

Jesus Christ the Redeemer

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The Bible is a closed book to the unbeliever. It is God's Word to the believer. Soul life is breath life. God breathed into Adam, and he became a living soul. Everyone is a living soul as long as he has breath life. When breath life is gone, man is a dead soul or dead person.

God is not a person, for He has no soul life. God is Spirit (John 4:24) and a spirit has no flesh or bones as people have (Luke 24:39). Jesus Christ was not spirit, for he had flesh and bones even after the resurrection.

You can legislate all you please, but until you change the nature of man, sin will grow and flourish. We may sort of keep it down a little bit here and there, but it will surely spring up elsewhere. The only hope of any human is to be born again. Man commits sin because his nature produces that kind of fruit. Now you can understand why man is more than a transgressor - a law breaker; man is spiritually dead. And as a natural man, he partakes of Satan's nature (Ephesians 2:2). When he is born again, he partakes of God's nature (II Peter 1:4).

Man is not lost because of what he does, but because of what he is. Man needs a new birth - that is life from God - because he is spiritually dead. Romans 5:12 says death passed upon all men. Also, see Matthew 4:16 and Romans 3:9, 23. Neither education nor culture can change man's nature. Education will not make a man fit to stand right with God. The new birth is man's only hope.

God's plan of redemption was a legal document because Satan had legal rights God had to recognize. If God could have disposed of the Devil, putting him out of dominion, but did not do it, then God would unnecessarily be guilty of all the acts of the Devil. That is exactly why some have confused death as coming from the true God. God cannot dispose of the Devil until man's lease of dominion has expired which Adam delivered to the Adversary.

The Adversary's chief desire and design is to destroy humans and thereby bring sorrow to the heart of the Father God. Check Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19.

The love of power corrupted Lucifer. When cast out of heaven, he lost none of his ability or brilliance, none of his wisdom. He simply became corrupted. He is the great king of the devil hosts of hell. He is the mighty enemy of God. He is an enemy of angels and of men. He heads up all the evil of all the ages. His whole nature is malignant and cruel. He had political dominion over the kingdoms of the earth, and as the prince he is the political head of the nations. As a god, he demands man's worship, reverence and obedience. The Devil is more popular today than Jesus. Hell is more popular than heaven. More people worship the Devil than worship God. Check Luke 12:4,5; Jude 9; Zechariah 3:1,2; Daniel 10:13.

Our combat is not against flesh and blood but principalities (Ephesians 6:12), powers and world rulers of this darkness. There are different degrees of the Adversary's dominion. The world is

divided into kingdoms, states and communities, and over each one a devil holds sway. I John 5:19 states that the whole human race lieth in the embrace of the Devil. II Corinthians 11:3 calls the Devil the serpent, which means the sly one, the corrupter. Colossians 1:13 calls the Devil the power of darkness.

The Devil has crushed the life out of nation after nation, proud city after proud city, until today their only monument is the wreckage of their past glory seen in the piles of their mighty ruins. The Adversary has deceived the whole inhabited earth. He has made sin appear beautiful, error appear as truth, lust as love, crime as virtue, deception as good practice. He has deceived the whole world, the nations, the cities, the schools, the homes and individuals. Man is totally helpless without God's aid to escape the Devil's power.

Satan got Adam's lease on this world and consequently Satan's dominion will last as long as Adam's would have lasted had he not sinned. Satan's dominion has a time limit. Satan is seeking God's place in man's heart. He wants man's worship and for the most part is getting it. None of the religions of the world give man any real hope; nor do they give a solution to the sin problem or teach man about his ability to approach God without fear. Man is a legal criminal and if he will ever stand right with God, it must be done on legal ground. All thinking men have sought and are seeking even today a solution to the sin problem and grounds whereby man can stand uncondemned in the presence of God. Man today can no more approach God without the mediator, Jesus Christ, than he could approach God in the days of Israel without the sacrifice. Nations that have embraced Jesus Christ have steadily increased. Others have sunk lower and lower.

Man's hopeless misery, sung in the minor key of the uncomforted miserable ones, is heard in every generation. Man needs a mediator and an intercessor. Because of the divine conception, death had no dominion over Jesus until Jesus became sin, took sin upon himself. As the second Adam, Jesus was as perfect as the first. Universally, man has always craved an incarnation and therefore has gone to all kinds of gods and had them born instead of the one true Son of God.

Since the fall of Adam, humans have steadily been sinking lower and lower intellectually, morally and spiritually. The only way up and out was Pentecost. Jesus as the son of God, his conception and birth is no more difficult to believe or understand than the creation of the first man or the birth of a child today. Christianity is supernatural. To be born again (the new birth) is a miracle. The new birth offers the only solution to life's mysteries and gives a reason for man's being. It makes life with its burdens, sorrows and grief culminating in death, tolerable. It throws light on the human problems for which we can get light from no other source.

By assuming the liability for the fall of man, by paying the penalty for it independently of man, God has surely answered the criticism of every man against His justice. There is no reason for any human being to suffer, for God has vindicated Himself in Christ Jesus. God gave the blood covenant as a covering set to man's account to be cashed in by Jesus Christ.

God stands acquitted before the tribunal of universal human consciousness in that He did not leave man after his treason without a means of salvation. Man's penalty for treason must be met.

If he will not accept God's perfect Son, Jesus Christ, he will have to suffer the consequences of his rejection. Man did not have to yield to Satan unless he chose to yield. All the arguments against God and His Son's (Jesus Christ's) legal redemption fall to their own folly. God has to be just toward Jesus the substitute. Therefore, men who reject Jesus Christ must suffer the penalty. That is why God has the right to and will sit as the Judge on the great white throne.

Man's physical death could not fully pay the just penalty for his crime; Man is unable to even pay the interest. Man cannot save himself. God must provide a redeemer. God must assume the liability of man's awful treason.

God must restore man upon grounds that will not pulverize man or rob him of his self-respect; it must be upon legal grounds that will perfectly justify man in the sight of God and give him as good a standing as though he had never sinned. This work of God in the restoration of man dare not take advantage of Satan, but it must be on absolute legal grounds in justice to the Devil, to man and to God Almighty.

The redemption of man must emanate from God. God must provide a redeemer. This redeemer must adequately meet every demand of justice, every need of man, and he must be big enough to conquer Satan and death. He must be a man. He must be conceived and born in such a manner that he will not be a subject of Satan. He must have the same dominion and authority that the first man, Adam, had before his fall. He must meet all the requirements that justice demands for a substitute, capable of suffering all that men suffer, tempted in all things. And in order to do this he had to become sin and die spiritually and physically.

If just the physical death of Jesus could pay the penalty of men's transgression, then sin is but a physical fact. If just physical death is a penalty for sin, the whole human race could pay their own penalty and save themselves, for all die.

The physical death of Jesus did not touch the sin issue. It was only the result of sin. The real suffering of Jesus, our substitute, was spiritual, though he also died physically.

The redeemer must experience death for every man so that every man has a legal right to eternal life and sonship with God. If during the period of time after his resurrection and before his appearance on Sunday, Jesus Christ went to the Satanic world, the spirit world, and witnessed to them, which he did, then God stands vindicated and man's mouth is closed forever in silence. Man no longer has a case against God. For God sent His only begotten Son, who came to earth and paid the penalty of man's guilt without asking man to have any part in the awful transaction.

If Jesus Christ did not go to the depths of hell and suffer, God cannot send any man to hell who rejects him as his savior. But if Jesus Christ did go to hell, then God has not only a legal right to send every man to hell who rejects him, but God must send him there in order to be just toward Jesus Christ, His Son, the substitute.

If God can save one human being who rejects Jesus Christ as a personal savior, then God could save the whole human race because there would be no difference.

Since all men are spiritually dead and subject to Satan, if one could have been saved, then the whole world could have been saved. If the whole world could have been saved apart from Christ, then God sending His only begotten Son to become sin for us is the most colossal crime ever committed in the universe. But because of what God did, every man who rejects Jesus must legally go to hell regardless of God's feelings (John 5:29). And every man who accepts Jesus must legally go to heaven.

The new birth gives eternal life to man and the promise of being in the gathering together at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not enough to just take him as your savior; you must recognize his lordship over your life. Many people would like to have Jesus as a savior, but they do not want him as their lord. They do not want him as the ruler in their lives here upon earth.

The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity; the new birth is the heart. If the new birth is not supernatural, Christianity is just one of the religions of the world. If the new birth is supernatural, Christianity is a family and not a religion.

There is a legal and an experiential side to the new birth. The legal side of the new birth is enacted in the courthouse of heaven. Man's sins are remitted (Colossians 2:14). Man is legally justified. His name is written in the family birthday book. He is legally adopted into the family and this has to be done in the courthouse of heaven. Jesus Christ publicly confesses that person before the Father and he is legally reconciled to the Father and thus declared and made righteous.

And now the experiential or vital part of the redemption. Man has a legal right to his Father's protection and to Jesus as his intercessor, his great family lawyer. Man holds the place of a son in the royal household and family of God. He has a right to the son's inheritance and the right to use the name of Jesus Christ. Thus, he has the nature of God - eternal life. He has the peace of God which floods his soul. He has passed from death unto life, and he loves the brethren because he is a joint-heir with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17). Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me...is passed from death unto life;" (John 5:24). He is born from above. Paul says, "You hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins." The First Epistle of John says, "He that hath the Son hath life..." Also, "These things have I written unto you ... that you may know that you have eternal life."

This is not a future possession but a present-tense reality. If any man takes Christ as his savior, that man is a new creation. He is not a rebuilt one, or one who has been fixed over, because he is now begotten not of corruptible seed but incorruptible. He is begotten by the will of God, the Book of James says. We are not illegitimate children or hybrids or half-breeds but legitimately born children of God. The believer is free from the dominion of law, the dominion of sin, the dominion of spiritual death, the dominion of Satan, because he is under the dominion of the grace of God and Jesus Christ is his Lord.

Every believer has a battle with his physical body, for we are living in the realm where Satan is the emperor, and most people with whom we associate are under the dominion of the Devil. The only way to overcome the influence of this physical body is by our spirit's fellowship with

the Spirit of God. There's going to be a battle until our physical body is brought into subjection to our spirit. He who knows how to control his tongue, his passions and his appetite will live abundantly. God gave us our bodies as servants. We are to rule them.

The fall of man was a finished product, but God did as much of a finished work in man's redemption as the Devil did in his destruction. The truth that in the new birth we actually receive the nature of God has never been brought to the forefront by the church. Most teaching has produced an unstable and vacillating type of Christianity. Jesus Christ was the embodiment of divine reality and every subject on which he expressed himself is a revelation. Jesus would be as much a stranger in our world today as he was when he first appeared upon the land of Israel.

In a tree, life manifests itself in the leaf, then the blossom, then the luscious fruit. In a child of God, spiritual life manifests itself in his nature, conduct and speech. Our lives breathe the fragrance of forgiveness, but it is bravery clothed in humility. It is strength clothed in gentleness.

Religion has wasted man's life. His life is poured out like water upon a sandpile. Natural, brotherly love (*phileo*) may suffer, but it grows bitter under the suffering and becomes a cruel death spot. Yet brotherly love is the best this old human nature has had from the fall until the new birth.

The household and family of God are uniquely wonderful, for God takes humanity into partnership with Himself and allows us to give birth to His joy. This indicates the eternal responsibility of fatherhood and motherhood. He could have created the whole human race at one time, but this God did not choose to do. He preferred to let us have the pleasure and joy of fellowshiping with Him in it. The household of faith is a very choice name (Ephesians 2:19; John 16:27).

No sadder feature of the modern church can be imagined than the children of God Almighty taking the place of servants, utterly ignorant of their sonship privileges and responsibilities (I Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6; I Peter 2:5,9).

We are as near to the heart of the Father God as Jesus is. We can talk to Him heart-to-heart, spirit-to-spirit all the time, for the Father Himself loves us. As long as we are loved and as long as we can love, there is a reason for being in the world. But when we cease to love and cease to be the object of love, then the reason for being ends. Christianity is a child living with his Father. Believers are members of the heavenly aristocracy. God is not secretary-treasurer of a charitable organization where we go when we've used our last resource.

If the Christian believer, however, fails to assume his obligation in believing his sonship privileges, then the hand of God is powerless. You have as much right to demand fulfillment of every promise of God as you have to demand the cashing of a check at a bank where you have a deposit. If you are oppressed or enslaved, you have a legal right to protection in the family of God. No man has a right to hold a slave, and Satan has no legal right to hold a child of God in bondage. Whatsoever in Jesus' name we set free here on earth, God in heaven will make good. But, most everyone around us in the whole world is fighting to keep born-again believers ignorant of our legal rights. Or, if we do know them, to keep us under condemnation so we will

not dare to use them. Satan leads men around on a leash. God's hands are tied until He can use ours. God is limited to believing and obedience. God is as small in the world as we make Him. God is big only where men make Him big by using the divinely-given authority. Our ear to believe and act binds God's omnipotence.

Act as though the word of God is true and take the words of Jesus seriously: then preach, then practice, then make good, walking in power instead of weakness. Sin operates almost exclusively through the members of our body (Romans 8:13). The body itself is not wrong - there is no evil in it. It is only that we submit it to practices that are wrong (Romans 6:18; I Thessalonians 4:3-8). Renewed-mind believing and walking are sanctification manifested. The Greek words for holiness and sanctification come from the same root, meaning "to be set apart." We tarnish the spirit by broken fellowship and lose the joy that is ours.

We need to walk in fellowship through the spirit of Christ in us. The resurrected body of Christ was the highest perfection that matter is capable of (John 10:18). A born-again man has an intellect through which he thinks, a nervous system through which he feels, a will through which he chooses and selects, and the gift of God, spirit, through which he loves God. The reason for the new creation in Christ is that the fellowship between God and man might be restored. If that fellowship cannot be based upon the grounds of man's being made righteous, redemption has failed to accomplish God's purpose. As long as man has a consciousness of sin, a sense of unworthiness in the presence of his own Father, there can be no joy of fellowship between them. If God cannot make man righteous and as free from sin-consciousness and condemnation as he was before sin entered the world, then Satan's work in Adam has been more effectual than God's work in Christ (Romans 3:26; 4:25; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:18-20).

The message of righteousness is the one message that Satan has hindered people from knowing. He has continued to manifest a gospel of sin. People have had sin preached at them, producing nothing but weakness and instability. Satan has made us think that it is a mark of humility to boast of our sin, weakness and our unworthy condition. Believing and saying this dishonors God, dishonors redemption and the blood of Jesus Christ. Redemption was the restoration of a lost fellowship (I Corinthians 1:9). The spiritual condition of believers is a result of broken fellowship.

I find the following statement by Harry S. Truman interesting: "Most of my own ideas on how the world runs I obtained very early in life from the Bible, the King James version of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is, among other things, one of the greatest documents of history. Every trouble that humanity is heir to is set out in the Bible. And the remedy is there, too, if you know where to find it. I read the Bible at least a dozen times, and maybe more, before I was fifteen years old. The Bible must be read over and over again to get the full meaning out of it. The same is true of the Constitution of the United States."

And the moral code that is in the Old and New Testaments is needed by all mankind. If civilization is to continue. The majority of the people of the world must have a moral code by which to live and by which to act. The moral code set forth in the Bible is unequalled."