

Sunday, November 8, 2015

In last week's sermon, I ended by talking about the atrociousness of sin, the state of the sinner, and the holiness and righteousness of God, against whom we have sinned. In summary, God is righteous, and we are not.<sup>1</sup> It is a wonderful blessing to have a righteous and just God, but if He judges us according to that righteousness and justice, we must all be condemned. Remember, for one sin Adam was cast out of Eden. God demands nothing less than complete perfection.

**“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10)**

**“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)**

About the law, Gill says *“it requires perfect obedience, an observance of all things contained in it, which can never be performed by fallen man...the law requires constant perfect obedience; not only that a man should do all things commanded in it, but that he should continue to do them from his infancy, to the day of his death; and in failure hereof, it pronounces every man cursed, without any respect to persons, or any regard to pleas, taken from the infirmity of human nature, the sincerity of the heart, or repentance for transgressions.”*

**“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” (Psalm 24:3-4)**

We can learn a lot from Psalm 24, and one of those things is that by our natures, we are not qualified to ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in His holy place. Nobody has clean hands and a pure heart.<sup>2</sup> “There is none righteous, no, not one.”<sup>3</sup> But God loves righteousness, and has prepared His throne for judgment and will judge the world in righteousness.<sup>4</sup> In order to be reconciled with a righteous God, our sin must be removed, His justice must be satisfied, His wrath must be appeased, and we must appear as righteous men before Him. We can't do this ourselves; if this problem is going to be fixed, God must fix it. Remember, He doesn't owe us a Savior. If He judged every human on earth according to righteousness, and every human therefore went to hell, He would still be perfectly just, holy and righteous. But He did provide

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 7:9; Romans 3:10

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 24:4; Jeremiah 17:9; Job 9:30-31

<sup>3</sup> Romans 3:10

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 7:9, 9:7-8

us a Savior.<sup>5</sup> So today, I'd like to talk about some of these foundational gospel principles. The first text we will take a look at is from Romans 3:

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:24-26)**

Let's begin by talking about justification. Justification is where God declares someone to be just or righteous. Standing before the judgment throne of God, God sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and we are therefore declared to be sinless and righteous.<sup>6</sup> It doesn't mean that you don't ever sin; it means that God doesn't behold iniquity in Jacob and that God has forgiven your iniquities and doesn't impute sin to you.<sup>7</sup> It means that the righteousness and obedience of Christ has been imputed to you.<sup>8</sup> “Impute” means to reckon, or esteem, or regard, or attribute, or ascribe. God has reckoned you to be righteous, not by your own merit, but by the merit of Christ. We have been “made the righteousness of God in him.”<sup>9</sup> When God looks at us, He sees the righteousness of His Son. Please remember, Jesus Christ never sinned.<sup>10</sup> Let's consider that for a minute, in regard to the two greatest commandments:

**“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)**

There was never a time where Jesus did NOT love the Father with all His heart, soul and mind. And there was never a time where Jesus did NOT love His neighbor. Contrariwise, we have NEVER loved the Father with all of our heart, soul and mind. And we have NEVER loved our neighbor perfectly. Everything we do, say or think is tainted with sin, from the time we're born, to the time we die. But this perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to us; we are declared to be righteous, and we are treated as being righteous. I feel like I'm repeating myself, but I want to make sure you understand this. In the eyes of God, we are righteous, our

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 22:8; John 4:42; Revelation 5:12

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 9:27; Psalm 132:9; Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 3:5, 4:4, 7:9, 19:14

<sup>7</sup> Numbers 23:21; Romans 4:6-7

<sup>8</sup> Romans 4, 5:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30

<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15

iniquities are forgiven, and our sins are covered.<sup>11</sup> We have peace with God.<sup>12</sup> We are saved from His wrath.<sup>13</sup>

I would also like to mention that there are many passages that teach that we are justified by faith.<sup>14</sup> That is, we have faith, or we believe, and that is imputed to us for righteousness. There are some who would pervert these scriptures, undoing all of the teaching of the Bible, and turn that faith or that belief into a work which is the cause of our justification. Remember, faith is a gift of God, just like justification.<sup>15</sup> We are justified by faith in the sense that it is the means by which it is manifested that we have been justified. That is, it is the instrument by which we come to the knowledge and perception of our justification by Christ. And it is the object of our faith (that is, Christ and His blood) that has justified us.<sup>16</sup>

Now, not only has He justified us, but He has justified us “freely by His grace.”<sup>17</sup> That word “freely” there means “without a cause.” It’s the same word we find in John 15:25 when Jesus said “they hated me without a cause.” Jesus didn’t give His enemies any cause to hate Him, and you didn’t give God any cause to love and justify you. Of course, His “grace” is His unmerited love and favor towards His elect. You have done absolutely nothing to warrant being justified. There is no inherent good in you that causes you to be worthy of having the righteousness of Christ imputed to you. It is only by the free, sovereign grace of God.

**“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (Romans 9:15)**

This justification is “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>18</sup> So, let us talk for a minute about what “redemption” is. Redemption is a release, or liberation, or buying back brought about through the payment of a price or ransom. Think of a slave, or a prisoner, or a person who is condemned, who is set free by the payment of a ransom. The concept of redemption necessarily implies that the person that is redeemed was alienated, and in the case of the sinner, it supposes that the one who is redeemed was in captivity to sin and Satan.<sup>19</sup> According to Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” Gill says, “*Sin is represented as a king, a mighty monarch, a tyrannical prince; sinners are his subjects and vassals, his servants and soldiers, who fight under him, and for him, and all the wages they must expect from him is death...It denotes wages due, and paid after a campaign is ended, and service is*

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<sup>11</sup> Romans 4:6-8

<sup>12</sup> Romans 5:1

<sup>13</sup> Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

<sup>14</sup> Romans 4:3,5,9,22, 5:1; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23

<sup>15</sup> Ephesians 2:8; 2 Peter 1:1; Romans 3:24

<sup>16</sup> Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9

<sup>17</sup> Romans 3:24

<sup>18</sup> Romans 3:24

<sup>19</sup> John 8:34; 2 Timothy 2:26

*over; and, as here used, suggests, that when men have been all their days in the service of sin, and have fought under the banners of it, the wages they will earn, and the reward that will be given them, will be death.”* That is, eternal death.

By nature, every human is a servant of sin, condemned to death and hell, and Christ delivered His people from all of that by paying a ransom. And what was the ransom? What was the price that He paid? It was His life<sup>20</sup>; His precious blood<sup>21</sup>.

**“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; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:” (1 Peter 1:18-19)**

The everlasting, infinite God shed His own blood for our souls. We are justified freely, but the price that He paid is invaluable. And this redemption is “in Christ Jesus.”<sup>22</sup> That is, **only** in Christ Jesus. He is the only qualified Redeemer. It couldn’t have come from anywhere else.

**“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)” (Psalm 49:7-8)**

Back to Romans 3:24-26, this redemption is further explained: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” A “propitiation” is something that appeases or placates; it brings peace and reconciliation. As used here, Christ is either represented as the propitiator (that is, the author of peace and reconciliation with God). Or the propitiatory sacrifice (that is, the sacrifice that satisfies or appeases the wrath and justice of God, and brings peace, reconciliation and favor with Him). Your sins have provoked the wrath of God, and the justice of God requires that those sins be punished. As the propitiation, Jesus Christ has taken on our sins – they were imputed to Him, just like His righteousness was imputed to us. He was punished just as if He had committed all of the abominations that all of His people had ever committed. And by taking on our sins and being punished in our place, He has satisfied the demands of the justice of God; He has pacified a just, angry God; we were enemies of God, but we are now reconciled to God.<sup>23</sup> This is what it means when we say He has atoned for us.<sup>24</sup> The wrath of God cannot fall upon a person for whom Christ is the propitiation, and the propitiation is limited to those who have “faith in His blood.” Again, faith is not the cause of Christ being a propitiation. Faith is a gift of God, and it is through faith that we obtain the blessings of the propitiation, and we understand that His blood removes all

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6

<sup>21</sup> 1 Peter 1:18; Revelation 5:9; Ephesians 1:5-8; Colossians 1:14

<sup>22</sup> Romans 3:24

<sup>23</sup> Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:20-21; Hebrews 2:17

<sup>24</sup> Romans 5:11; Refer to 1-12-2014 sermon on the Day of Atonement

accusations against us, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.”<sup>25</sup> (Note: this should show you that when 1 John 2:2 says that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that “the whole world” has a meaning other than “every individual of mankind,” because certainly the wrath of God WILL fall upon most of mankind, which wouldn’t happen if Christ was the propitiation for their sins).

What is interesting about this word “propitiation” is that it is translated as “mercyseat” in Hebrews 9:5. The mercy seat was a type of Christ, and was prominent on the Day of Atonement when the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on and before it. It was at the mercy seat that sin was atoned for, His people were pardoned, and mercy was made possible. We also find a form of this word when He is said to “make reconciliation for the sins of His people.”<sup>26</sup> And again, when the publican smote his breast and said “God be merciful to me a sinner.”<sup>27</sup>

Now, God has “set forth” Jesus Christ to be a propitiation.<sup>28</sup> This means that He exhibited Him to public view. He put Him on public display. He wanted to make Him manifest to the world, and teach us certain truths about Himself. Specifically, according to the text, He set Him forth as a propitiation “to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”<sup>29</sup>

By this propitiatory sacrifice, Jesus has brought in “everlasting righteousness,” which is now publicly manifested.<sup>30</sup> He has provided a perfect righteousness for His people. During the Old Testament dispensation, God forgave sins, due to His forbearance. From all appearances, men like David who were great sinners should have been recipients of the wrath of God. But they were forgiven! Due to the promised propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which is what those men had faith in, and which was foreshadowed by the ceremonies and types of the Old Testament, these men were forgiven. This is one of the reasons why Jesus is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.<sup>31</sup> He is publicly declaring that He is a righteous God. He was righteous and just to forgive men in the Old Testament, and He is righteous and just to forgive men in the New Testament. But how can a righteous and just God forgive a wicked sinner? How is that just? There would be no justice if God simply forgave sins. “Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.”<sup>32</sup> It is an abomination to justify the

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<sup>25</sup> Hebrews 9:22

<sup>26</sup> Hebrews 2:17

<sup>27</sup> Luke 18:13

<sup>28</sup> Romans 3:25

<sup>29</sup> Romans 3:25-26

<sup>30</sup> Daniel 9:24; 1 Peter 1:20

<sup>31</sup> Revelation 13:8

<sup>32</sup> Job 34:12; Genesis 18:25

wicked.<sup>33</sup> But God is both just AND the justifier, and He openly declares Himself as such through Christ, the propitiation. He is just, and we see that in the death of Jesus Christ. Our sins, without exception, were imputed to Him, and He drank the cup of the wrath of God in our place. Our sins were punished according to all that the law demanded, and justice was perfectly satisfied. The wrath of God has been appeased, and God is therefore faithful and just to forgive us our sins.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, He is the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. He has imputed His perfect righteousness to us, and when God looks upon us, He sees Jesus Christ and all of His obedience and righteousness. God has cleared Himself of any accusation of being unjust by publicly displaying the propitiation. And it is here that the following is fulfilled:

**“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.”**  
(Psalm 85:10-11)

I said before that Jesus Christ is the only qualified Savior. I’d like to talk about that a little bit more, and then go into some detail about the cross of Christ. As both God and perfect man, and therefore as having both infinite value and living a sinless life, Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified to be our Savior.

In order to save us, Jesus must be God. “I, *even I, am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.”<sup>35</sup> But He must also be man, so that He would be capable of obeying, suffering and dying in the same nature of those who had sinned.<sup>36</sup> He must be a man to be our proper kinsman redeemer.<sup>37</sup>

In order to suffer the wrath of God and come forth victorious, He must be God. The wrath of God is beyond our ability to comprehend, and nobody is able to abide His wrath.<sup>38</sup> But Jesus suffered it to the uttermost, and was victorious over death.<sup>39</sup> But He was also a man, “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” suffering that measure of wrath that was required to satisfy the justice of God.<sup>40</sup>

How can one man provide a sacrifice that covers the sins of a multitude of men, saving them from an eternity of damnation? As God, Jesus has infinite, incalculable worth. All things were

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<sup>33</sup> Proverbs 17:15

<sup>34</sup> 1 John 1:9

<sup>35</sup> Isaiah 43:11; Hosea 13:4; Jonah 2:9

<sup>36</sup> Hebrews 2:14-17; 1 Timothy 2:5; John 1:1,14; Philippians 2:6-8; John 19:5

<sup>37</sup> Leviticus 25:47-55; Hebrews 2:11

<sup>38</sup> Psalm 76:7, 90:11; Jeremiah 10:10; Nahum 1:67

<sup>39</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:54

<sup>40</sup> 1 Peter 2:24; Mark 8:31; Isaiah 53:3

created for Him and by Him.<sup>41</sup> He is our eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise God.<sup>42</sup> He is worth more than all creation, and every knee shall bow.<sup>43</sup> The blood of God is more precious than anything on earth.<sup>44</sup> A God with infinite worth will provide a sacrifice of infinite worth. He was also a man. A sinless, perfectly obedient man.<sup>45</sup> He lived a sinless life on our behalf, and imputed that perfection and righteousness to us, so that we are guiltless in God's eyes. The combination of His matchless worth and His perfect obedience is what caused Him to be an acceptable "sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."<sup>46</sup>

**"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:6-8)**

So let us talk about the death of the cross. On the cross, God showed his absolute abhorrence of sin. When His own Son carried our sins, He was not spared by God, but rather He bruised (or, crushed) Him.<sup>47</sup> And if His own Son was not spared, how will those who neglect so great a salvation escape?<sup>48</sup> On the cross, God also showed His immeasurable love for His people.<sup>49</sup> You have to understand that Jesus was the beloved delight of God the Father<sup>50</sup>, and you have to understand the heinousness of your own sins and your lack of righteousness (which we talked about last week), before you can begin to understand how great His unmerited love of us is.<sup>51</sup>

As you know, this topic of the cross is not a small topic. Today, I'm going to limit myself to the following: Christ was forsaken of God, He was made sin, and He was made a curse.

**"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)**

Our Savior, who had had intimate communion with the Father<sup>52</sup>, is now forsaken by Him. Jesus is pointing us back to Psalm 22:

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<sup>41</sup> Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 2:10; John 1:1-3

<sup>42</sup> 1 Timothy 1:17

<sup>43</sup> Philippians 2:9-11

<sup>44</sup> 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 20:28

<sup>45</sup> Hebrews 4:15

<sup>46</sup> Ephesians 5:2

<sup>47</sup> Romans 8:32; Isaiah 53:10

<sup>48</sup> Hebrews 2:3

<sup>49</sup> 1 John 4:9-10

<sup>50</sup> Matthew 3:17; Proverbs 8:30

<sup>51</sup> 1 John 4:10;

<sup>52</sup> John 8:18; 10:30;17:21

**“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”* (Psalm 22:1-6)**

His own Father had forsaken Him and turned a deaf ear to His cry. He had the sins of His people imputed to Him, and part of the suffering for those sins was to have the divine presence taken away. This was one of the most grievous parts of suffering on the cross. And why did He forsake Him? Because “thou art holy.” It is perfectly consistent with the holiness and justice of God for the Father to forsake Him. As He hung on the cross, He bore our sins, and “*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*”<sup>53</sup> He did this to declare His righteousness, and that He is just.

**“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 Corinthians 5:21)**

He was made sin. This isn’t some abstract concept of “sin.” He took on every sin of every one of His people, not in part, but the whole. Can you imagine the weight of that burden to our precious Savior who was without spot?<sup>54</sup> The horror that that added to the suffering of our God who knew no sin? The One before whom the seraphims had recently cried “holy, holy, holy” has now been made sin.<sup>55</sup> The one in whom “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” has now been made sin.<sup>56</sup> As I mentioned before, He was made sin in the same manner in which we are made the righteousness of God – our sins were imputed to Him. He did not become a sinner. He did not become sinful. He did not become corrupt. When our sins were imputed to Him, that simply means that God looked upon Him and considered Him to be guilty of our sins, and punished Him according to the full measure of His wrath. He stood in our place, bearing our sins, and fully satisfied the justice of God by suffering the wrath that our sins deserved. (If you consider this for a moment, you can understand better why the “Jesus died for everyone” lie is so repulsive. If He died for all the sins of everyone, then He already suffered the just punishment that was due, and nobody could be guilty. But this heresy would have us believe that Jesus suffered for these sins [including the sin of “unbelief”<sup>57</sup>], and that the unbelievers would have to suffer for them all again. This would make God unjust, to cause a man to pay for a crime that has already been paid for.)

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<sup>53</sup> Habakkuk 1:13

<sup>54</sup> Hebrews 9:14

<sup>55</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>56</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>57</sup> John 16:9



Gill<sup>58</sup>: *“What Christ bore were ‘sins’, even all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin of his people; and all that is in sin, all that belongs to it, arises from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and punishment; and a multitude of sins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and then which nothing could be more nauseous and disagreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity...His ‘bearing’ them was in this manner: he becoming the surety and substitute of his people, their sins were laid upon him by his Father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and placed to his account; and Christ voluntarily took them upon himself; he took them to himself, as one may take the debt of another, and make himself answerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his shoulders; so Christ took up our sins...and bore them, and did not sink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself; and so made entire satisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and all that punishment which was due unto them; and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the sight of God, and his vindictive justice; and removed them as far as the east is from the west, and made a full end of them; and this he himself did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another.”*

And not only was He made sin, He was made a curse:

**“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 a tree:” (Galatians 3:13)**

Last week, I discussed the exceeding sinful nature of sin, and how vile, by nature, we are in the eyes of a holy God. We all lie under a curse:

**“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10)<sup>59</sup>**

The word in Greek is “katara” and means “imprecation” or “execration.” If a man is cursed, it means he’s worthy of the wrath of God and all of the curses demanded by the law. In having our sins imputed to Him, Jesus was treated as the covenant breaker in Deuteronomy 29 in our stead:

**“The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.” (Deuteronomy 29:20-21)**

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<sup>58</sup> On 1 Peter 2:24

<sup>59</sup> See also Deuteronomy 27:26

Gill: *“As he that offends in one point is guilty of all...so he makes himself liable to all the curses of the law, which shall not only come upon him, but abide on him. And there is no person clear of them but by redemption through Christ, who, by being made a curse for his people, has redeemed them from the curse of the law.”*

You can read about Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal in Deuteronomy 27-28. Basically, the Lord divided the children of Israel into two parts. One part stood on Mount Gerizim, to loudly pronounce the blessings of God for those who would obey Him; the other part stood on Mount Ebal, to loudly pronounce the curses of God for those who would not obey Him. Of course, Christ was worthy of all blessing, but when He took our sins upon Him, He received the curses. There appear to be a few of these curses, or parts of these curses, that could be applied directly to our Savior as He suffered:

**“Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field...Cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out...The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly...The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness...and no man shall save *thee*...And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee...Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee...The LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought.”** (Deuteronomy 28:16, 19, 20, 28-29, 37, 45, 63)

Sometimes you can learn about something by looking at the opposite of that thing. The opposite of a “curse” is a “blessing.”

**“Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered. Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.”** (Psalm 32:1-2)

The transgressions that Christ bore were not forgiven Him, in the sense that He was required to suffer the full punishment for them. The sins that He carried were not covered – they were displayed publicly. If a man is blessed because iniquity is not imputed to him, then Christ must have been cursed, because “the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Isaiah 53:6

**“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” (Numbers 6:22-26)**

Jesus received the exact opposite of these blessings when suffering the wrath of God.

Before closing, I would like to touch briefly on three more essentials of the gospel: Christ’s resurrection, Christ’s ascension, and the final judgment of the world by Christ.

**“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain... And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:14, 17)**

Clearly, Paul placed a lot of importance on this doctrine. If Christ didn’t rise, then we’re all wasting our time, we’re going to die in our sins, and “we are of all men most miserable.”<sup>61</sup>

We see several examples in scripture of people being raised from dead<sup>62</sup>, but the resurrection of Christ was unique in at least two ways. First, He arose never to die again.<sup>63</sup> Second, He arose of His own power and authority.<sup>64</sup> He triumphed over death and the grave!<sup>65</sup>

The resurrection of Christ declared Him to be the Son of God.<sup>66</sup> It was proof that He was the Messiah.<sup>67</sup> And it demonstrated that God had accepted His sacrifice and that His people were justified.

**“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”  
(Romans 4:25)**

*Gill: “He died in the room and stead of his people, and by dying made satisfaction for their sins; he rose again as their head and representative, and was legally discharged, acquitted, and justified, and they in him. Christ's resurrection did not procure the justification of his people, that was done by his obedience and death; but was for the testification of it, that it might fully appear that sin was atoned for, and an everlasting righteousness was brought in.”*

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<sup>61</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:19

<sup>62</sup> 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; John 11:23-44; Mark 5:41-42; Luke 7:14-15; Acts 9:36-41

<sup>63</sup> Revelation 1:18; Romans 6:9-10

<sup>64</sup> John 2:19, 10:18

<sup>65</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55

<sup>66</sup> Romans 1:4

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 12:40

Forty days after His resurrection, after having shown Himself alive by many infallible proofs, Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of God.<sup>68</sup>

**“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah.”** (Psalm 24:7-10)

I believe that this is the picture of His triumphant return to glory. He stands before the gates of heaven and, by His own virtue and merit, commands the doors to open. And upon entering, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”<sup>69</sup> Even now, Christ is enthroned on the right hand of God, as our High Priest, and the Lord and Judge of all.

As our High Priest, He has already atoned for our sins and done all that was necessary to justify. Now, He ever liveth to intercede for us:

**“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin... Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”** (Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25)

Gill: *“He came down from [heaven], and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of His people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby He fully answers to His character as the great high priest.”*

As the Lord of all, He is an absolute sovereign. Jesus is our Savior, and we preach that, but you cannot claim to be preaching the gospel unless you are also preaching that Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord!<sup>70</sup>

**“According to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church.”** (Ephesians 1:19-22)

<sup>68</sup> Acts 1:3; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3

<sup>69</sup> Psalm 110:1

<sup>70</sup> Acts 2:36; 2 Peter 3:18

I mentioned last week that people despise this doctrine, and despise us for preaching it. Whether the recipients of our preaching like it or not, He is, in fact, the sovereign Lord of all.<sup>71</sup> And whether they like it or not, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.<sup>72</sup> All power is given Him in heaven and earth.<sup>73</sup> They must fear God and give glory to Him.<sup>74</sup> And all of their raging only causes God to laugh.<sup>75</sup> The whole of Psalm 2 is wonderful on this subject:

**“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, [saying], Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish [from] the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed [are] all they that put their trust in him.” (Psalm 2:1-12)**

As the Judge of all, Jesus Christ will return in power and judge the world.<sup>76</sup> He didn't come the first time to condemn the world.<sup>77</sup> But now He's sitting on the right hand of God, waiting for the appointed time to return in wrath to judge the world.<sup>78</sup>

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)**

**“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:”  
(Matthew 25:31-32)**

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<sup>71</sup> Job 23:13; Daniel 4:35

<sup>72</sup> Philippians 2:9-11

<sup>73</sup> Matthew 28:18

<sup>74</sup> Revelation 14:6-7

<sup>75</sup> Psalm 2:4

<sup>76</sup> Acts 10:40-42; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 22:12; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Psalm 9:7-8; Romans 2:6-8; John 5:22; Hebrews 9:27-28; 1 Peter 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:1

<sup>77</sup> John 3:16-17

<sup>78</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

God commands us to preach that Jesus was ordained to be the Judge of the quick and the dead.<sup>79</sup> It is an essential part of preaching the gospel.<sup>80</sup> The apostles preached Christ as Savior, Lord and Judge. Modern “Christianity” either completely leaves out the last two, or lies about them, and certainly lies about the first one. We have a duty to preach these things accurately and unvarnished. We aren’t sent to debate or parley; we are here with an ultimatum. “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”<sup>81</sup>

I will conclude today with a charge from Paul:

**“I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:1-5)**

I love you all. Amen.

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<sup>79</sup> Acts 10:42

<sup>80</sup> Romans 2:16

<sup>81</sup> Psalm 2:11-12