorily, or through empty routine. It cannot be done casually, or without the involvement of spirit, soul, and body.***

The giving of thanks was typified by the *“thank offerings”* presented under

“Thank offerings” were properly called *“sacrifices of praise,”* given freely to the Lord. As it is written, *“And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD”* (Jer 17:26). This type of sacrifice is fulfilled in Christ Jesus, and is referred to in Hebrews 13:13. *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name”* (Heb 13:15).

The broad nature of thanksgiving is seen in the various sacrifices that could be offered in the thank offerings under the Law. The offering could be made of an animal, fruit from trees, honey, oil, or new wine (Ex 13:12,13; Lev 23:10-13; Num 18:12; 1 Chron 9:29; Neh 10:37; 2 Chron 32:5; Deut 12:17,18; 14:23). **Thus, not only was the frequency of the offering in the hands of the people, but WHAT they offered as well.**

All of this is brought to spiritual fruition in this word to the church – *“giving thanks.”* **The time and content of this thanksgiving will be determined by the will and insight of the people.** That does not mean thanksgiving is slipshod, or that we are not to apply ourselves to it with zeal. This will be confirmed by the words that follow. They are a summons for believers to ponder the benefits of redemption. Once they enter into such contemplation, and their understanding is fruitful, thanksgiving will follow.

The verses that follow contain some of the most profound of all Apostolic doctrine. That doctrine will be best received when it is heard with insightful thanksgiving.

UNTO THE FATHER

Thanksgiving is to be offered *“unto the Father,”* who is the Architect of our salvation, and the One who *“hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Pet 1:3).

The words *“the Father,”* as

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type of life that is worthy of God.

GIVING

One of the distinctions of the New Covenant is the willingness and forwardness of the people. They have truly been made *“willing in the day of His power”* (Psa 110:3).

Under the Law, things were often given to God reluctantly, or even not at all. In Malachi’s day, the people offered animals that were *“blind,” “lame,”* and *“sick”* (Mal 1:8). Technically, some might have considered these things as being *“given”* to God. That is not, however, how heaven regarded them. They revealed a disdain for God, and not a love for Him, or a the fear of Him. Our text speaks in harmony with the nature of the New Covenant, not that of the Old.

“Giving” involves loving the Lord, fearing Him, and knowing Him. It is

the Law. These were offered according to the will of the people. As it is written, *“And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will”* (Lev 22:29). These are generally understood to be the *“freewill offerings”* mentioned in the Levitical Law (Lev 22:18; 23:38; Num 29:39; Deut 12:6,17). **Their frequency was governed by the heart of the people rather than the Law itself.**

Such thanks offerings, for example, were offered during the revival of Hezekiah’s day. Then those who were of a *“free heart”* brought sacrifices for *“thank offerings.”* *“Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings”* (2 Chr 29:31).

applied to God Himself, do not occur in Genesis through Malachi. That is not how God was generally known prior to, and during, the administration of the Old Covenant. However, the New Covenant writings refer to *“the Father”* over one hundred and twenty-two times. Seventy-two of them are found in the Gospels. This circumstance reflects the marvelous accomplishments of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Those who are in Christ Jesus are brought into a new and productive relationship with the heavenly Father who begat them. It is a deeper relationship than that of *“Friend,”* which Abraham enjoyed (James 2:23). It is more extensive than the benefits realized by David, a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). In all of the Psalms, the word *“Father”* occurs only once (Psa 89:26). Daniel was called *“greatly beloved”* (Dan 9:23; 10:11,19), but that does not approximate the status of those who are in Christ Jesus. The word *“Father”* does not occur a single time in the book of Daniel. None of Solomon’s writings contain the word *“Father.”*

The term *“Father”* emphasizes source, or origin. Thus we read, *“God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him”* (1 Cor 8:6).

A Consciousness of the Father

It is imperative that our religion promote a lively consciousness of *“the Father.”* Much of the *Christianity* of our day has very little to say about *“the Father.”* It is not uncommon to hear people pray to Jesus, even though He taught us to pray, addressing our prayers to *“Our Father”* (Matt 6:9). In speaking of the time following His enthronement at the right hand of God, Jesus said: *“And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you”* (John 16:23).

Paul spoke of his personal prayers in this manner: *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph 3:14). In the book of Colossians, one of the first things Paul said was, *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you”* (Col 1:3). He taught that we have *“access by one Spirit unto the*

Father” (Eph 2:18).

While this may seem to be a small point, rest assured that this is not the case. God the Father is central in the entire redemptive economy. Although this is known intuitively by those familiar with Scripture, it is good to reaffirm the centrality of the Father in the matter of our salvation.

- ✚ We were *“reconciled to God by the death of His Son”* (Rom 5:10).
- ✚ We are *“alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom 6:11).
- ✚ Through Christ we *“bring forth fruit unto God”* (Rom 7:4).
- ✚ The one who *“serveth Christ is acceptable to God”* (Rom 14:18).
- ✚ We *“glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God”*

(Rom 15:17).

- ✚ Giving glory is spoken of on this wise: *“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen”* (Rom 16:27).
- ✚ In the *“end,”* it is written that Jesus *“shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power”* (1 Cor 15:24).
- ✚ **God** *“giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor 15:57).
- ✚ It is **God** who *“always causeth us to triumph in Christ”* (2 Cor 2:14).
- ✚ Our lives are *“unto God a sweet savor of Christ”* (2 Cor 2:15).

- ✚ Our trust is *“through Christ to God-ward”* (2 Cor 3:4).
- ✚ Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile *“unto God in one body by the cross”* (Eph 2:16).
- ✚ Christ Jesus *“hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor”* (Eph 5:2).
- ✚ We are to give *“thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph 5:20).
- ✚ *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him”* (Col 3:17).
- ✚ Christ is a *“merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the*

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- people”* (Heb 2:17).
- ✚ Jesus is *“able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Heb 7:25).
- ✚ Spiritual sacrifices are *“acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”* (1 Pet 2:5).
- ✚ Christ died and rose again *“that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit”* (1 Pet 3:18).
- ✚ It is by Jesus that we believe in God. *“Who by him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God”* (1 Pet 1:21).
- ✚ God the Father put us into Christ. *“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).

- ✚ The Father sent the Spirit into our hearts. “And because ye are sons, **God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father**” (Gal 4:6).
- ✚ The “eternal purpose” was conceived by the Father. “According to the eternal purpose which **He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord**” (Eph 3:11).
- ✚ The Son came to do the will of the Father. “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin **Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God**” (Heb 10:6-7).
- ✚ The Father sent the Son. “And we

have seen and do testify that **the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world**” (1 John 4:14).

- ✚ The Father sustained the Son. “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because **the Father is with Me**” (John 16:32).
- ✚ The Father raised the Son from the dead. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that **God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved**” (Rom 10:9).
- ✚ The Scriptures declare the Father has glorified the Son. “**The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus**” (Acts 3:13).

- ✚ The Father gave the Son a name that is above every name. “Wherefore **God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name**” (Phil 2:9).
- ✚ The Father is glorified by our good works. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat 5:16).
- ✚ Most precisely, Jesus is “*the Son of the Father*” (2 John 1:3).

These are only a small sampling of the type of doctrine delivered by Christ and His Apostles. They serve to confirm the centrality of the Father in redemption, and the necessity of proper focus upon Him. Christ is, after all, the Way to the Father. In fact, it is the Father who gives significance to Christ.

HE HATH MADE US MEET

“^{12b} . . . which hath made us

Salvation Is Not Simplistic

WE SHOULD EXPECT A SALVATION OF THIS MAGNITUDE AND DEPTH TO ENGAGE THE MATURE MIND AS WELL AS THE UNDEVELOPED ONE.

meet . . . ”The things for which we give thanks to the Father have their ultimate origin in Him. Now, the Spirit will trace our acceptance to God, and our qualification for His blessing, to the Father Himself. If we are to “*grow up into Christ in all things*” (Eph 4:15), we must have a proper view of the Father.

Our theology must not be juvenile and naive. When it comes to the things of God, simplicity of understanding is an enemy, not a friend. We are solemnly admonished, “*Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men*” (1 Cor 14:20).

Nothing about salvation is simplistic, and it must not be viewed as though that was the case.

- ✚ Anything that involves God being both just and the Justifier cannot be elemental Rom 3:26).
- ✚ Reconciling sinners to a holy God is not rudimentary (Rom 5:10).
- ✚ Making peace between the enemies of God and God Himself is not a matter to be expounded by children, even though children who are of thoughtful mind can possess that peace (Col 1:20).

- ✚ In salvation the devil has been “destroyed” (Heb 2:14), yet “walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet 5:8). That is not a simple matter.
- ✚ Principalities and powers have been spoiled, and yet we continue to wrestle against them (Col 2:15; Eph 6:12). That is not simplistic.
- ✚ The removal of a stony heart and the reception of a heart of flesh is not something to be expounded by the novice (Ezek 36:26).
- ✚ The fact that the “*glorious Gospel of the blessed God*” (1 Tim 1:11) can be believed by the young, and pondered by the most astute and disciplined thinkers among men, confirms it is not a juvenile message. This is a Gospel that has moved holy angels to inquire into it (1 Pet 1:12).

We should expect a salvation of this magnitude and depth to engage the mature mind as well as the undeveloped one. What Paul now

expounds comes from a matured understanding – a keen perception of the nature and extent of salvation. This is not the outer court of spiritual thought, but brings us into the most holy place.

MADE US

“ . . . which hath made us . . . ”

Other versions read, “who has *qualified* us,” NKJV/NASB/NIV “who has *enabled* you,” NRSV and “who *did make* us.” YLT

The word “made” refers to the result of God’s own work. The condition that follows is “the Lord’s doing,” and it is “marvelous in our eyes” (Psa 118:23).

It is true in redemption, just as it is in the natural creation: “it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Psa 100:3). As Paul said, “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:10). We will now behold some of the involvements of that glorious “workmanship.”

MEET

“ . . . meet.” Other versions read, “qualified,” NKJV/NASB/NIV “enabled you to share,” NRSV “given us a part,” BBE “fit for,” DARBY “worthy,” DOUAY and “able to.” NJB

This is an aspect of salvation that is rarely considered by professing Christians. The truth of the matter is that

UNWORTHINESS EXCLUDES US FROM THE LORD, HIS COURTS, AND HIS BLESSINGS. THAT IS PRECISELY WHY WE HAD TO BE DELIVERED, SAVED, RAISED, AND “MADE MEET.”

much of the preaching of our day is not conducive to sound spiritual thought.

While, like Jacob, none of us are “worthy of the least of all the mercies” we have received (Gen 32:10), yet **the things God has prepared for those who love Him of God demand worthiness on our part!** Thrust from your mind any notion that unworthy people will at last dwell forever with the Lord. This is not the case. **Unworthiness excludes us from the Lord, His courts, and His blessings.** That is precisely why we had to be delivered, saved, raised, and “made meet.” Salvation does not leave us in an unworthy condition, but rather delivers us from it.

God did not give us a procedure by which we could be “made meet,” but did the work Himself. He “made” us “meet,” qualified, or worthy. His nature would not

allow Him to give an “eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15) to unworthy individuals – else the devil himself could receive it. Further, fallen man was unable to attain to a state of worthiness in his own strength – even if he was told precisely what to do. The Law provided such information, yet was “weak through the flesh” (Rom 8:3), leaving mankind in an unworthy state.

Therefore, the Lord did the work Himself. The prophet put it this way: “And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me” (Isa 63:5). **That marvelous salvation includes the work of making us qualified for the blessings to be realized in Christ Jesus.** In redemption, God not only does something with our iniquity, He does something with us as well.

THE INHERITANCE

“^{12b} . . . to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

In this text, the Spirit provides a grand **summation** of the “salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). It is essential for us to have a grasp of this overall view. Only God can give us the grand total first, then provide the details that sum up to that total. **Whatever does not eventually lead to this conclusion has nothing whatsoever to do with our salvation.** If the theology one embraces does not have a primary place for the consideration that follows, it ought to be abandoned with both zeal and haste. Such a theology is false to the core, for God promotes

nothing that does not lead to this end: “the inheritance of the saints in light.”

I understand that this does have some alarming repercussions, for much of the religion to which we are exposed these days has precious little to do with an inheritance. However, nothing – absolutely nothing – about salvation is divorced from this consideration. This is the objective toward which Jesus is working. It is why Jesus died, and why the Holy Spirit works within us.

PARTAKERS

“ . . . to be partakers . . . ” Other versions read “to share,” NASB/NIV/NRSV “given us a part,” BBE “sharing the

portion,” DARBY and “the participation.” YLT

The word “partakers” means a part, as distinct from the whole; an assigned part, portion, or share. STRONG’S Here we are introduced to a Kingdom manner – a way God has of dealing with mankind. Being made a “partaker” postulates obtaining a part of something much larger than ourselves. **What the Lord provides is divided, or apportioned, with Divine discretion.** The Holy Spirit makes a point of this throughout Scripture.

The Earth

While men have aspired to be world conquerors, the Lord divided the

earth, giving certain sections to certain people. "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen 10:5). "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were **the nations divided in the earth after the flood**" (Gen 10:32). "When **the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance**, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deu 32:8).

When speaking to the Athenians, Paul referred to this division in most precise language. "From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and **the exact places where they should live**"^{NIV} (Acts 17:26).

The Land of Canaan

When Israel came into the

"Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as **his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.** And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day" (1 Sam 30:22-25).

Ministries Within Christ's Body

The same dividing procedures is found within the body of Christ. The Lord Himself apportions certain functions within Christ's body. As it is written, "But now hath God set the members

highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom 12:3-5).

Concluding Thought

A "partaker" is a participant, not a spectator. **A partaker is someone with a function, or role, within something much larger than himself.** This is something for which God has made us "meet," or worthy.

THE INHERITANCE

"... of the inheritance..." The word "inheritance" emphasizes the future. It is something that is not currently seen or realized, yet of which powerful testimony has been delivered. The "inheritance" is at the heart and core of spiritual life. It is something for which there is both longing and labor. Ponder how much is said of it.

WHEN ISRAEL CAME INTO THE PROMISED LAND, IT WAS DIVIDED TO THEM BY LOT - EACH TRIBE RECEIVING A PORTION OF THE LAND APPROPRIATE TO THEIR SIZE AND FUNCTION.

promised land, it was divided to them by lot - each tribe receiving a portion of the land appropriate to their size and function. "And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit" (Num 33:54).

The Spoils of Victory

In ancient times, the spoils of victory, or the goods plundered from the enemy, were divided by portion. David is particularly noted for his discretion in this matter. Following a thorough defeat of the Amalekites, it is written of him,

every one of them in the body, **as it hath pleased Him**" (1 Cor 12:18). These are areas of responsibility that accrue to the building up of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit administers these various functions. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, **dividing to every man severally as He will**" (1 Cor 12:4-11).

In admonishing the saints to engage in profitable ministry, Peter referred to this arrangement. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it **as of the ability which God giveth**" (1 Pet 4:11). Paul spoke similarly to the brethren in Rome. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more

✚ **AN INHERITANCE AMONG THE SANCTIFIED.** "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and **to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified**" (Acts 20:32). The Word of God's grace, contained in the Gospel, is able to give us a participation in the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9).

✚ **THE OBJECTIVE OF APOSTLESHIP.** "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, **and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me**" (Acts 26:18). Forgiveness is in order to participating in the inheritance that has not yet been revealed. It is involved in making us worthy for that glorious inheritance.

✚ **IN A SENSE, IT IS ALREADY OBTAINED.** "In whom also **we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all**

things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph 1:11). The inheritance is presently obtained by having our names affixed to it. It is reserved for us, to so speak, in Christ Jesus. The aim that must pervade the heart of every believer is to obtain it.

✦ **WE HAVE A DOWN PAYMENT OF THE INHERITANCE.** “... 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 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit is a pledge of the inheritance to come. He represents the nature and substance of that inheritance, and is a guarantee that it will be realized.

✦ **AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE.** “And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15). Unlike the lands inherited by the nations, and the portions of Canaan inherited by the twelve tribes of Israel, the inheritance realized in Christ Jesus is an eternal one. Those, therefore, who emphasize worldly benefits, affirming that to be the meaning of “life more abundantly” have not told the truth. It is still true, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor 15:19).

✦ **BORN AGAIN TO OBTAIN.** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet 1:3-4). From this point of view, the purpose for the new birth is in order to the realization of an **incorruptible** inheritance – not one that will perish, or cease to be when the world passes away. Even though we presently have the “earnest of the inheritance,” we do not have its fulness – nor can we have it while we

remain in the body in this world. However, it is “reserved in heaven for you.”

After all is said and done, a person must be qualified for this inheritance. We give thanks to God that, although we had no power to qualify ourselves, He has made us “meet” to participate in this “eternal inheritance.” We will participate in that inheritance by lot, or portion. Jesus referred to this as our “reward in heaven” (Matt 5:12). Paul referred to it as “the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor 2:9). Elsewhere we read of a “city” God has “prepared” for those who seek a “better country” (Heb 11:16). John spoke of the inheritance in the grandness of scope. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev 21:7).

“inheritance” will produce meager and beggarly thanksgiving. It is possible for people to limit their thanksgiving to the experience of temporal benefits. To be sure, we must give thanks to the Lord for these things. However, we must see to it that our thanks are not limited to them. Our Father in heaven has qualified us for “the inheritance,” and for this an uninterrupted flow of praise must be raised to Him! Perhaps if preachers and teachers spoke more of the inheritance it would produce a greater measure of thanksgiving in the hearers.

THE SAINTS IN LIGHT

“... of the saints in light.” Other versions read, “saints in the kingdom of light,”^{NIV/NIB} “that belongs to God’s holy people, who live in the light,”^{NLT} and “God’s holy people and with them to

AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, A PERSON MUST BE QUALIFIED FOR THIS INHERITANCE. WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD THAT, ALTHOUGH WE HAD NO POWER TO QUALIFY OURSELVES, HE HAS MADE US “MEET” TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS “ETERNAL INHERITANCE.”

Keep in mind that before we were in Jesus, we were appropriately described as “by nature children of wrath” (Eph 2:3), and “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). We were “condemned already” (John 3:18), and the wrath of God was abiding upon us (John 3:36). Ponder Paul’s extensive description of our former state in his letter to Titus. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Titus 3:3).

Our outward appearance might have been acceptable before men, but we ourselves were not acceptable to God. It is no wonder that we are called to give thanks to the Father for making us qualified for the inheritance! That is a great work, indeed!

Minuscule views of the

inherit the light.”^{NJB}

“God is light” (1 John 1:5), and those who would fellowship with Him here, and dwell forever with Him there, must be **in the light!**

“Light” speaks of life and illumination. Jesus said those following Him would have “the light of life” (John 8:12). He also said, “If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world” (John 11:9). He further referred to the light being IN the person, not merely upon him: “But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him” (John 11:9).

Saints

There are all manner of qualifiers in this brief sentence. God is the One who has qualified us, and without that qualification we cannot participate in the

inheritance. Now the Spirit adds that the enjoyment of that inheritance will be by “saints” – holy ones, for that is the meaning of the word.

Elsewhere we are taught that “without” holiness, “no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). This is a day when it is certainly not fashionable to speak of holiness. The modern church does not reflect this quality in its appearance, activity, or thought. But be sure of this, there will not be one unholy personality in glory – not a single one! If a person is not holy, then they must at once engage in

unholiness, or unrighteousness is found, “the flesh” is dominating the person. We are solemnly told, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom 8:13). That is a big “IF.” There is not the slightest chance that a person living “after the flesh” will be saved. Conversely, there is not the slenderest chance that those mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit will not live!

Holy people are “saints.” Righteous people are “saints.” Godly

not end by mentioning “saints,” or “holy ones,” He identifies them with the “light.” Some versions read “kingdom of light.” ^{NIV/NIB} That is, the “light” is the habitat in which the “saints” live. **It is a domain of understanding, insight, and illumination.** Saints “walk in the light,” and thus experience fellowship with one another and the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ. As it is written, “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). With true “saints,” there is no “if” – they DO walk in the light, for that is how they maintain their godly character.

Saints are “children of the day,” and are “not of the night” (1 Thess 5:5). They “know God,” from the least of them to the greatest (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:11). They have acquainted themselves with Him, and therefore have peace (Job 22:24).

“Light” is the surrounding element of the saints: “the saints **IN** light.” **This speaks of an environment of understanding, perception, and insight. Enlightenment and illumination from God are experienced** (Eph 1:18; 3:18; Heb 6:4; 20:32). An ignorant person or church cannot be holy, for ignorance indicates one is in darkness (1 John 2:11)!

We must not be judgmental toward one another in this matter. However, we must see to it that those who insist on walking in darkness are not comfortable when they are among the saints. **In the same way, our personal and congregational manners should not cause offense to those who are walking in the light.** What offends God will not please those who know Him.

Once again, I want to emphasize how this manner of speaking conflicts with the *Christianity* of our day. This condition underscores the spiritual jeopardy of the times in which we are living. These are truly “perilous times” – times that encourage slumber. How the church needs the focus of the text before us! **It needs to see how great a deliverance is wrought when the holy God qualifies a person for His inheritance – the things He has prepared for those who love Him!**

A LACK OF HOLINESS REVEALS A LACK OF CHRIST. THE MODERN CHURCH, PARTICULARLY THE AMERICAN CHURCH, IS TOO TOLERANT OF A LACK OF HOLINESS. IT'S COUNSELORS ARE ATTEMPTING TO TALK PEOPLE OUT OF SIN INSTEAD OF CALLING UPON THEM TO REPENT AND BRING FORTH “FRUITS MEET FOR REPENTANCE”

activities that make for holiness. The Spirit puts it this way: “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness **unto holiness**” (Rom 6:19). And again, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit **unto holiness**, and the end everlasting life” (Rom 6:22).

We are admonished, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God**” (2 Cor 7:1). The “new man” was “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). No unholiness proceeds from the new creation – not even the smallest expression of it (2 Cor 5:17). Where

people are “saints.” The inheritance is for “saints,” and no one but “saints.”

A lack of holiness reveals a lack of Christ. The modern church, particularly the American church, is too tolerant of a lack of holiness. It’s counselors are attempting to talk people out of sin instead of calling upon them to repent and bring forth “fruits meet for repentance” (Matt 3:8). **The church has become a hospital where people stay sick instead of getting well.** Among the people with whom I have been identified, the words “inheritance” and “saints” are like foreign language. The average church member does not have the faintest notion of what they mean, even though they are frequent themes of Apostolic exposition.

In Light

The Spirit seems to drive the truth even deeper into our conscience. He does

HE HATH DELIVERED US

^{13a} *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness . . .*”

WHO

“Who . . .” We now embark on what God the Father has done in our salvation. These are matters for which insightful thanksgiving is given to Him. Such thanksgiving is integral to walking “*worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.*”

This is “*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor 11:31; Eph 1:3; 4:6; 1 Pet 1:13). It is the God that is manifested in Christ Jesus (1 Tim 3:16). This is the One to whom, Jesus is bringing us (1 Pet 3:18). He is most precisely seen in Jesus, who is “*the express Image of His Person*” (Heb 1:3).

This God is not fully defined in a creed. His “*fulness*” dwells in the Lord Jesus (Col 1:19; 2:9). Only the Lord Jesus can make this God known. Apart from Christ, He cannot be comprehended as He is. Thus Jesus affirmed, “*All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him*” (Mat 11:27).

God cannot be known by mere study or research. The heavens declare His glory, but in all the history of the world, no one has ever comprehended God by studying the heavens!

Apart from the Lord Jesus, all talk about God is mere speculation. No eternal benefit has ever, nor can it ever, come from an understanding of God that was **not** taught by Jesus. No man can come to God except by Christ (John 14:6), and no man even knows who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom Jesus wills to reveal Him. That is the God who is the Subject of this text.

DELIVERED US

“*. . . hath delivered us . . .*” Other versions read, “*rescued us,*” ^{NIV/NRSV} and “*made us free.*” ^{BBE} The word “*deliver*” means “*to draw to one’s self,* to rescue, and to deliver.” ^{STRONG’S} Lexically, the

word means “*To draw,* hence, properly, to draft, to oneself, to rescue, to deliver.” ^{THAYER}

The picture is that of one Master drawing a captive to himself from another master. The utter helplessness of the one being delivered is also assumed.

THERE IS A DOMAIN INTO WHICH ONE MUST ENTER BEFORE SIN CAN BE COMMITTED – THE REALM OF DARKNESS. ONCE ENTERED, THE DOOR SHUTS BEHIND THE TRANSGRESSOR – A DOOR HE IS POWERLESS TO OPEN.

This deliverance was as complex as our bondage. We should not expect a deliverance requiring the incarnation, death, resurrection, exaltation, and intercession of Christ to be simplistic. Sin introduced a complex situation that could only be resolved by an all-powerful and all-wise God.

✚ Concerning our condemned status, and the justness of it, we were delivered from the **Law** in its condemning capacity. “*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*” (Rom 7:6).

✚ Concerning our conflict with God, and the consequent indignation to which we were subjected, we were delivered from the **wrath** to come. “*And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*” (1 Thess 1:10).

✚ Concerning our present environment, with which we had been united by nature, we were delivered from this present evil **world**. “*Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might*

deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal 1:4).

Now the Spirit affirms our deliverance from an alienating power greater than ourselves. This was a power to which we had been enslaved, and from

which we could not extricate ourselves. Furthermore, no created personality could liberate us from this bondage.

FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS

“*. . . from the power of darkness.*” Other versions read “*the domain of darkness,*” ^{NASB} “*the dominion of darkness,*” ^{NIV} “*power of evil,*” ^{BBE} “*authority of darkness,*” ^{DARBY} “*the ruling force of darkness,*” ^{NJB} and “*the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness.*” ^{NLT}

More is involved in sin than infracting the Law of God. That is what sin is Godward – but there is another dimension to sin. There is a domain into which one must enter before sin can be committed – the realm of darkness. Once entered, the door shuts behind the transgressor – a door he is powerless to open. There is also a powerful personality behind sin – the devil. To sin, the individual must listen to the devil, and do his bidding. Once sin is committed, Satan gains control of the transgressors – a control the sinners are powerless to break.

The Race Had Been Captured

Because of Adam’s sin, the whole human race was captured by Satan. Although theologians have argued about this point, the Holy Spirit had made the

matter quite clear.

- ✚ Sin entered and dominated through Adam. *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”* (Rom 5:12).
- ✚ All men died toward God because of one man’s sin. *“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”* (Rom 5:15).
- ✚ Judgment unto condemnation resulted from one man’s sin. *“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by*

made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

Confirming Evidence

While men may argue about these things, the evidence speaks for itself. Satan has *“deceived the whole world”* (Rev 12:9). The *“whole world”* lies under the power of the wicked one (1 John 5:19). Everyone has sinned and comes short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). By nature, we are *“the children of wrath”* (Eph 2:3).

What Is Darkness?

Darkness is the objective realm of evil – that is, it is an authoritative empire that promotes and maintains wickedness. It is headed up by Satan, who maintains this vast empire through *“the rulers of the darkness of this world”* (Eph 6:12). **This is a domain in which God is**

are called the *“works of darkness”* (Rom 13:12; Eph 5:11). Prior to being in Christ, we ourselves were called *“darkness”* – the epitome of ignorance and sin (Eph 5:8).

The Rule of Darkness

Our text affirms we were delivered from *“the POWER of darkness.”* We were not simply guilty of sin, but were held within the confines of guilt, ignorance, and condemnation. The *“power of darkness”* is stronger than the ability of the transgressor. It keeps men locked up just as surely as Israel was kept in bondage in Egypt, and Samson in the grinding mills of the Philistines. It is no more possible for the sinner to break his own bonds than it was for Joseph to escape from prison through his own ingenuity. If God does not intervene, there simply is no hope.

Darkness rules! If a person chooses to walk in darkness – in the ignorance of God – he will be ruled by that darkness. Darkness does not ask for permission to rule, but takes the dominion over all who are within its confines.

The Jeopardy of Our Times

We live in a time when the scholars and psychologists have captured the church. They have taught men to speak in such a manner as to minimize the power of darkness, and overstate the power of men. Men now speak of addiction, substance abuse, the disease of alcoholism, habits, inherited behavior, and the likes. They have emitted an obscuring fog that hides the truth from men. What they call “addiction” is really *“the power of darkness.”* Let us not be confused about the matter, “substance abuse” is actually *“the power of darkness.”* Alcoholism is not a disease, but the evidence of *“the power of darkness.”* Men are not addicted to pornography, they are under *“the power of darkness.”* When men cannot break away from sin, they are not wrestling against mere habits, but against *“the power of darkness.”* Men may glibly speak of the need to manage their anger, but what they really need is deliverance from *“the power of darkness.”*

God Has Delivered Us

The truth of the matter is that God has *“delivered us from the power of*

THE “POWER OF DARKNESS” IS STRONGER THAN THE ABILITY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR. IT KEEPS MEN LOCKED UP JUST AS SURELY AS ISRAEL WAS KEPT IN BONDAGE IN EGYPT, AND SAMSON IN THE GRINDING MILLS OF THE PHILISTINES.

one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification” (Rom 5:16).

- ✚ Death reigned over the human race because of one man. *“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”* (Rom 5:17).
- ✚ By the offense of one man, judgment came to all men unto condemnation. *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life”* (Rom 5:18).
- ✚ By one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners. *“For as by one man’s disobedience many were*

neither seen nor known. So far as men are concerned, the realm of *“darkness”* deals exclusively with *“this world,”* making it ones solitary focus.

This realm militates against any thinking about God Himself, Christ Jesus, the salvation of God, or the Law of God. It does not allow men to think about the inevitability of death, the end of the world or the day of judgment. None of these things can be clearly seen in *“darkness,”* and thus they do not occupy the minds of those under its power.

“Darkness” has to do with ignorance. Basically, this is an ignorance of God, which actually alienates the individual from Him (Eph 4:18), and guarantees condemnation (2 Thess 1:8).

Darkness is the realm in which sin is committed, and those who sin *“walk in darkness”* (1 John 1:6). Transgressions

darkness.” The deliverance is as real as Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. Through Christ, men can walk out of darkness just as surely as Israel walked out of Egypt.

Like Peter’s Deliverance

Our deliverance from darkness is much like Peter’s deliverance from prison. When Peter was “kept in prison,” he was “sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.” When the delivering angel “came upon him,” a “light shined in the prison,” and “his chains fell off from his hands.” The angel told him to gird himself, put on his sandals, wrap a garment around himself and follow him. They walked past two guards without the guards even noticing them. When they came to a great iron gate that led into the city, the gate “opened to them of its own accord” (Acts 12:6-10). Peter had been delivered from the power of the prison!

When God delivered us from “the power of darkness,” the moral chains that bound us simply fell off. Satan’s lieutenants did not even know we were leaving their domain, and the moral and spiritual gates that held us in darkness opened to let us out. We were able to come to Jesus, believe the Gospel, and obey the Lord from the heart.

Like Job’s Deliverance

While there are some things about Job’s deliverance that do not exactly parallel our rescue, here are some comparable circumstances.

First, the experience of Job is called “the captivity of Job,” and God alone “turned” the circumstances for Job’s advantage (Job 42:10). During the period allotted to Satan to test Job, the patriarch was powerless to thwart the working of the devil. Of that period God said to Satan, “Behold, all that he hath is **in thy power**; only upon himself put not forth thine hand” (Job 1:12). In a single day, the devil liquidated Job’s assets, and Job could do nothing to stop him.

In his second attack, Satan “smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). There was nothing Job could do to negate Satan’s power. He could not reject the boils, as some are wont to say today.

However, when God “turned the captivity of Job,” the devil’s attack was abruptly ended, and blessings were so abundant that it is written, “So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job 42:12).

That is how it was when God delivered us “from the power of darkness.” The misery caused by sin was over, and Satan’s dominion was ended.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Until men comprehend the

which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope, and without God in the world**” (Eph 2:11-12).

✦ “For we ourselves also were sometimes **foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating**

UNTIL MEN COMPREHEND THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR FORMER ENSLAVEMENT TO SIN, AND DOMINANCE BY THE DEVIL, THE SALVATION OF GOD WILL NOT BE VIEWED AS IT SHOULD.

magnitude of their former enslavement to sin, and dominance by the devil, the salvation of God will not be viewed as it should. **The Holy Spirit extends Himself to emphasize what we have been delivered from, as well as what we have come to.** A few examples will serve to confirm this to our hearts.

✦ “But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you**” (Rom 6:17).

✦ “For when **ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness**” (Rom 6:20).

✦ “Wherein in time past **ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others**” (Eph 2:2-3)

✦ “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past **Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that**

one another” (Titus 3:3).

These are a commentary on the effectiveness of “the power of darkness.” Our condition required a Divine work, not mere human ingenuity or resolve. Anyone who is honest knows that is the case.

The Beginning

Our deliverance from “the power of darkness” was the beginning of our experience of salvation. It started with deliverance, just as Israel’s salvation from Egyptian bondage started with their exodus from the land that held them.

The Implications of this Teaching

There are some powerful implications in this teaching. If those in Christ have, in fact, been delivered “from the power of darkness,” then continued involvement in sin reveals the person is deceived – for Satan can only work through deception.

The reality of our deliverance “from the power of darkness” is why the Lord demands that we be holy (1 Pet 1:15-16). It is why we are told no man will see God who is not holy (Heb 12:14). **Give thanks for such a marvelous deliverance! Then, accept the responsibility that accompanies that deliverance.** Leave the area wherein you were once held!

HE HATH TRANSLATED US

^{13b} *... and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.*"

There are two sides the coin of redemption: what we are saved **from**, and what we are saved **to**. There is what we have come **out of**, and what we have come **into**. There is something **removed**, and something **given**. There is deliverance **out of the hand of the enemy**, and deliverance **into the hand of the Savior**. There is the **settling of**

shape our understanding concerning salvation.

HATH

"... and hath ..." We are still speaking of what God the Father has done. While it is apparent from the language of the text, our hearts must be continually reminded that we are *"His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus"* (Eph 2:10). It is *"by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom*

✚ God HAS given to us eternal life, which is in the Son (1 John 5:11).

None of these things have been done independently of the accomplishments of the Son of God. **Christ's redemptive work is WHY God has been able to do these things, and be righteous in the doing of them.**

We must always view salvation as wholly dependent upon the work of Christ and the will of God. In a marvelous summation of Christ's mission in this world, the Spirit records Him saying, *"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second"* (Heb 10:7-9).

AMONG MANY PROFESSING BELIEVERS THERE IS NOT CLEAR AND CONCISE THINKING CONCERNING THE SALVATION OF GOD. OFTEN IT IS OVERSIMPLIFIED, AS THOUGH GOD COULD JUST DELIVER PEOPLE FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE DEVIL, AND PUT THEM IN HEAVENLY PLACES SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WANTED TO.

a debt, and the establishment of an inheritance. Old things pass away, and all things become new. We put off *"the old man,"* only to put on *"the new man."*

There are two kings and two kingdoms. Christ heads up one, and Satan the other. One kingdom is of light, the other of darkness. Both kingdoms are entered by a birth. The natural birth brings you into the kingdom of darkness. The new birth brings you into the kingdom of light.

It is not enough to be *"delivered from the power of darkness."* That is not the end of the matter. Much of the religion of our day treats conversion as though it only removed guilt and dealt with the past. However, our deliverance from *"the power of darkness"* was in order to something. **We were not delivered to live on our own, for that brings no glory to God.** It was living for self that characterized our former lives. It surely cannot be the focus of our new lives.

Now the Spirit will elaborate on WHY we were delivered. This will help to

from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" ^{NASB} (1 Cor 1:30).

We are speaking of something that has already taken place – *"hath."* **The circumstance that follows exists, and all of the benefits associated with it are accessible.**

Much is made of what God has already done. A brief view of this aspect of the Kingdom will serve to confirm the reality declared in this verse.

✚ God HAS set forth Christ as the propitiation for sin (Rom 3:25).

✚ God HAS raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9).

✚ God HAS dealt to every person in Christ *"the measure of faith"* (Rom 12:3).

✚ God HAS prepared things for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9).

✚ God HAS sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Gal 4:6).

This is why Jesus said, *"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work"* (John 4:34). That work culminated in laying down His life *"a ransom for many"* (Matt 20:28). This was according to the commandment He received from the Father, to lay down His life, and take it up again (John 10:17-18). Until Christ did this, God could not do what our text affirms He now has done.

All of this may seem so apparent that one might imagine there is no need to say such things. However, that is not at all the case. Among many professing believers there is not clear and concise thinking concerning the salvation of God. Often it is oversimplified, as though God could just deliver people from the tyranny of the devil, and put them in heavenly places simply because He wanted to. Such thinking is too simplistic for a child of God.

Ponder what ramifications such a foolish theology has. That would mean that God really had no desire to save people for the first four thousand years of human history – for, during that time,

none were delivered from the power of darkness in the sense of our text.

The fact that God *"HATH"* proves something has been accomplished that permits Him to righteously do what follows – something that satisfied God's own requirements. That "something" is the vicarious and effectual death of Christ. It is said of that death, *"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied"* (Isa 53:11). Blessed indeed is the person who finds himself also *"satisfied"* with the offering of Christ.

TRANSLATED US

" . . . translated us . . . " Other versions read, *"conveyed us,"* ^{NKJV} *"transferred us,"* ^{NASB} *"brought us into,"* ^{NIV} and *"given us a place in."* ^{BBE}

The word *"translated"* means to transpose, transfer, remove from one place to another, or a change of situation or place. ^{STRONG'S} It involves changing one's official position from one place to another. Enoch, for example, was *"translated that he should not see death"* (Heb 11:5). That is, he was transferred to the unseen realms without having to pass through the corridor of death.

There is a moral change that takes place in salvation – the static heart of stone is taken out, and we receive a malleable heart of flesh, which is given to us (Ezek 11:19). There is also a spiritual change that takes place, in which our fundamental constitution is altered. This involves God's laws being written in our hearts and put into our minds (Heb 8:10).

But there is also a change of location – a translation into another realm. **We are moved into a domain that is conducive to the development and maintenance of spiritual life.** This is something that God does, and He does it for everyone who *"receives"* His Son, or *"believes on His name"* (John 1:12).

What follows is accomplished in everyone who is baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27). It is the experience of all who are *"added to the church"* (Acts 2:47). This is the lot of every single person who is *"in Christ Jesus"* (Rom 8:1), are *"justified by faith,"* and have *"peace with God"* (Rom 5:1). This is what God *"hath"* done!

INTO THE KINGDOM

" . . . into the kingdom . . . "

This is where we *"are come"* – a kingdom, a new domain. In delineating the *"kingdom"* we have *"received,"* or into which we have been *"translated,"* the Spirit says the following. *"But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"* (Heb 12:22-24).

This kingdom is bigger than people: it includes angels, God, Christ, and the blood of Christ. It is a

of the resources required to maintain newness of life are found. This is an organized kingdom in which everything is orchestrated for a specific objective – the will of God.

Both Present and Future

The kingdom into which God has translated us is both present and in the future. In this world, we are occupying a colony of the kingdom – a heavenly outpost on earth. But it is not another kingdom. The one into which we have been translated is the same one we are going to inherit (Matt 25:34; Gal 5:21).

If we allow our vision to terminate with the modern church, we will scarcely be able to imagine that God has transferred us into a *"kingdom"* – a kingdom becoming of the God who has put us there. It is replete with resources, abounding with personalities, and

THERE IS A MORAL CHANGE THAT TAKES PLACE IN SALVATION – THE STATIC HEART OF STONE IS TAKEN OUT, AND WE RECEIVE A MALLEABLE HEART OF FLESH, WHICH IS GIVEN TO US (EZEK 11:19). THERE IS ALSO A SPIRITUAL CHANGE THAT TAKES PLACE, IN WHICH OUR FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION IS ALTERED

conglomerate of many personalities – *"the city of the living God."* It is apart from this world – *"the heavenly Jerusalem."* Its citizenry are recorded in the heavenly log – *"written in heaven."*

This is a *"large room"* (Psa 31:8), teeming with personalities and benefits. It is a vast domain, or realm with rights and privileges. This is the domain where Divine workings are found. It is the place where holy angels are occupied with holy activity. The real Ruler is here, and His will is the only will that is done.

Being translated into *"the kingdom"* is another view of passing *"from death to life"* (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14). This *"life"* is lived out in a specific domain. That domain is where our affection is to be *"set"* – on *"things above"* (Col 3:2). This is a *"kingdom"* in which all

overflowing with benefits.

OF HIS DEAR SON

" . . . of His dear Son." Other versions read, *"the Son of His love,"* ^{NKJV} *"His beloved Son,"* ^{NASB} and *"the Son He loves."* ^{NIV}

This kingdom is presently being administered by the Son of God – the Lord Jesus Christ. He presently is *"the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"* (1 Tim 6:15) – and He is not without a kingdom.

The kingdom over which Jesus is presiding is the same kingdom elsewhere called *"the kingdom of God."* This is the kingdom men are to *"seek first"* (Matt 6:33). It is the *"kingdom"* we have *"received"* (Heb 12:28). It is the *"kingdom"* that came when Jesus walked

among men (Matt 12:28). Jesus spoke of this kingdom to His disciples following His resurrection (Acts 1:3). It was the kingdom preached in Samaria: “Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). It is the kingdom we enter “through much tribulation” (Acts 14:22). This is the kingdom Paul preached (Acts 20:25) and expounded (Acts 28:23,31). This is the same kingdom that is presently “in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).

Appointed to Jesus by the Father

This kingdom has been

and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14).

A Special Parable

On one occasion, Jesus delivered a parable to those who “thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” Speaking about Himself He said, “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12). The “return” was not to set up His kingdom, but to cause His servants to give

hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:32-33). Peter then proclaimed that God had made Jesus Lord – that is, that He had placed Him upon the throne as He promised David. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, **both Lord and Christ”** (Acts 2:36).

He will give it back to God

At the conclusion of this “day of salvation,” when “the end” comes, the Lord Jesus will deliver the kingdom back to God. All the sons will have been brought home to glory, and all competing authorities and powers will have been “put down.” Assuming identity with those He came to save, He will then Himself be subject to the Father. Thus it is written, “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:24-28).

EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE HAS BEEN PUT UNDER JESUS WITH THE SINGLE EXCEPTION OF THE FATHER HIMSELF.

“appointed” by the Father to His Son (Luke 22:29). Presently, this vast kingdom is being ordered to bring many sons to glory – to bring them through the quagmire of this world into the presence of God Himself (Heb 2:10). Thus it is appropriately referred to as “the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph 5:5). Our ultimate entrance into glory is spoken of in this manner, “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:11).

Revealed to John

On the Isle of Patmos John said he was a “companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9).

Daniel’s Vision

While men speak of Jesus coming back to earth to obtain His kingdom, Daniel was told the Messiah entered into heaven to obtain it. “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him **dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations,**

an account of their stewardship. At the time He came back, he was already in possession of the kingdom. “And it came to pass, that when he was returned, **having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him . . .**” (Luke 19:15).

Peter’s Proclamation

On the day of Pentecost, Peter referred to God’s promise to David. “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne”** (Acts 2:30). He then affirmed that David foretold the enthronement of Jesus when He prophesied His resurrection – not His second coming. “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:31).

Further, the sending forth of the Holy Spirit was Christ’s first work as King. “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore **being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He**

Everything and everyone has been put under Jesus with the single exception of the Father Himself. When the purpose of God has been brought to its conclusion, and the new heavens and the new earth are in place (2 Pet 3:13) – when there is no more foe, and death itself has been banished from the kingdom to the lake of fire (Rev 20:14) – then the Son, in all of His glory, will Himself be subject to the Father, who put everything under Him.

It is no wonder, therefore, that we are urged to “give thanks” to the Father who, through His Son, has qualified us for the “eternal inheritance.” **That glorious redemption cost Jesus something!** That price cannot presently be comprehended. In fact, it may very well be that it will never be fully discerned. He who existed “in the form of God,” and “was God” will be “subject to God” (Phil 2:6; John 1:1).

This does **not** involve a sort of demotion. The Word **volunteered** to come into the world, and the Son will volunteer to put Himself under the Father. All of this is in order to be identified with His bride, which is the church. Those who view Jesus Christ as a created being are wrong, they have embraced a view that lessens the magnitude of salvation.

In the meantime, the kingdom into which we have been “translated” is the one over which Jesus presides. He has been “made the Head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:11). That is, He has been given to the church in the capacity as head over everything – the power of darkness included. At this present time, there is nothing that is not subject to Christ, except the Father Himself.

The Church Is Not the Kingdom

“Kingdom” is not a synonym for the church. The church is not “the kingdom.” It is involved in the kingdom, but is not itself the kingdom. The kingdom includes all subjects, which embraces “principalities and powers” of darkness, demons, Satan himself, and “all souls.” Holy angels are in the kingdom. Speaking of higher powers, Peter said of Jesus, “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pet 3:22). They are all part of His kingdom.

A Special Place

Being “translated” into the kingdom, we have been brought into more close affiliation with Jesus, who by virtue of His manhood, is directly related to us. In fact, believers are His “brethren” (Heb 2:11,17). In Christ, we are not destined to be under His feet, but in His throne with Him. As He Himself said, “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). God has determined

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him” (2 Tim 2:12). It is no small thing, therefore, that we have been “translated” into the Kingdom of God’s Son!

“Dear Son”

Because of His willingness to take a lower seat, fulfilling what was necessary to save the children, “the Man Christ Jesus” is especially precious to the Father. Because He willingly “humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8), He is God’s DEAR Son.

Those who insist that God loves everyone alike must account for His special view of the Son. Is

voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Mat 17:5).

✚ **In His life.** “And he that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29).

✚ **In His death.** “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17).

✚ **In His exaltation.** “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above

HE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE CHURCH IN THE CAPACITY AS HEAD OVER EVERYTHING – THE POWER OF DARKNESS INCLUDED. AT THIS PRESENT TIME, THERE IS NOTHING THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO CHRIST, EXCEPT THE FATHER HIMSELF.

there a soul foolish enough to affirm that God has no higher regard for His “only begotten Son,” than for those who had sinned and come short of His glory? I would think such a view to be most repulsive, for Christ’s priority to the Father is everywhere declared with great clarity.

✚ **In His baptism.** “And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat 3:17).

✚ **At His transfiguration.** “While He yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a

every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11).

Believers are admonished to “be followers of God as dear children” (Eph 5:1). Jesus is declared to be God’s “dear Son.” He is not only “THE Christ,” He is “THE Son” (Matt 16:16).

There is a sense in which “the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5) is the only man God honors and receives. In order for Divine acceptance, Jesus Himself must receive us! Thus it is written, “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Rom 15:7). God be praised for that gracious and God-honoring reception!

REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST’S BLOOD

“^{14a}In whom we have redemption through His blood . . .”

We are in the midst of a discourse on thanksgiving, which is within the

context of walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. That means we are

It is Possible for Thanksgiving to be Insightful, and with Great Understanding– by Given O. Blakely

speaking of things that are not to be taken for granted. We are not to allow these things to be excluded from our thinking. Furthermore, these are areas in which the Tempter is particularly active, seeking to blind men minds. These are sanctifying realities. The more clearly we see them, the more pleasing and thankful we become.

IN WHOM

“In whom . . .” Every version reads the same way – “IN whom.” The “whom” is God’s “dear Son.”

Through Christ

Many times we are said to receive things “through Christ.” We are an “heir of God through Christ” (Gal 4:7). We thank God “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 7:25). God receives glory “through Jesus Christ” (Rom 16:27). The Holy Spirit is shed on us “abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Tit 3:6). God works in us “that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ” (Heb 13:21).

In the above texts, the Greek word

of “within, in, or denoting a specific position.” STRONG’S Rather than Christ being viewed as the means through which the benefit comes to us, “in” sees Him as **the environment in which we have been placed**. The benefit that is mentioned is realized because of WHERE we are – “IN Christ.” “Through” emphasis the legal aspect of salvation. “In” places the accent on the experience itself.

Of the many glorious benefits of salvation, being “IN Christ” is the primary one. This is a relationship never before realized. Under the Old Covenant, men were actually held at a distance from God, confined to routines and procedures outlined in the ceremonial law. But a new day has dawned in Jesus in which we become “one” with Christ Himself.

Viewed from the **functional** viewpoint, we are “members of HIS body” (Eph 5:30) – “IN Christ.” From the standpoint of the **new nature**, we are “one spirit” with the Lord (1 Cor 6:17). If we want to view this position from the point of its **beginning**, we were “baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27). It is

are no longer strange to us, and His will is pleasant to us. On the eve of His betrayal, the Savior prayed about those who believed on Him being one with Him and the Father. His language is most precise. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art **in Me**, and I **in thee**, that they also may be one **in Us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent Me. And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: **I in them**, and Thou **in me**, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me” (John 17:21-23).

The unity for which our Savior prayed is too complex for men to achieve. The Father is in the Son (Thou Father art in Me), and the Son is in the Father (I in Thee). The followers become one in the Father and in the Son (they also may be one in Us). Christ is in the believers (I in them), and the Father is in the Son (Thou in Me). **In other words, the Savior prayed that believers would be involved in the union between the Father and the Son.** That involves being made a “partaker of Christ” (Heb 3:14), and “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4).

This unity is so precise that it is expressed in the following ways.

- ✦ We are in the Father (1 John 2:24).
- ✦ The Father is in us (Eph 4:6).
- ✦ We are in Christ (1 Pet 5:14).
- ✦ Christ is in us (Col 1:27).
- ✦ We are in the Spirit (Gal 5:25).
- ✦ The Spirit is in us (Rom 8:9).

According to our text, Jesus Christ has become our habitat. He is the spiritual environment in which we live and move. Our union with Him is what puts us in “heavenly places,” for God placed us there “in Christ” (Eph 2:6). Salvation involves a merging of Christ Jesus with His people – a joining so precise that it is referred to as “one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17).

The Sureness of the Position

When we are in Christ, all of benefits accruing from His work become ours. They are ours by virtue of being “in Christ,” for He who is “in Christ” possesses everything He has to give.

BEING “IN CHRIST” INVOLVES ONENESS WITH HIM – UNITY WITH HIM. HIS THOUGHTS ARE NO LONGER STRANGE TO US, AND HIS WILL IS PLEASANT TO US.

used is δὲ (dea). It means “through, by means of, or on account of.” BARCLAY-NEWMAN That is, Christ is the means through which the benefit comes. This is **not** the meaning of the word used in our text – “in.”

This word (dea) is also translated “by.” We come to God “by Him” (1 Pet 1:21). “By Him” we have access to the Father (Eph 2:18). “By” the blood of Christ’s cross we have been reconciled to God (Col 1:20). Again, the meaning is “by means of Christ.” That also is **not** the meaning reflected in our text.

“In”

But here, the word is different. “In” comes from the Greek word ἐν (en). This is a preposition carrying the meaning

being **in Christ** that constitutes the new creation. “Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17).

This is the most precise of all unions – being “in Christ.” It is the result of God’s own work, for “OF HIM are we IN Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 1:30). Elsewhere we are told that God actually “set the members every one of them” in Christ’s body “as it hath pleased Him” (1 Cor 12:18).

What Is Involved in Being In Christ?

Being “in Christ” involves oneness with Him – unity with Him. His thoughts

Notice how the Spirit speaks on this matter.

✦ **NO CONDEMNATION.** *“There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are **in Christ Jesus**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:1).*

✦ **SANCTIFIED.** *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are **sanctified in Christ Jesus**, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor 1:2).*

✦ **ALL ONE.** *“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).*

✦ **MADE NIGH.** *“But now **in Christ Jesus** ye who sometimes were far off are **made nigh** by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13),*

✦ **NEW CREATION.** *“Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17).*

✦ **MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.** *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be **made the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Cor 5:21).*

✦ **PRESERVED.** *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and **preserved in Jesus Christ**, and called” (Jude 1:1).*

There is no question about the applicability of all redemptive benefits to those who are “in Christ Jesus.” He is the blessed environ in which they are all realized. Now we will consider a particular aspect of salvation that is foundational.

WE HAVE REDEMPTION

“ . . . we have redemption . . . ”

Some variant translations read, “in whom we have our salvation,”^{BBE} “in Him we enjoy our freedom,”^{NJB} and “purchased

our freedom.”^{NLT}

The word “redemption” means “a releasing effected by payment of a ransom.”^{STRONG’S} More precisely, it is “a buying back of a slave or captive through payment of a ransom.”^{BARCLAY-NEWMAN} Thayer’s Greek lexicon says of this root word, “releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom.”^{THAYER}

There are, then, several basic concepts encapsulated in the word “redemption.”

HERE WE SEE THAT WHAT WAS DEDICATED TO GOD NEEDED TO BE REDEEMED. IT WAS ALSO IMPERATIVE THAT THOSE REDEEMED BY GOD REMEMBER THEIR REDEMPTION.

✦ There is a bondage from which one must be liberated.

✦ There is a price that must be paid, called a “ransom.”

✦ There is a freedom that will result from the purchase.

✦ The price is paid by the rightful owner of the one in bondage.

✦ The one being redeemed was not capable of redeeming himself.

✦ Redemption is a deliverance from bondage.

✦ It involves a transfer of ownership.

Israel Redeemed

When Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage, God said He was going to “redeem” them “with a stretched out arm and great judgments” (Ex 6:6). “Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which **Thou hast redeemed**: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation” (Exo 15:13). “But because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and **redeemed you out of the**

house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deu 7:8).

Thus Israel was “redeemed” from bondage to liberty, and from Pharaoh to God. The people who were redeemed already belonged to God. But had been enslaved to another master.

Under the Law, #1

As a reminder of this deliverance, firstborn children were redeemed for God. “And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not

redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Exo 13:13-14).

Here we see that what was dedicated to God needed to be redeemed. It was also imperative that those redeemed by God remember their redemption.

Under the Law, #2

A house that was sold could be bought back, or redeemed, within a year. “And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then **he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year may he redeem it” (Lev 25:29).**

Here we see there was a time frame within which redemption could take place.

Under the Law, #3

A person who had sold himself because of poverty, could be redeemed, or bought back, by one of his brethren. “And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by

him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: after that he is sold **he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him**" (Lev 25:47-48).

The redemption of one who had sold himself had to be by a relative.

In this brief sampling, we are introduced to the concept of redemption. It will become apparent that the redemption we have in Christ Jesus is necessary and thorough.

"We Have"

Redemption is something that those in Christ possess. The ransom has

a tree" (Gal 3:13).

✚ **Redeemed from a vain and pointless life.** "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, **from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers**" (1 Pet 1:18).

✚ **Redeemed from all iniquity.** "Who gave Himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works**" (Titus 2:14).

✚ **Our bodies have been redeemed, thus guaranteeing our**

"... through His blood..." The redemption price was the blood of Christ. This same statement is made in the book of Ephesians: "In whom we have redemption **through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**" (Eph 1:7). Under the Law, redemptive sacrifices always involves the blood of an animal. However, in our redemption, Jesus "obtained eternal redemption" through "**His own blood**" (Heb 9:12).

Much is made of the blood of Christ in Scripture. His blood stands for His life, for "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Lev 17:11). More specifically, Christ's blood stands for the willing forfeiture of His life as our Substitute. His life had to be taken before we could be given life. Ponder what great things are accomplished by the blood of Christ.

✚ We are brought near to God by Christ's blood (Eph 2:13).

✚ The blood of Christ can "*purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*" (Heb 9:14).

✚ It redeemed us from pointless living (1 Pet 1:19).

✚ It gives us boldness to enter into the holiest place (Heb 10:19).

✚ It cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

✚ We are justified by His blood (Rom 5:9).

✚ Jesus made peace through the blood of His cross (Col 1:20).

✚ The blood of Christ sanctifies (Heb 10:29).

Now the Spirit will summarize all of these benefits in a single sentence.

REDEMPTION IS SOMETHING THAT THOSE IN CHRIST POSSESS. THE RANSOM HAS ALREADY BEEN PAID. THE FREEDOM TO WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED ALREADY EXISTS. THEY DO NOT NEED TO REMAIN ANY LONGER WITHIN THE CONFINES THAT ONCE HELD THEM.

already been paid. The freedom to which they have been called already exists. They do not need to remain any longer within the confines that once held them. They are free to leave sin – free to walk away from the devil. The price that was paid is legal, and it is righteous. They "**have redemption.**"

The "*redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" covers a wide range – all of these are effects of sin.

✚ **Redeemed from the curse of the Law.** "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on*

resurrection from the dead. "*And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*" (Rom 8:23). "... *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 1:13-14).

The costliness of this redemption confirms the seriousness of our natural condition.

THROUGH HIS BLOOD

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

"^{14b} ... even the forgiveness of sins."

EVEN

"... even..." This word is supplied by the translators. It is intended

to show that the following expression is an elaboration of redemption itself. This is what redemption involves for those in

Christ Jesus. It transcends all of the types and shadows of the Law, for the remission of sins was not included in those ancient ceremonies.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

“ . . . the forgiveness of sins.”

Forgiveness is a large word. Coming from the Greek word ἀφεσις (aph-e-sin), it means freedom, pardon, deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, and remission. ^{STRONG'S} Forgiveness is letting go of the sin just as though it was never committed. No record is maintained of sins that are forgiven, and thus no one is able to lay anything to the charge of God's elect (Rom 8:33).

Because sin is really the only thing that separates men from God, the forgiveness of sins fully addresses the dilemma caused by them. Whatever the guilt of sin caused, forgiveness takes away.

Jesus has now been exalted to “give” the forgiveness of sins, as well as the repentance that leads to it (Acts 5:31). Through Jesus Christ “the forgiveness of sins” is now preached (Acts 13:38). All men can “receive” this forgiveness, for the remedy for sin reaches as far as its effects (Acts 26:18).

Now, because of Jesus, God is just, or righteous, as well as the Justifier of sinners. As it is written, “To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom 3:26).

The redemption of Christ Jesus was retroactive, reaching backward to cover the transgressions committed under the first covenant. “And for this cause He

is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15). He mentions the “first covenant” here because those to whom the book of Hebrews was addressed were reverting to a system of Law for justification. I do not believe the text limits the effectiveness of Christ's blood to those under the Law. That would exclude Adam and Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I do not believe such a supposition can be defended. **The meaning is that Christ's blood was effectual for those who, through faith,**

3:25). That is, not only was God forbearing and longsuffering, but He was righteous in doing so.

We should not end this section without recalling some of the affirmations of forgiveness. These have a glad sound to the believing heart.

✚ *“Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin”* (Rom 4:7-8).

✚ *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath*

THE MEANING IS THAT CHRIST'S BLOOD WAS EFFECTUAL FOR THOSE WHO, THROUGH FAITH, ANTICIPATED HIS COMING AS WELL AS THOSE WHO LIVED AFTER HE CAME.

anticipated His coming as well as those who lived after He came. How gloriously extensive is His redemption!

It was in anticipation of the coming of Christ that God was forbearing with sins committed in old times. As it is written, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom

forgiven you” (Eph 4:32).

✚ *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses”* (Col 2:13).

✚ *“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake”* (1 John 2:12).

CONCLUSION

Thus the Spirit has provided us an overview of what the Lord has done through Christ Jesus. He has made us “meet,” qualifying us for the inheritance that is now reserved for us in heaven. He delivered us from the power of darkness, freeing us from moral and spiritual defilement and guilt. The power of

darkness can hold us no longer.

Having liberated us from the tyranny of darkness, he translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. All of the needed provisions are in this kingdom, and it is ruled exclusively by the exalted Christ, and He is reigning in order to

bring God's sons to glory.

Right now, in this world, you have every reason to be thankful. In fact, if you will give yourself to thanksgiving, you will find your life becoming more pleasing to the Lord. It will help you to walk worthy of the Lord, as you ought to walk.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/3/2003. In this session, we will be covering verses 15-19 of the first chapter. The title of our lesson is, "WHO JESUS IS." Who Jesus really is may not be as apparent as some professing Christians have thought. This lesson will confirm that it really is not possible to serve a Christ that is not known – and that it IS possible to know Him more fully. That knowledge has more to do with Christ's relationship to God than it does with His relationship to you. In fact, it is His affiliation with the Father that gives productive meaning to His identity with you. 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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