

God So Loved the World (Go To Meeting)

Albert Jones—February 10, 2024

I appreciate the opening prayer. I appreciate the words that truly are inspiring for us to think about, and that is that these words are true. These words are from God's inspired Bible, and they are life to us. It's not just a hearing of them, but to listen and to apply them in our lives.

I hope that we will come away with a greater and a more magnified understanding of God's Word when He says to us, 'He so loved the world.' That invokes quite a bit of emotion, typically in the part of those who see those words on billboards, they'll see those words in printed form.

It kind of generates this idea that the love of God has surpassed my weakness in the flesh. That God's love supersedes anything that I am. This is true, but the love of God is supposed to be pulled alongside and coupled with your commitment to God as much as His commitment is to you. ***That is faith unto faith!***

God is faithful toward us, and then we in turn should be faithful toward Him. We have been discussing God's Plan a lot lately, and rightly so, as we approach the Holy Days. Paul tells us to be 'urgent in season, and out of season,' and that is to *always be mindful of these things!*

2-Tim. 4—this is Paul's charge to Timothy as a minister of the Gospel, as a minister charged with preaching the Gospel of God.

2-Timothy 4:1: "I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God..." *is what Paul instructs Timothy!*

He affirms once more that "...even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom" (v 1).

Once again, when you read the words of God, it's good to step back and really think about what God is doing. God is making possible a means and entrance for us into His Family, into His Kingdom.

The creation of human beings is the pinnacle of God's creation. We are very important to Him and Christ. When you look at all that God has done in creating the universe, in creating and reforming the earth so that we could exist upon it, we see His hand in it.

Verse 2: "Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke..."

That is from time to time there is an appropriateness for rebuke and nonsense and

foolishness and false doctrine, and things that are not grounded in the Word of God. We ought to rebuke that, all of Satan's attempts to come into this door, all of Satan's attempts to get into our midst, to get into our fellowships; God says ***rebuke him!***

"...encourage, with all patience and doctrine" (v 2).

So the doctrine of God is very important. We do a family Bible study within my own family and we've been bringing in more of the brethren here in Michigan into that fellowship, into that family Bible study. That is the study and the doctrinal teachings of the New Testament Church. So, we need to make sure our family is grounded in doctrine.

Verse 3: "For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers*, having ears itching *to hear what satisfies their cravings*; and they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths" (vs 3-4).

This is a admonition from God; He wants us to understand what He is doing. He wants us to understand:

- the magnitude of His love
- the magnitude of His work in the Church
- the magnitude of His work in us

He is there doing a great work

- in this mind
- in this heart
- in this very being that we are

Yes, we are to be "...urgent in season and out of season..."

God's Holy Days indeed do reveal His Plan, but He has revealed Himself in so many ways. He preaches to us and he expresses to us that which is important for us to know. Paul describes this relationship:

Romans 1:1: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle..."

Again, this relationship with God with the ministry is one of service, one of selection and election to be a teacher within His Church. *The relationship with you is similar in that you are called as a firstfruit of God!* We as ministers to you, servants to you, on behalf of Christ, are trying to point you perfectly to Him as that Savior He is.

Verse 1: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, set apart to preach the Gospel of God, which He had promised before through His prophets in *the* Holy Scriptures concerning His Son; Who came from *the* seed of David according to *the* flesh” (vs 1-2).

That is that promise to Abraham that Jesus Christ would come through him, that in Him we would be blessed.

Verse 4: Who was declared *the* Son of God with power...”—*born in the flesh!*

We have talked about this covenantal relationship that Jesus and the Father has, born in the flesh. The Son of God declared to be as such here in:

Verse 4: “...with power, according to *the* Spirit of Holiness, by *the* resurrection from *the* dead—Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Again, Jesus did say there would only be one sign: ‘as Jonah was in the belly of the whale, He would be in the grave three days and three nights.’

We should say ***three nights and three days*** because He went into the tomb as the sun was setting.

Verse 5: “Through Whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations... [a worldwide work, an all-encompassing work for humankind] [...in behalf of his name. In whom you...” (vs 5-6).

Whoever you may be wherever you may be, in whomever you are, or I can say we, those of us who are called of God and have His Spirit.

Verse 6: “**In Whom you also are called of Jesus Christ.**”

Once again, the Father draws; but without Christ there wouldn’t be anybody to draw you to. Because of Christ, we are drawn to Him, because it’s in His perfect righteousness that we are able to access God.

He goes on to conclude his salutation here into the Roman Church:

Verse 7: “To all those who are in Rome, beloved by God, *the* called saints: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *our* Lord Jesus Christ.”

This salutation is applicable today to each and every one of us. So, when I read these words, as the opening prayer said, these words are Life. In those seven verses, there’s inspiration and encouragement for us that God is working in us, for us, and He and Jesus Christ are perfect in that effort.

From the beginning, we know that from Gen. 1 that God made us—mankind—in His image and after His likeness; that man was toward God at that time, that man was seeking God. There was no other being getting in the way at that moment, *sin had not entered in!* The relationship was between the created man and woman, and they were in the presence of Christ in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 1:26: “And God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.’ And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female” (vs 26-27).

In that creation, God blessed them, and God said to them—again, words of Life:

Verse 28: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’” *God provided all that they needed to exist!*

Verse 31—*He then concludes, summarizes:* “And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly* good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

So, in that relationship, God has now laid out human beings and began this purposeful work in us.

Everything was toward God until, and here (Gen. 3) comes the problem: This serpent—that is Satan—was around from the beginning in terms of our creation. His diabolical schemes and means is coming on the scene now, so things are about to change.

Genesis 3:1: “Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘*Is it true...*’”

The infusing of doubt within the perfect Truth of God. God tells us day-by-day not to give any credence to anything that is outside of God’s Truth. God’s Truth resonates with us because of God’s Spirit. Without God’s Spirit, we would not understand Truth.

We may have parts of it, but we would not comprehend the depth of it, the true meaning of it. God has worked this miracle within us through His Spirit.

All of that was made possible by the perfect work of Christ. Without Christ, we would not

comprehend these things. We would be captives in bondage to the world as is the rest of the world.

But God has indeed, *through His Spirit*, united with the *spirit in man*, enabled us to comprehend spiritual things.

Oh yes, we can do great things *with the spirit of man*. We see the accomplishments of mankind over the millennia, *but the spiritual things are from God!*

This is what God is going to show here as we go on through some of His Scriptures. So, Satan comes in and *he brings doubt!*

“...‘*Is it true that God has said, “You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?”*’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, “You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die”’” (vs 1-3).

And the serpent said to the woman again—a statement of truth provided by God, now undermined by a lie! A statement of Truth provided by the Creator, the Maker of mankind, the Creator of all things, *now undermined by a created thing!*

Whether it comes from a spirit being directly to your mind, or comes from a person influenced by spirit powers from outside, *a lie is a lie!* How do you know it’s a lie? There are a couple of ways that happen.

1. the Spirit of God gives you a consciousness of this
2. the Spirit convicts you of sin; tells you something isn’t right

I should say it is through God’s Word! If it is not from this Word, it is a lie!

I think that was mentioned in some of our conversation in the sermon that we heard here last evening. That if you know that what is being given to you is not from the Word of God, then it is to be rejected; *it is a lie!*

Verse 3—the woman continues: “...but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, “You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”” And the serpent said to the woman, ‘In dying, you shall not surely die! For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened...’” (vs3-5).

This is such a blatant untruth given here to Eve in the garden. Satan is just hinting at a lie on God, other than more than just really laying out falseness from his mouth to her ears—a *lie!*

Satan is implying nefarious intentions on God’s part. This is what the world does because the world belongs to him, so he says:

Verse 5: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food...” (vs 5-6).

Now we’ve moved away with this lie and this doubt set in. No instruction from God on this matter *moving into this self-analyzing, reasoning, comprehending forms herself!* This is the way sin begins to take root.

We understand that God is doing something to counter man all of that. So, we know the history. Mankind—Adam and Eve, especially Adam—sinned.

In Rom 5 is a more complete summary of that incident, and I want to bring it to where we are today from that standpoint so that we understand where we’re going.

Romans 5:12: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death...”

The whole equation is different now. Sin, as perpetrated there by Satan the devil, came into the garden. He’s the author of it. He’s the author of the great lie that precipitated it, working upon the mind of man, and man giving himself over to sin.

“...and in this way death passed into all mankind...” (v 12).

So, the application of that sin was applied to every one of Adam and Eve’s descendants all the way to you and me here today. Our father and mother, if you will, from the Garden of Eden gave us this gift that just keeps on giving, and that is the law of sin and death. That’s a problem. As it were, *that was a problem!*

Verse 12: “...and it is for this reason that all have sinned.... [yes, all are under sin] ... (For before the Law, sin was in the world.... [v 13]: ...However, sin is not imputed when law does not exist.” *So, sin is not imputed when Law does not exist.*

Verse 14: “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam...”

Why? *Because Adam’s sin was imputed to us!* We didn’t ask for it to be imputed to us, but it was imputed to us. We were born with this gift from Adam, if you will. Again, a problem. But I want you

to know there is a solution, and God will provide the solution.

“...Adam, who was a type of the *One* Who was to come. But *should* not the free gift be even as the offense *was*? For if by the transgression of the one man many died, how much more did the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which *is* by the One Man, Jesus Christ, abound unto many? And *should* not the free gift *be* like that which came by *the* one who had sinned?....” (vs 14-16).

An imputed, unrighteousness, now an imputed righteousness!

“...For on the one hand, judgment *was* by one unto condemnation; but on the other hand, the free gift *is* by one to the justification of many offenses” (v 16).

Now, this free gift and this justification that we are benefactors of, this standing that we have before God, is a part of the grand design of God. It is part of the solution for what occurred in the Garden of Eden.

When we think about the other side of the Flood as badly as mankind had evolved into, as sinful as mankind had evolved into, that entire existence; the way, society kind of unfolded to this point that *it grieved God that He had made man!*

We have a situation where God has rested to contemplate the perfection of His Plan to a point of being grieved that He made man. But yes, His Plan is still intact; the grace of God is still there, the abundance of grace as described in:

“...and the gift of righteousness reign in life by the One Jesus Christ. So then, even as by the one transgression condemnation *came* unto all men, condemnation came unto all men...” (vs 17-18).

Let’s understand that this condition applies to every human being ever born. So when we look at the work of God through the ages, and we see God’s work and intervention in the lives of individuals, nations, in God’s Word, what is He doing, ***He is revealing Himself to us!***

- He revealed Himself with Noah and bringing his children, through the Flood.
- He revealed Himself to Abraham and established a covenantal relationship with the man in His progeny so that the children of Israel would be objects of His grace

Maybe not into salvation at that moment, but definitely in the presence of God, having the knowledge of God, having the Truth of God, God interacting in their life. The God of heaven, the Creator God is there working with the nation. The

people are blessed as a result of that relationship with God.

I think if anyone understands what God was doing or is doing in His work with Israel, it is for all of us to comprehend His faithfulness and the benefit of a relationship with God.

Now with His Church, can we say the same? That we as members of God’s Family need to comprehend that we are to be ambassadors for Christ, that we are to comprehend that we are to be lights in this dark and crazy world that we live in, that God, *through us*, is appealing to mankind.

They will give glory to God in the end when they see His finished product in each and every one of us. They will give glory to Him. *We look forward to that!*

Verse 21: “So that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might the grace *of God* reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We see that relationship now all culminating in this act. This presence of Jesus Christ born in the flesh, the Lord Who created us, born in the flesh to be a Savior for His creation; all the way from the Garden of Eden to His return and the New Heaven and the New Earth.

This plan is unfolding, unstoppable, unmovable; it will be fulfilled!

- Will we avail ourselves without hesitation to it?
- Will we grab hold and not let go?
- Will we endure to the end?

God is going to fulfill His work; He is going to finish it!

You know, there is this saying that ‘you are either on the train or you’re not.’ If you’re going to get on God’s train:

- you have to be at the station
- you have to be on time
- you have to have a ticket
- your name is written in the book
- you’re on the register

So when you show up, your name will be there and God tells us to make sure of that. We have sin, yes, and that sin destroys our relationship with God.

- Adam and Eve had a great thing going
- the children of Israel had a great thing going.
 - ✓ sin is the problem
 - ✓ sin is not to be ignored

- ✓ sin won't go away by itself
- ✓ sin has to be dealt with

It exacts a price, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ paid that price!

Where we have sin, it destroys the relationship that we have with God. It leads us into more darkness, bondage and death. Just as Christ or the Lord God said to Adam and Eve, 'The day that you eat of that, you shall die.'

God wants all mankind to know Him. He wants us to know Him. He wants us to know that despite the world being all mixed up:

- that He is there
- that He is the One Who made us
- that He is the Creator God

He wants all mankind to know that and to realize:

- that He is God
- that He is the only One Who gives life

You won't have it or access in any other way!

When Paul crossed paths with the wise of the world of his day, he emphasized this very point to them. Paul gives a great sermon here and unfortunately for the most part it fell on deaf ears, but there were some who listened. There were some who believed:

Acts 17:18: "Then some philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him. And some of them said, 'What will this babblers have to say?'"

- Out of ignorance, you make fun of that which you don't understand!
- Out of pride, you think that your wisdom is wiser than God

If you don't know Him, you might think that. But I tell you, ***if He reveals Himself to you in the way that He can, you will understand*** as they will in the end-time. When God intervenes in the affairs of men, there will be no doubt Who is God. There will be no doubt of the weakness of the flesh and mankind will faint in horror and fear all kinds of attempts on their part to hide from the face of the living God.

"...And some of them said, 'What will this babblers have to say?' And some said, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods'..." (v 18). ***Paul is a preacher of the true God! Their worship is in sticks and stone!***

- How sad can that be?
- How much more silly are their thoughts?

"...because he [Paul] was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection" (v 18).

They could have taken a note from the woman at the well here, but they didn't.

Verse 19: "And they took him and brought him to Mars Hill, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is that is spoken by you?'"

Okay, we'll give them that. They were blind; they did not have any knowledge; they did not comprehend God. No one has told them about the true God. Maybe no one has revealed to them that they were made and not evolved, and so on.

Verse 20: "'For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears... [they had never heard this type of preaching before] ...So then, we desire to know what these things mean.'" ***Now you're pointing in the right direction!***

Verse 21: "(Now, all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning among them spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.) Then Paul stood in the center of Mars Hill and said, 'Men... [mankind] ... Athenians, I perceive that in all things you are very reverent to deities; for as I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration... [objects, things that don't have feet or mouths, can't walk, can't speak] ... I also found an altar on which was inscribed, "To an unknown God."...."' (vs 21-23).

And so Paul takes advantage of this opportunity. He says,

"...So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance is the One that I proclaim to you. He is the God Who made the world and all things that are in it. Being the Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as though He needs anything, for He gives to all life and breath and all things. And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand their appointed times... (vs 23-26).

Not all of mankind would have access to God's grace, His Truth, His purpose all at the same time. But he has an appointed time for all things.

"...and the boundaries of their dwelling... [Why?] ...in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being..." (vs 26-28).

We've explained that, we've established that fact. We do not exist without God!

"...as some of the poets among you also have said... [speaking to them on terms that they can understand, their poet said this quote] ... 'For we are

His offspring.’.... [hopefully they understood that] ...Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man” (vs 28-29).

How are you going to encompass God in your imagination? *He made you, He sustains the universe!*

Verse 30: “For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance...”

If you go to John 1, we know that Light has come into the world now.

“...He now commands all men everywhere to repent”—*of this ignorance!*

Verse 31: “Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by raising Him from the dead.*”

That is our Lord and Savior! That is Christ! That is a part of that work that He was doing by coming into the world and being our Savior.

Verse 32: “And after hearing *about the* resurrection of *the* dead, some mocked...”

You know that Nicodemus had a problem with it. Here they can’t even contemplate this. Maybe on the terms of their understanding with their gods, the false gods, is to say that one of them would become one of their gods. No, they couldn’t understand that.

“...but some said... [for a lighter part of the verse] ...‘We will hear you again concerning this *matter.* And so, Paul went out from among them.... [but God gave grace to some]: ...But certain ones *who* believed joined themselves to him” (vs 32-34).

They joined themselves to Paul, because of this Word, this Light, this Truth that he unveiled there to them,

“...among whom also *were* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (v 33).

So, God has given grace to a few there who heard the Word and it resonated with them. This is the way God works. We know and understand that.

Let’s look at something here in 1-Tim. 2 just give a proper context to this precept. Paul writes:

1-Timothy 2:1: “I exhort, therefore, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men.”

It just shows that Paul understood that this work of God is not just church-focused, but that this

work of God has a broader application for all mankind.

For kings, v 2: “For kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness and respectability. For this *is* good and acceptable before God our Savior, Who desires all men to be saved and to come to *the* knowledge of *the* Truth” (vs 2-4). *So, do I, brethren!*

I desire for God’s work to be fulfilled in this earth, that His presence and His Spirit fills the earth as air, that God is everywhere, that Satan is no more. That Light is everywhere, that darkness is no more. We live in a dark world, and we only see a little bit of the foolishness and the evil, and we can barely stand that. There is so much diabolical sin occurring in this world that Satan the devil is a ‘god of,’ but God again has a solution for it, and He is fulfilling it.

Verse 4: “Who desires all men to be saved and to come to *the* knowledge of *the* Truth. for there *is* one God... [not many] ...and one Mediator between God and men—*the* Man Christ Jesus” (vs 4-5).

That’s who He is, the man Christ Jesus. Here again, God’s love is expressed. The work of God is expressed here.

Verse 6: “Who gave Himself *as* a ransom for all, the testimony *of which is to be preached* in its appointed times.”

This is one of those appointed times as we approach Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. But the appointed time for Christ is every day of our life. The appointed time for Christ to be preached is every day of our life. The work of God never ceases.

Verse 7: “For this purpose I [Paul] For this purpose I was ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak *the* truth in Christ—I do not lie), a teacher of *the* Gentiles in Faith and Truth.”

You look at the way God has structured His ministry to fulfill its purpose, to reach as many as He would call those who are seeking Him would have a means to access Him.

Verse 8: “Therefore, I desire that men everywhere pray, lifting up Holy hands without anger and *evil* opinions.”

We talk about the sin that’s in the world and we see it because we have God’s Spirit, we are under God’s grace, we have His love in us. We see because God reveals to us. They don’t see, they don’t comprehend when we preach the Truth. ***Sin destroys, righteousness gives life!*** Righteousness keeps you in the presence of God.

Righteousness that is aspiring to, striving after, desiring, looking to God's commandments, His Truth. That is what keeps us in this relationship with God. God wants us to truly comprehend and understand that.

Yes, we are approaching Passover and for us it is a very high part of our relationship with God. This time is essential to us because this is a renewal of a covenant that we have with God.

It's not a one-time event, it's not a single exercise and that's it, as though it's just regimented. No, it is an appeal to the conscience. It is to say:

- yes, I understand. He is my Savior
- yes, I understand that I stand in His blood
- yes, I have been conjoined with Him in that blood

The me, as it was, died! The new resurrected me from the watery grave mentally, emotionally, physically ***now belonging to Christ, belonging to Him!*** He bought us with a price and God the Father now can use us.

But we're not done, yet. We're still ripening on the vine. The Father is still producing and carrying out His Husbandry with us and Jesus Christ is still nourishing and feeding us.

We're not done, yet; but we do belong to Him. They can work with us now because of the great work of Christ in His blood

Verse 8—Paul says: “Therefore, I desire that men everywhere pray, lifting up Holy hands without anger and *evil* opinions. In like manner also, *let* the women adorn themselves with clothing that shows modesty and discretion, not with *elaborate* braidings of the hair” (vs 8-9).

Not that there is anything wrong with elaborate braiding of hair other than the fact that it should not define you. That should not be your outward appearance, should not be the thing that defines you as a child of God.

“...or with gold, or pearls, or expensive apparel” (v 9). *No, nothing wrong with those things!*

A precious pearl is something to have. We should view our relationship with God that way, but it shouldn't define us. Those outward things should not define us. Here's what should define us:

Verse 10: “But with that which is fitting for women who profess to have reverence for God—with good works.” *Let me apply that for a moment to men:*

- don't let your brand new pickup truck define you

- don't let your new sports car define you
- don't let your physique, *because you've been very studious in exercising and lifting weights*, define you

But with that humbleness of the heart and fear of God, that is what should define us!

Verse 11, “Let a woman learn in quietness and be submissive in every respect... [this is a relationship thing] ...For I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness” (vs 11-12). *Paul is describing here a judgment!*

Verse 13: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived.... [that is correct] ...but the woman came to be in transgression by being deceived.... [Satan really did a number on her] ...But she shall be saved through the childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with self-control” vs 13-15).

Once again, when you think about God's interaction with all of us, it is about obedience toward Him and overcoming sin. I think we can say there.

So, let me see if we can define this clearly. Let's put it in a clearly defined format here. We without Christ are back in our sins. We would have no covering without Christ. No, forgiveness of sin without Christ. Because brethren, we do sin every day.

Ephesians 2:11: “Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles in *the* flesh, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands.”

The uncircumcised were unclean or ceremonial unclean or be defiled by those who are called circumcision who perceive that their circumcision made them clean and acceptable.

The covenantal relationship there still is one that all of us, all of us need Christ to be forgiven sin. All of us are defiled before God because of sin. The Father can't reach any of us for salvation because of sin. So, the solution to sin is Christ as it says again in:

Verse 12: “*And* that you were without Christ at that time...”

To be without Christ is to be alienated from Him, to be alienated from life.

“...alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (v 12).

That is a sad state to be in, especially once you have learned the Truth and you recognize the condition that you're in. You'll be like the prodigal son who at some point came to his senses and recognized that all that glitters isn't gold and all that they say is good isn't good and all good in the world is not the goodness of God.

Verse 13: "But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition, having annulled in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in *the decrees of men*, so that in Himself He might create both into one new man, making peace; and *that* He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, having slain the enmity by it" (vs 13-16).

So this solution for access to God ***has been fulfilled in Christ through his death and resurrection!***

Verse 17: "Now when He came, He preached the Gospel—peace to you who *were* far off and to those who *were* near. For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father" (vs 17-18).

That is the incredible thing now that we stand in this relationship that gives us access to the very Throne of the Father.

Verse 19: "So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners..."

- you're not way over there somewhere
- you're not cut off
- you're not in blindness
- you're not in darkness

"...but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of the household of God" (v 19).

Who are the saints? *Those whom God has called, those in whom God dwells through His Spirit!*

Verse 20: "You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets."

That's the Word of Truth! That's what we read; that's what we study.

"...Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone" (v 20).

New Testament, the teachings, the words, the writings of the apostles, His disciples, whom define His example, His life on the earth.

Verse 21: "In Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being

built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit" (vs 21-22).

We become the Temple of God, individually. So, this relationship is a very intimate one, a very close one that we have with God. God is doing this great thing for us, but because of His great love with which He loved us, He and Christ, They are providing us this solution.

In Luke 2 this is the proclamation pertaining to Christ:

Luke 2:8: "Now *there* were shepherds in the same country, who were dwelling in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night... [this is the night of His birth] ...and suddenly an angel of *the* Lord stood by them, and *the* glory of *the* Lord shined round about them; and they were seized *with* great fear. But the angel said to them..." (vs 8-10).

Let's just pause a minute and think about this. The news of the birth of Christ is the greatest event to happen in the history of mankind. It was held by angels, a multitude of angels, singing, glorifying, hallelujah, and so on.

Verse 10: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I am announcing to you glad tidings *of* great joy... [I wish I could express the joy that the angels must have tried to express to them] which shall be to all people'... [all the creation of God] ...for today, in *the* City of David, a Savior was born to you..." (vs 10-11)—*US!*

It says to you as He was talking to them. But let's understand what has occurred here on this night. The Savior of mankind is born in the flesh!

"...Who is Christ *the* Lord" (v 11)—*the Savior, the Messiah!*

Verse 12: "Now, this *is* the sign for you: you shall find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of *the* heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in *the* highest, and peace on earth among men *of* goodwill'" (vs 12-14).

- ***IF*** you are seeking Him, *He can be found!*
- ***IF*** you cry out to Him, *He will find you!*

He has angels specifically tasked with that very thing.

Cry out to God! He is there in the name of Jesus Christ, and He will hear! God is indeed summarizing and summing up His work for us.

Let's go to the verse now that inspires a good bit of emotion pertaining to this understanding of what God is doing out of love. And His love is for all His creation.

John 3:11: “Truly, truly I say to you, We speak that which we know, and we testify of that which we have seen... [He was there] ...but you do not receive our testimony.”

Verse 12: “If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

Those things which are from above, for God is given to us through his Son, revealed to us through His Son. But you have to believe. You can't have God if you don't believe that He is.

Verse 13: “And no one has ascended into heaven... [so let's get that straight] ...except He Who came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, Who is in heaven.”

Verse 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.” *So, this death on the cross, being lifted up, does something incredible:*

Verse 15: “So that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

- access to eternal life, but there is work to be done.
- access to eternal life, but there is a consistent commitment that one needs to maintain

Verse 16: “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. The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged...” (vs 16-18).

Why? *Because you have no hope otherwise!* You have defeated yourself. You have cut the rope that has you hanging on to life. You are in free fall, and there is no one to catch you.

Yes, you have already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten, the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment of God right here:

Verse 19: “And this is the judgment: that the Light has come into the world...”

Wake up everyone! Comprehend that God is giving you access to life. Jesus Christ is that solution to sin. Jesus Christ is that solution to the weakness of the flesh, overcoming the law of sin within.

“...but men loved darkness rather than the Light because their works were evil. For everyone who practices evil hates the Light, and does not

come to the Light, so that his works may not be exposed; **but the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light**, so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (vs 19-21).

Again, the only solution, the only true source of life to overcoming sin, to having peace and having life more abundantly.

So, we see the problem is sin, standing, starting with Adam and Eve and sin being the problem. Remember He has spoken to us through the mouth of His prophets. God is good, His way is life, and all other ways leads to death. ***God cries out to us to repent, to turn to Him, to choose Life!***

Let's hear the Word of God to just three of His prophets, starting with:

Moses—Deuteronomy 30:19: “...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life...”

There is the choice, God or Satan, the world or God's way. *Death or life!*

Joshua—Joshua 24:15—Joshua concludes: “...But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

They would obey God and His commandments. They would not give themselves over to Satan lies and his sin and the things in this world.

Elijah—1-Kings 18:21: “And Elijah came to all the people and said, ‘How long will you vacillate between two different opinions?...’”

Let's put that in context of something we read today.

- Is it the way of the Athenians? *They're thinking they're the smartest in the world and making fun of Truth!*

or

- Is it God's way?
- Will you believe the Rock or the stick or the stone or the tree or whatever it is that you are given homage to?

or

- Will you believe the living God?

God is the way!

So, Elijah says. ‘How long will you go between two opinions? If God is God, serve Him! If Baal is God, serve him,’ ***but he is not God!*** Let me just be clear about that: ***God is God!***

John 3:21: “But the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light, so that his works may be

manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God.*”

We truly do have so much to be thankful for. God chooses us. He has selected us to be a part of His Family today, to be candidates for firstfruits in the Kingdom of God. ***We should walk in a spirit of repentance always regarding this Truth!***

Dan 9 is a good read to go to and reaffirm what true repentance toward God should look like, and how we should be so thankful for what God has given us. God speaks to us through His servants and that God helps us to understand His Truth.

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now, I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing; by which you are also being saved, if you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you... [words which are Life, the Truth of God is Life] ...otherwise you have believed in vain. For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve” (vs 1-5).

Again, more evidence, more affirmation: v 6: “Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen asleep.”

Verse 21: “For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then those who are Christ’s at His coming. Afterwards the end *comes*, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to Him Who *is* God and Father, when He shall have put an end to all rule and all authority and power. For it is ordained that He reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. *The last enemy to be destroyed is death*” (vs 21-26).

Now this is what God has to do to perfect us:

Verse 53: “For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility...”

This is the work of the Father now. You will be raised anew in Christ, you will be resurrected not just as somebody dies by the watery baptism, but now in reality raised from the dead, ***the Father will give you life as He gave life to Christ!***

“...and this mortal must put on immortality. Now, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O

death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? Now the sting of death *is* sin... [Satan knew that] ...and the power of sin *is* the Law” (vs 53-56)—*Satan also knows that!*

Verse 57: “But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It isn’t that the Law is evil, but the Law defined to diabolicalness of sin, the Law shows you where sin is and how sinful sin can be.

Verse 58: “So then, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in *the* Lord.”

Yes, we are just ***the first wave***, we are just the first wave, ***the redeemed of God, the elect of God, the firstfruit harvest to be presented to God***, precious and acceptable to Him.

Brethren, all of this is made possible because He loved us first!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Timothy 4:1-4
- 2) Romans 1:1-7
- 3) Genesis 1:26-28, 31
- 4) Genesis 3:1-6
- 5) Romans 5:12-18, 21
- 6) Acts 17:18-34
- 7) 1-Timothy 2:1-15
- 8) Ephesians 2:11-22
- 9) Luke 2:8-14
- 10) John 3:11-21
- 11) Deuteronomy 30:15
- 12) Joshua 24:15
- 13) 1 Kings 18:21
- 14) John 3:21
- 15) 1-Corinthians 15:1-6, 21-26, 53-58

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 1
- Daniel 9

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