

Is Salvation Achieved by the Sacrifice of Christ Alone?

(Go to Meeting)

Albert Jones—February 25, 2022

There are things going on in the world all the time and you can easily get distracted as you watch, but it's important to keep our mind on things that are important to God.

The thing that is important to God is our relationship with Him, and we're going to talk about that.

One of the things that is very clear to us as members of God's Family is that the love of God is fully demonstrated to us through the plan that God has, the plan that makes salvation possible for mankind.

This is the overarching reason for which God made man. That the Father and Christ at some point in eternity past made a decision to reproduce Themselves through human beings made in the image of God. This is a very blessed thing for us to be able to comprehend, as created beings in the image of God.

Of all of God's created creatures, we have a unique place in God's focus and in the work that He is doing. We're going to depend upon the Apostle John a lot. God is doing an incredible thing in our lives and He's demonstrated that in so many different ways that it's very important to Him.

1-John 4:8: "The one who does not love does not know God... [this a very foundational understanding that we have regarding what God is] ...because God is love. In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world..." (vs 8-9).

- For what purpose?
- Was that act itself enough to make salvation possible?

if we believe that that is true,

- Is that all that we need to do?
- To just believe in faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and ride on His coattails into the Kingdom of God, because our faith and belief in that fact was sufficient to make salvation possible?

We will explore that a little deeper!

One of the things to notice with Satan's deception in the world is that he will give you half-truths, and half lies, for that matter. He will mix enough of the Truth with his lie that it's kind of a

counterfeit. It can be so deceiving that if it were possible it could deceive God's people. But God has given us something special in providing for us Power from on High, the Holy Spirit that makes a major difference in our lives. It's through the Holy Spirit that we're going to try to understand what we're going to be talking about.

Verse 9: "In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live... [and believe] ...through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins" (vs 9-10).

If you break those Scriptures down and divide them out, here's what it's telling us:

- "...the love of God was manifested toward us..."—demonstrated, exhibited toward us so that we can comprehend the depth of His concern for us.
- "...God sent His only begotten Son into the world..."—He sent Him for a purpose, and that purpose is:
- "...that we might live through Him."

Jesus Christ's death, first and foremost, redeems man from that existing status that he has on 'death row' because of what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

Adam's sin was imprinted upon each and every one of us was under a death sentence. All of mankind was under the penalty of sin and we needed someone to rescue us. We were destined for death, not just death in the flesh, we're talking about *eternal* death, because *the wages of sin is death!*

Adam sinned, therefore, he had earned the penalty of death and it was imprinted upon all of his descendants after him, *all of us were a part of that!*

God the Father and Jesus Christ planned and also took care of the problem of sin. It shows that this occurred without any input from us. It occurred initially without any effort on our part.

Verse 10: "In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins"—*that is for the sins of all mankind!*

But there is a process by which one needs to

be able to avail themselves to that act.

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us....”

We see that demonstrated in our lives. We’re going to be renewing our faith in that sacrifice and that relationship that we have at Passover. So, we know today, as members of God’s Family and called out of the world to not only comprehend this truth, but we’ve made that commitment. We have demonstrated our faith and belief in that through repentance, baptism and having the Holy Spirit of God. Now we’re walking a walk!

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.”

We see that all that God does is from this foundation of love, because that’s what He is, *love!* Think about the magnitude of this:

1 John 3:1: “Behold! **What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!** For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure. Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin” (vs 1-5).

Some might read that Scripture and think that there is no sin ever applied to us. *If we sin it is applied to us, and we have to repent of it!*

But because Jesus Christ did what He did, repentance actually has something that will make it valid and give it substance. Otherwise, it’s just regret and sorrow, which by itself will not take away the penalties of it, or the consequences of it.

Jesus Christ’s blood has the power to cleanse, to justify, to make pure if you come to Him and what He did with that sacrifice is an incredible thing that we have available to us.

We will come back to 1-John 3 later on, because as we will see, this expression of God’s love that we’re talking about really needs to start at home. It starts within our own families and our own communities, from us having it demonstrated in our life. One of the most punning grounds for it is within

God’s Family, God’s House, within His Family.

The Father is very much aware of how we interact with one another in this love that represents Who He is, God’s Family that He is creating this Holy righteous character in to emulate Him

Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, **you shall be perfect,** even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.

John 3:14: “And even **as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way it is ordained that the Son of man be lifted up.**”

That serpent represents the sin of the people. It was a reminder that sin was not to be tolerated and that God would not abide in it, and that it had a consequence of death.

Verse 15: “So that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (vs 15-17).

This act provided the way that mankind could find a way forward, out of the grips of death; out of the grips of Satan the devil!

The penalty that was hanging over our head or the thing that we had anchored to our ankles, dragging around, was the penalty of death! I won’t say it was taken away, because it wasn’t; it was paid for us!

Hebrews 1:1: “God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the Prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, **when He had by Himself purged our sins,** sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high; having been made so much greater than *any of* the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them” (vs 1-4).

We see that what He did was just a incredible action to take away the sins of man.

Hebrews 2:1: “For this reason, it is imperative that we give much greater attention to the things, *which* we have heard, lest at any time we should slip away. For if the word spoken by angels was *enforced* without fail, and every transgression and disobedience received just recompense, how shall we escape, *if we* have neglected so great a

salvation... “ (vs 1-3).

That salvation is there to access! But there is a process by which one must access it. It isn't something that you can give yourself over to. It is something that God calls you to and He is looking to see your response to that calling.

“...which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*; God also bearing witness with *them* by both signs and wonders, and various miracles and gifts of *the* Holy Spirit, according to His own will? For *it is* not to *the* angels *that* He has placed in subjection the world that is to come, of which we are speaking. But in a certain place one fully testified, saying, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him, or *the* son of man, that You visit him? You did make him a little lower than *the* angels; You did crown him with glory and honor, and You did set him over the works of Your hands’” (vs 3-7).

This created being in the image of God, made of flesh from the very beginning had a purpose. We know what our purpose in life is:

Verse 8: “‘You did put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone; because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory...” (vs 8-10).

This plan of God being worked out here below, that is directed at you and me, all of mankind is in focus, but right now God has called you and me, and it is directed at us specifically right now:

“...to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both **He Who is sanctifying and those who are sanctified are all of one**; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in *the* midst of *the* Church I will sing praise to You.’ And again, ‘I will be trusting in Him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me’” (vs 10-13).

We see that Jesus Christ is aware of what He is doing here.

- Are we aware of it?
- Do we see the connectivity, closeness and focus that God has for us?

This incredible plan that they're orchestrating here on the earth is a beautiful thing that God is doing. Yes, at times, because we're in the flesh

- we struggle with sin
- we struggle with the world
- we struggle and fight and claw

We do not give up! Living in the flesh is hard! Jesus Christ experienced it!

Verse 14: “Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same, in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil.”

Satan knew or knows those he keeps in sin; he has control and power over them. That the penalty has to be issued and executed.

Verse 15: “And *that* He might deliver those who were subject to bondage all through their lives by *their* fear of death.”

We've heard that fear can rule you if you don't have a full understanding of what Christ is doing. Christ has redeemed us, and we will see that.

Verse 16: “For surely, He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels; but **He is taking upon Himself to help the seed of Abraham**. For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him* to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God...” (vs 16-17).

That's where He is right now at the right hand of the Father officiating as High Priest for God's people.

“...in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted” (vs 17-18).

We can see that we're not in this fight by ourselves.

- we have an Advocate
- we have a Friend
- we have a Brother
- we have a High Priest.
- we have a Savior!
- we have a God Who loves us!

He has demonstrated that love by giving His life for us, before we were even aware that we should have honor toward Him!

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, and He came and fished us out of the cesspool and

brought to Him, cleaned us up and working with even now. We truly need God in so many different ways; we can't begin to enumerate.

1-Peter 2:1: "Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders, as newborn babes, **yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow**" (vs 1-2).

Any mother will tell you about the importance of milk for the newborn baby. It has all the things needed for the baby to be nourished properly and to have the proper antibodies to fight disease. It is just very precious that that early milk is there, available and utilized so that the child will have a healthy start.

God is telling us as newborn babes that we are to "**...yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow.**"

Verse 3: "If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. To Whom coming, *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house..." (vs 3-5).

Charity begins at home, love beings at home, within our fellowship, within our Church family, within the Body of Christ! Literally, we are the Body of Christ; Christ and God the Father dwell in us through the Holy Spirit! We are brothers and sisters in the faith! ***God has called us all to overcome and grow in the knowledge and grace, and to put on Christ! This is our charge!***

Verse 5: "You also, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house—a Holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this reason it says in the Scripture, 'Behold, I place in Zion *the* Cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.' The preciousness *is* to you... [to us] ...therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey, *the* Stone that the builders rejected has become *the* Head of *the* corner, and a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense; *especially* to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, unto which *unbelief* they also were appointed But you *are* a chosen stock..." (vs 5-9)—*selected by the Father!*

We were called and converted. We repented and were baptized and received the Holy Spirit. Change is occurring in our lives! That is what is making us a *Holy* stock set aside for the purpose of God.

"...**a royal priesthood**..." (v 9)—*in*

training! We see what Jesus Christ did and what He is doing. We will have a role in God's Kingdom, both as kings and priests.

"...a Holy nation, a people for a possession of God..." (v 9).

We belong to Them. That work that They're doing in our lives, when you think of the fact that we are Their property, we were redeemed by Christ, bought with a price, we belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ. They are seeing us as a very precious possession:

"...that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues..." (v 9).

He is the model! He is the One Whom we have Who was here on the earth as a human being and the record of His life is here before us.

"...Who called you out of darkness... [God the Father has done that] ...into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people... [that is true; we, too, were in that darkness and cutoff from God, but the Father called us into His Light] ...but now *are the* people of God; who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy" (vs 9-10).

Here we are in God's Family! God is building His house made up of all of us from around the world; those whom we know and those we don't know. God is doing the work, and it's not necessary that we know every single cell within the Family of God, or every single brick or post. God is building the house, and the Holy Spirit connects us all; one Spirit connecting us all!

The things that God created in us, the values, the yearnings, the conscious, *they are experiencing it, too!* I know that anywhere you travel across the country or the world, and you come in contact with God's people, you will know they're God's people. You're going to see those fruits, those things that represent God. You're going to know that you're in the presence of a brother or sister.

I remember the days of Worldwide well, when we were able to go and have a single's weekend or to Feast sites around the country. It was a huge family reunion, it was not as though we were amongst strangers.

I have only been able to witness that in the Church, in God's Church! Any other organization you won't have it. The moment you step outside the boundaries of that Feast, it goes away. So, we know that God is doing a great work! He's building His house on the very foundation of Christ!

The Scriptures show a very clear fact: Christ is life! So, Christ's life, Christ's death and His

resurrection were critical in making salvation possible for us!

Romans 3:9: “What then? Are we of ourselves better? Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin.” *This is the condition of mankind, all are under sin!*

Verse 10: “Exactly as it is written: ‘For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one!’” (vs 10-12).

Then describes the condition of man and how man is degraded down to the state of anarchy without God!

Verse 15: “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood... [we see that today as war is reared its ugly head again] ...**destruction and misery are in their ways**” (vs 14-16).

My son and I have been going through a series of documentaries and we saw the Vietnam War and how it unfolded and how arrogance was driving it; all the different aspects that came out of it while people were dying. Families were being destroyed, men were losing their lives and people were playing politics.

Verse 17: “And *the* way of peace they have not known.” *We see that man can produce quite a vicious evil in his own weight!*

1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God...”

We see all the ugly in the world, all the destruction in the world, and all the sin that is being perpetrated in the world. But we have this special link with God through Christ. We believe that Jesus is the Christ. He was the Son of God, therefore, we are begotten of God because we have that within us.

“...and everyone who loves Him Who begat also loves him who has been begotten by Him. By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments” (vs 1-2).

So, we see that there is a relationship between commandment-keeping and salvation.

Verse 3: “For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Remember that ***commandment-keeping is an obligation!*** It is not some gift that we give God.

It is not something that is going to earn us some ‘brownie points.’ It is an ***obligation*** that we have; ***an obligation because God loves us and His way is being demonstrated to us.*** His Holy Spirit is within us, and we’re supposed to be growing in God!

- God does not sin
- God doesn’t abide in sin

When the Holy Spirit pricks one’s heart regarding sin, we need to respond quickly and repent of that type of thing in prayer.

Verse 4: “Now then, everyone who is begotten by God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world? Even the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (vs 4-5).

There again we see the hallmark, the critical piece; that Jesus Christ has made all of this possible for us to access. But we still have to access it; we have to reach out, grab it and take advantage of it. We have to fight for it. God is offering it to us, and Satan is try to snatch it away as quickly as God is offering it to us.

Verse 6: “This is He Who came by water and blood—Jesus the Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is the Truth. For there are three that bear witness on the earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three *witness* unto the one *Truth*. If we accept the witness of men, the witness of God is superior. For this is the witness of God, which He has witnessed concerning His Son” (vs 6-9). *We’re talking about the Father!*

Verse 10: “The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar because he has not believed in the witness that God has witnessed concerning His Son. And this is the witness: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has *eternal* life...” (vs 10-12).

There is no other way; there is no other way to be able to have this right standing before God other than through the One Who was the Son, our Savior, the Christ! *He is the way!*

“...the one who does not have the Son of God does not have *eternal* life... [because there is no other way] ...These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life...” (vs 12-13).

You’re on the right track; you are putting

your investment in the right place, holding onto the Truth, the Way and the Life that is the only way you are going to have eternal life.

“...and that you may *continue to believe* in the name of the Son of God” (v 13).

You have to endure all the way to the end, you can't ever give us and you can't let anyone pull you away from this truth. There will come men, times and situations—governments and all kinds of things out in front of us—that are going to attempt to do so. Even today Satan is artful liar and a manipulator so that he will make even sin appear as though it's good.

But he will offer you all of these great promises and enticements, and the minute you capitulate to him and take it, he will leave you lying in the mud laughing in your face, happy that he has destroyed one of the greatest gifts that God can extend to you. Satan will laugh at you because you have thrown it away. ***God tells us to not to let that happen!***

Verse 14: “And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us...” (vs 14-15).

And we do know that Jesus Christ's death and resurrection provides a way for us, through him, to the very Throne of the Father. So, when we approach His Throne the Scripture here says:

“...whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, he shall ask, and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death....” (vs 15-16).

We're seeing here the relationship within God's Family, through Christ what They have setup for us. So that we can not only have our sins forgiven, but we can lift each other up in prayer! We can lift each other up from sickness and disease. We can encourage one another. Even as we see our brothers and sisters suffering pain and misery, we offer up that prayer and God will hear us.

Verse 19: “We know that we are of God, and *that* the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one. **And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, so that we may know Him Who is true; and we are in Him Who is true, and in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and the eternal life.** Little children, **keep yourselves from idols.** Amen” (vs 19-21).

Stay away from anything else that will exalt itself in place of God. Nothing else can give you what God can give you. *Nothing else!* We are not going to be deceived by Satan the devil and thinking that it will.

Heb. 9—here we see Christ in His office today and what He is doing in our lives; *Christ our Sacrifice and Priest!*

Hebrews 9:11: “But Christ Himself has become High Priest of the coming good things... [that's what He is doing right now] ...through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by *human* hands (that is, not of this *present physical* creation).”

He is there at the real Throne, the real spiritual Tabernacle in heaven.

Verse 12: “Not by *the* blood of goats and calves, but by the means of His own blood, He entered once for all into the Holiest, having *by* Himself secured everlasting redemption *for us*. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and *the* ashes of a heifer sprinkled *on* those who are defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, to a far greater degree, the blood of Christ, Who through *the* eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God. And for this reason He is *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant... [officiating it] ...in order that through *His* death, *which* took place for the release of the transgressions *that were committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (vs 12-15).

This whole process is wonderfully designed by God, and we're still trying to understand it as members of God's Church.

As I'm preaching this message, I'm instructing myself, as well. I read these Scriptures over and over and try to get a deep and more understanding of them.

Verse 16: “Now where *there is* a covenant, *it is* obligatory to bring forth a *symbolic sacrifice to represent* the death of the one who personally ratifies *the* covenant; because a covenant *is* ratified *only over the* dead *sacrificial* animals, since there is no way that it is legally in force until the living ratifier *has symbolically represented his death*” (vs 16-17).

{note our In-Depth Study: *Covenants of God* (truthofGod.org)

Verse 18: “For this very reason, neither was the first *covenant* inaugurated without blood because

after Moses had spoken every commandment of *the* law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, *and* he sprinkled both the book *of the covenant* itself and all the people, saying, ‘This *is* the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you.’ And in the same manner, he sprinkled with blood the tabernacle, too, and all the vessels of service” (v 18-21).

Verse 22: “Now, almost all things are purified with blood according to the *priestly* law, and without *the* shedding of blood there is no remission *of sins*. Therefore, *it was* indeed obligatory *for* the patterns of the heavenly things to be purified with *the blood* of these *animals*, but *the* things in heaven themselves with superior sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered into the Holy places made by *human* hands, *which are mere* copies of the true...” (vs 22-24).

Christ is the ‘real deal’; He is at the Throne of God.

“...rather, *He has entered* into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (v 24).

This ceremony is an obligatory action that was necessary. That penalty had to be paid, blood had to be shed in order to have those sins forgiven.

Verse 25: “Not that He should offer Himself many times, even as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies year by year with *the* blood of others; for then it would have been necessary for Him to suffer many times since *the* foundation of *the* world. But now, once and for all, in *the* consummation of the ages... this is *the* event]: ...He has been manifested *for the* purpose of removing sin through His sacrifice *of Himself*. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, *the* judgment; so Christ, having been offered once to bear *the* sins of many, will appear *the* second time without sin unto salvation to those who are eagerly awaiting Him” (vs 25-28).

This is revolutionary in the course of man’s history to have had God manifested in the flesh, come His very own self to rescue His people, to rescue His creation! He became, literally, sin that we were. He took the penalty that was due us.

If you have seen the movie Spartacus, one of my favorite scenes was when the Roman captures had all the men gather, and they were trying to find which one was Spartacus and if he didn’t reveal himself he was going to kill all of them. As Spartacus stood up another man stood up, and then another stood up—they were all Spartacus. They were willing to do that for what they perceived was a good man.

But look what Christ did! Here we are deserving of eternal death, but God so loved us that He sent us a solution. He sent us a Savior, the Creator Who spoke and made us! He came Himself to redeem His own, to redeem His children.

That penalty was due us, but Christ paid it for us from the very foundation of the world.

Psa. 40—this is the mind of Christ. At the time that decision is begin made or definitely being thought about here.

Psalm 40:6: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I [Christ’s] said...” (vs 6-7).

Listen to the passion in these words and His love for us and how He was willing to come and do what He needed to do to save us.

“...‘Lo, I come; in the Scroll of the Book it is written of Me; I delight to do Your will, O My God; and Your Law is within My heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation...” (vs 7-9).

Today we are reading the inspired Word of God right now. This is from Christ and the Father.

“...lo, I have not kept back my lips, O LORD, You know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation...” (vs 9-10).

We hear it because God has opened our mind to comprehend it.

“...I have not hidden Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.... [His Church, His Family] ...Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your loving kindness and Your Truth always preserve me, for evils without number have encircled me; my iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me” (vs 10-12).

He endured quite a bit for us and what we owe Him is just incalculable. There’s no way that we can repay. He had a body specifically prepared for Him for this purpose. So, a body was prepared and placed and gestated in the virgin Mary, born as described in Luke.

2-Corinthians 5:1: “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with *human* hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we truly are groaning, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; if indeed *that* being clothed,

we may not be found naked. For we who are in *this* tabernacle truly do groan, being burdened; not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon so that the mortal *flesh* may be swallowed up by life” (vs 1-4).

Yes, this mortal flesh is weak and none of us can be rid of it soon enough. But we are in it right now and called out of the world to grow and struggle in this flesh with God’s Spirit and power through faith in our walk with God.

Verse 5: “Now, He Who is working out this very thing for us *is* God...”

See the beauty of it? This is God’s plan! What God is doing in our life is by design; His perfect design.

“...Who has also given us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in *this* body, we are away from our eternal home, which is coming from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight.)” (vs 5-7).

Verse 16: “So then, from this time *forward* we know no man according to *the* flesh; but even if we have known Christ in *the* flesh... [Peter, James, etc.] ...yet, now we no longer know *Him* accordingly. Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. And all things are from God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...” (vs 16-18).

This reconciliation to the Father of all mankind, having been provided a way to get to Him, provided a way to eternal life, but we have to do our part!

Verse 20: “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us. We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, ‘Be reconciled to God.’”

This is our message; this is the message that we heard, this is the message I’m give you here now.

Verse 21: “For He made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him.”

Yes, we have a part! Christ says to us: ***I am the Way, the Truth and the Life!*** But we must walk in His Way; He is the Way, but we must choose to walk in that Way. He says to us that ***He is the River of Life!*** But we must come to Him to take advantage of it!

John 7:37: “Now, in the last day, the great *day* of the Feast, Jesus stood and called out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (vs 37-38).

He says to us that ***He is the door!*** John 10:1: Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through ***the door***, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a robber.

Verse 7: “Therefore, Jesus again said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, ***I am the Door of the sheep***. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture” (vs 7-9).

But we must come to the door and knock; we must seek Him; we must desire to embrace Him.

He says that must ***obey His voice! We must keep His Word!*** We must apply ourselves.

John 14:1: “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.”

Verse 15: “: If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.

Matthew 19:16: “Now at that time, one came to Him *and* said, ‘Good Master, what good *thing* shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’ And He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God. But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.’” (vs 16-17).

- the blood is applied for us
- the blood makes salvation possible
- the blood gets mankind off ‘death row’

All of mankind is under sin unless grace is applied!

For the blood to be applied, we must believe in the One Who shed it. We have the example of the Gentiles being called in the book of Acts, and again in Gal. 3 and Rom. 4.

We have to avail ourselves; we have to repent, change, and do and act upon what God has given us to understand. The wisdom that we are learning here, the words that I’m describing to you, or sharing with you, are not foreign to your ears.

You have been called of God; you know these things. We know that we can’t ride into the Kingdom of God just sitting back on the coattails of Christ’s sacrifice and blood. We have work to do! It is time for us to truly wake up and realize that that work has to be done.

Proverbs 6:9_[transcriber’s correction]: “How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?”—*redeeming the time!*

Ephesians 5:14: “Therefore, He says, ‘*You* who are sleeping—wake up, and arise from the dead! And Christ shall shine upon you.’”

We have the sacrifice laid down for us, and through it we can access eternal life. Because God called us, we know about it! The Father has extended to us an invitation for the greatest opportunity that one can imagine. My wife and I talk about this all the time.

This is a blessing, to be in your presences as a brother and sister, to have the opportunity to be a part of this incredible work that God is doing on the earth. ***We are part of God’s work on the earth!*** It is not just a sentiment, ***it is reality!***

Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ; according as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ...” (vs 1-5).

You will see throughout Eph. 1, the relationship of what Christ has done, what the Father is doing and what They have planned for us!

Verse 6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*... [yes, He came for us] ...in Whom we have redemption through His blood...[yes, we do] ...*even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence” (vs 6-8).

Yes, this is the grandest plan that one can imagine from the very mind of God the Father and Jesus Christ, Elohim, from the beginning, the foundation of the world!

Verse 9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [this is God’s will] ...according to His good pleasure...”

Christ said that it ‘was His will to do the pleasure of the Father.’ So, He came, no one twisted His arm and pushed Him out of heaven and say ‘go do it.’ ***He came willingly; He came to save us!***

Verse 11: “*Yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of

His own will; that we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ” (vs 11-12).

We’re the first! Christ is the First of the firstfruits, and then we are the first to trust in Christ.

Verse 13: “In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with **the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.** For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you...” (vs 13-15).

I see it in God’s Church, in my small circle within God’s Family; the few of us who are with Christian Biblical Church of God. And I have seen it in the greater Church Family in the past, that same Spirit among God’s people,

“...and the love toward all the saints, 16: do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.** And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...” (vs 15-18).

When we pray that God helps us to understand and truly comprehend the greatness of this calling:

“...in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling, and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power” (vs 18-19)—*which He is working out in us through His Holy Spirit!*

Verse 20: “Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the *Church*, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 20-23).

You can imagine that I’ve only scratched the surface with the Scriptures that point to this. When we think about what God has done, we recognize that it is for a purpose, and we are the central focus of that purpose right now as God’s firstfruits. As those who are following Christ!

Christ has blazed the trail; He sets the path that we follow and we have to walk it! It isn't the broad and easy way; it is straight, difficult and we struggle with it! But we have Jesus Christ in heaven that at a moment we can fall on our knees before God and be given the power and the strength that we need to keep going.

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I encourage you, as we see things unfold around us in these times, and as we will see things unfold around us in the times to come, keep your mind on these truths, that the work *that God is doing in us cannot separate us from Him by anything that occurs in this world!*

Keep our eyes, our mind and our focus on God and Jesus Christ and the work that They are doing in our lives, because truly His blood has made a way forward for us, and His blood also has prepared the wherewithal for us to be able to make it all the way there. *Let's keep our faith and trust in Him!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 John 4:8-10, 16
- 2) 1 John 3:1-5
- 3) Matthew 5:48
- 4) John 3:14-17
- 5) Hebrews 1:1-4
- 6) Hebrews 2:1-18
- 7) 1 Peter 2:1-10
- 8) Romans 3:9-12, 15-17
- 9) 1 John 5:1-16, 19
- 10) Hebrews 9:11-28
- 11) Psalm 40:6-12
- 12) 2 Corinthians 5:1-7, 16-18, 20-21
- 13) John 7:37-38
- 14) John 10:1, 7-9
- 15) John 14:1, 15
- 16) Matthew 19:16-17
- 17) Proverbs 6:9
- 18) Ephesians 5:14
- 19) Ephesians 1:1-9, 11-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 3
- Romans 4

Also referenced: In-Depth Study:
Covenants of God (truthofGod.org)

AJ:bo
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