

The Baptismal Regeneration / Believer's Baptism Debate

A theological and historical overview of the most contested
subject of the church age.

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Chapter Three One Plan Of Salvation For All Ages

When searching out the true nature of the saving gospel, the honest Christian seeker can easily become bogged down and overwhelmed in a debate regarding the different ways God required sinners lay hold of eternal life throughout the divisional periods of scriptural history. How were people saved from Adam through Noah and on to Abraham? Were Gentiles and children of Abraham saved differently until Moses? Could Gentiles be saved during the Mosaic period without becoming Jewish proselytes? How were people saved in the era of the synagogue when observance of Mosaic ceremonialism during the exilic period was an impossibility? Was the thief on the cross saved under an intermediate gospel between the Mosaic system and the New Testament system? These are deep questions that are taken very seriously by many contemporary theologians.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate that there never has been but one plan of salvation for all time. There will be deliberate absence of extensive discussion about covenants, dispensations, degrees of Calvinism, etc. These various concepts do not alter the principle of the imputed righteousness of Christ for salvation. This plan was illustrated differently for educational and testimonial purposes in various divisions of biblical history, but the plan was eternal and unchanging.

God is omniscient (all-knowing), which means that He has nothing to learn, and there is nothing of which He can be ignorant. He is infinite and eternal and therefore knew before all other existence what would transpire as a result of creation. If God is not infinite (without limitation) then He may be supernatural but certainly not God. God knew in eternity past and determined that only one means would be used to ransom fallen man from His fiery wrath—crucifixion of His only begotten Son.¹ From Adam to eternity future the only saving power will have been Christ the crucified Messiah—*The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations* (Ps. 33:11). The Psalmist knew that the council of God had established salvation from eternity past when he petitioned Him saying:

Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand (Ps. 20:4-6).

This plan of salvation in eternity past has been called other names such as: *covenant of redemption*, *covenant of grace*, or *promise of redemption*. Nothing can be added to this plan nor taken away from it, though the plan's promise of eternal life can be integral to other covenants and contained within other promises. This will be graphically

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1964), 42: “*The Covenant of Redemption* (Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:20) into which, it is usually thought by theologians, the Persons of the Godhead entered before all time and in which each assumed that part in the great plan of redemption which is their present portion as disclosed in the Word of God. In this covenant the Father gives the Son, the Son offers Himself without spot to the Father as an efficacious sacrifice, and the Spirit administers and empowers into the execution of this covenant in all its parts. This covenant rests upon but slight revelation. It is rather sustained largely by the fact that it seems both reasonable and inevitable.”

illustrated in a later portion of this book. For all practical purposes, we will refer to it as *the plan of salvation*.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION IN ETERNITY PAST

The purpose of God to save men by grace through faith in Christ the Messiah is the basis of the Trinitarian council held in eternity past—

...to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (Eph. 3:9-12).

So the declaration of this plan of salvation was called the *counsel of God* (Acts 20:27-28). The Apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians:

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified...Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory (I Cor. 2:2, 6, 7).

God the Son was in ready agreement with this eternal plan and said, *lo, I come to do thy will, O God* (Heb. 10:7, 5; Ps. 40:6-8) and again, *a body hast Thou prepared for me*²

For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure (Heb. 10:4-6).

If the person presently reading this book is a Christian, he should stop and fathom, for a moment, how far back infinity extends prior to Creation. It is without end, and yet there never was a moment in which Christ did not know and love you by name and plan to die on the cross for your sins. The Apostles and Prophets understood their salvation to have been established before the foundation of the earth—*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear* (Rev. 13:8, 9) cf. Rev. 17:8.

² *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition*, John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, Editors (USA: Victor Books, 1983), pp. 803, 804. "The phrase **a body you prepared for Me** is one Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew expression 'You have dug ears for Me.' The Greek translator whose version the author of Hebrews used (obviously translating with the help of the Holy Spirit), construed the Hebrew text as a kind of figure of speech (technically called synecdoche) in which a part is put for the whole. If God is to 'dig out ears' He must 'prepare a body.' This interpretation is both valid and correct as its quotation in Hebrews proves. In the 'body' which He assumed in Incarnation, Christ could say that He had come to achieve what the Old-Covenant sacrifices never achieved, the perfecting of New-Covenant worshippers. In this sense He did God's will."

It was within the eternal council of God that it was predetermined to transfer the guilt of the sinner to Christ, and to transfer the innocence of Christ to the sinner (transferred meaning *imputed*). Isaiah, who prophesied from 790 B.C., expressed imputation very clearly when he said:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

And just as Isaiah expressed the imputation of the sinner's iniquities upon Christ, the Apostle proclaims the imputation of Christ's righteousness upon the sinner who believes—*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* (II Cor. 5:21).

Hence He was declared and promised, and expected as the Redeemer, long before He came into the world to do this service. Job knew him as his living Redeemer, and numerous Old Testament saints waited for Him as such, having had a promise of it, which was founded on the eternal council of the Trinity before the foundation of the world. To doubt this truth is to doubt Christ Himself when He said: *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me* (Jn. 5:39). And again, when He said:

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (Jn. 5:45-47).

The Savior proved this point when He spoke to the doubting disciples on the Emmaus road saying:

...O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Lk. 24:25-27).

This truth of one unified plan of salvation all for ages was also expressed by the Apostles. The Apostle Peter spoke of it when he said: *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins* (Acts 10:43). The Apostle Paul spoke of it when he said:

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (Rom. 3:20-22).

The rituals of any age are only meant to be instructional or educational illustrations pointing to the finished work of Christ on the Cross. The writer of the Epistle of Hebrews called Mosaic rituals the *shadow* of the coming Messiah and His salvation:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God (Heb. 10:1-7).

This is precisely why there never was a time when animal sacrifices could have taken away sin, not even in the daily sacrifices of the Mosaic priests—

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:10-14).

THE PLAN OF SALVATION BEFORE THE FLOOD

Concerning Christ and His saving grace, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied before the New Testament was ever written, saying:

Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us (Lk. 1:68-78; cf. Ps. 89:2,3.).

Eternal life was indeed made known in the earliest writings of the Old Testament and was believed, looked for, and expected by the multitudes of saints from the beginning. In the Old Testament, many saints looked forward to the Christ that was to come, but in the New Testament believers look backwards to Christ as having already come.

Adam and Eve first received the promise while overhearing God's words to the serpent in Gen. 3:15. Adam and Eve discovered that they were not to die immediately, but that a seed should be of the woman Who would be the ruin of Satan and the Savior of them. Here we see the incarnation of the son of God signified by the *seed of the woman*. We see the sufferings and death of Christ signified by the serpent's *bruising his heel*.

The crucifixion of Jesus is sometimes expressed by his being bruised for his people.³ Again, the victory that Christ would accomplish over Satan is prophesied by *bruising his head*.

The plan of salvation by grace was illustrated again when the Lord made coats of skin for Adam and Eve. These were the skins of slain beasts, thus pointing to the sacrifice of Christ, the woman's Seed, which would be offered up. These sins covered their nakedness but only pointed to the true covering of their sin. The fact that God would not allow them to cover their own nakedness with fig leaves demonstrated man's helplessness to make himself righteous before God.

Consider Adam's son, Abel. He is called *righteous* Abel. Not his own righteousness; otherwise, he would not have needed a sacrifice for his sins in the first place. It was the righteousness of faith which he possessed before he performed the sacrifice. This was nothing less than the righteousness of Christ received by faith. He was looking to Christ for eternal life, as when the writer of Hebrews said:

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh (Heb. 11:4).

His sacrifice was a more excellent one by being a lamb, and thus typified the Lamb of God. It was also more excellent by the manner in which it was offered—by faith. He did not offer the sacrifice to obtain faith but, offered it by faith, in view of a better sacrifice—the sacrifice of Christ.

Skipping over to the days of Enos we see the effects of divine grace when *Men began to call upon the name of the Lord* (Gen. 4:25-26). In doing this they met the Lord, Who is the only literal mediator between God and man—*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved* (Rom. 10:13).

Though perhaps thousands were made partakers of the grace of God at this time, the Bible takes special notice of Enoch. He had a testimony that he pleased God, which he could not have without faith, for...*without faith it is impossible to please him* (Heb. 11:6a). He drew near and walked with God, thus enjoying communion with Him. He was even anointed with a spirit of prophecy with which he foretold of a future judgment and the coming of Christ to perform it.⁴ If he was conversant with the second coming of Christ, he would have understood the aspects of His first coming, for the Old Testament foresaw all of the advent of the Messiah as one coming. It could only have been God's grace that took Enoch from the earth before the judgment of the flood. He was translated in faith and the object of his faith was Christ.⁵

³ See Isa. 53:5, 10

⁴ (Jude 14) "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Though Jude is quoting from the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* the concept is inscripturated under Divine inspiration and must be allowed to factor into the Genesis record.

⁵ (Heb. 11:5,6) "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But

THE PLAN OF SALVATION FROM NOAH TO ABRAHAM

Lamech, Noah's father, foresaw something remarkable in his son saying: *This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed* (Gen. 5:29). Therefore Lamech called his name *Noah*, meaning *comfort*. Noah was perhaps divinely gifted to be an inventor of tools, not only for carpentry, but for cultivating the earth and facilitating progress in agriculture, whereby the curse upon the earth was lightened. This indeed was a gift of God's grace in that no fallen man ever deserved to have his curse lightened.

Perhaps Lamech had something even more spiritual in mind by his words toward Noah. Might he have been hoping that Noah would be the promised seed, the Messiah, the Consolation from whom all comfort flows, the Savior of men from their evil works, and from the curses of the fall? Was he the promised *seed* who would ease them from the toil and labor of their hands? This is precisely what the Messiah will do at His second coming when he lifts the curse from the ground.⁶

Noah was at least a type of Christ in Whom was a rich display of the eternal saving grace of God. When God determined to destroy the earth and the inhabitants thereof, it was said: "*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*" (Genesis 6:8). This means that he was an heir of the righteousness of faith, which is nothing less than the imputed righteousness of Christ—

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. 11:7).

This was the unmerited favor of God which Noah found before he ever cut the first timber to build the ark in obedience to God's command. He was a justified man, a perfect man and one who shared communion with God.⁷ We know that he could not have justified nor perfected himself before God in his own righteousness. Therefore, his communion with God was grounded on the imputed righteousness of Christ.

In his public ministry Noah was a *Preacher of righteousness* in three regards: that which is done between man and man, the righteousness of God in bringing a flood upon the world to destroy it, and also of the righteousness of Christ; for he must have been a

without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

⁶ (Rev. 22:3) "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."

⁷ (Gen. 6:9) "...Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God."

preacher of that of which he was a heir.⁸ During his 120 years in which he had preached, God's longsuffering was being manifest with eternal consequences.⁹

The ark itself would become a grand illustration of God's grace. The ark became a type of Christ, the shelter from the tempest of divine wrath and vindictive justice, and in whom spiritual rest is to be had for weary souls. When the dove was let out of the ark it found no rest until it returned. Although the flood was not God's eternal wrath, and the ark was not His eternal justification, eternal salvation was typified when the temporal boat saved eight people from a temporal judgment.¹⁰ Noah's salvation by grace from temporal judgment became a type of his salvation from eternal judgment—a salvation that was his when he found grace, justification, perfection, and communion from God before he ever entered the ark.

Noah's sacrifices upon exiting the ark became a picture of the sacrifice of Christ in the fact that they were clean animals (Gen. 8:20); expressing the purity of Christ as a Lamb who offered Himself without spot to the Father for the sins of the undeserving, of whom Noah was numbered. It was a picture of the sacrifice of Christ in respect to God's acceptance of it...*And the Lord smelled a sweet savour* (Gen. 8:21a), meaning that God was well-pleased with the sacrifices and graciously accepted them. This is the same phrase used of Christ's sacrifice when Paul told the Ephesians to, *walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour* (Ephesians 5:2).

Noah again displayed God's grace as he blessed his son saying: *Blessed be the LORD God of Shem* (Gen. 9:26). To be the personal God of any person is the sum and substance of eternal salvation by grace, which God expresses when he says, *I will be their God*.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION FROM ABRAHAM TO MOSES

Abraham is a dynamic example of God's saving grace. He was justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ. His faith was not an act of saving righteousness, but it was *counted to him for righteousness* (Gen. 15:6b). Not the act of faith, but the object of faith imputed perfect righteousness to him, and what was imputed to him is imputed to all in all ages who believe in the imputed righteousness of Christ. Abraham's faith was not a meritorious work of any kind, as the Apostle Paul confirms when he asks:

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture?

⁸ (II Pet. 2:5) "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

⁹ (I Pet. 3:19, 20) "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

¹⁰ (I Pet. 3:20) "...while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." Note that they were saved in the ark and through the water, not by the water. (The NIV reads *saved through water*).

Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:1-5).

This was a righteousness of faith which Abraham had before he ever obeyed God in circumcision, as Paul asked: *How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision* (Rom. 4:10).

The faith that Abraham possessed, independent of his works and acts of obedience, was the same faith that made him the father of all believers in all ages—

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also (Rom. 4:11).

When Paul spoke of Abraham's faith being independent of Law, he was not speaking of the Mosaic in particular, but of any law of works:

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:13).

Adding a law of works to faith makes faith void and the promise of God of none effect—

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect (Rom. 4:14).

When Paul was speaking to the Galatians of Abraham's saving faith, he mentioned its relationship to law when he said:

...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (Gal. 3:21b, 22).

Make no mistake, Abraham staggered often. He was told to leave his kindred in Ur of the Chaldees, but he began instead in disobedience by taking his father and nephew with him. Instead of following God to the Promised Land, he stopped in Haran, the capital of moon worship, until his father died. We will not even begin to list the times that he lied about his marital status in order to save his life. Why was this disobedient man saved? Because—

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:20-22).

It is essential to know that Abraham's faith was not an act of saving virtue (cf. 4:5; II Pet. 1:5), but rather, the sinless virtue of Christ was imputed to him because of his faith in

Christ as redeemer. That Christ was the object of his faith is made clear as we are taught to accept eternal life on the same grounds, for—

... it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:23-25).

Are we reading into the story of Abraham when we say that the object of his faith was a coming redeemer? Certainly not. Abraham was personally visited by Christ and given the gospel, with the promise that it would be for Gentiles as well as his own seed. The Apostle Paul cited this very fact when he said:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal. 3:8).

When God told Abraham that all the families of earth would be blessed in his *seed* he understood this to be the person of Christ and not the nation that would proceed from his loins—

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).¹¹

The Apostle Paul wanted every believer to know that the saving gospel promise is unconditional, and therefore cannot be disannulled. This he communicated to the Galatians when he wrote:

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto (Gal. 3:15).¹²

Absolutely nothing about the Mosaic Law was to be considered an addition to the plan of salvation promised to Abraham. Again, Paul writes:

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:17-18).

When God presented the Gospel of the heathen to Abraham, He was able see the coming of Christ the redeemer, as the Savior Himself testified when He said:

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am (Jn. 8:56-58).

¹¹ It is not our purpose in this present chapter to discuss all the ramifications of the Abrahamic Covenant, but only to discern the gospel aspect within it.

¹² Now the Laws of Moses did not constitute such an unconditional promise and therefore can be annulled— (Heb. 7:18,19) “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.”

It was in the salvation of the Gentiles, who would follow in the steps of Abraham's faith, that he knew that he would be the *father of many nations*—

Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), (Rom. 4:16, 17a; cf. Gen. 22:18).

Actually, God manifested the Gospel to Abraham several times. The first was when he was told to leave Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:1-3); cf. Gal. 3:18—

For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

The second was in Gen. 15:1 when God spoke to him in a vision saying: *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, speaking of his reward in this life and the life to come. His reward in this life was his natural seed and a promise of the land of Canaan to his posterity, but his eternal reward was a city in the eternal state of Palestine after the resurrection—*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (Heb. 11:10). The third manifestation took place when Abraham was ninety-nine years of age (Gen. 17). Then he was told that he would be the father of many nations. The fourth manifestation was in the plains of Mamre (Gen. 18), where three angels appeared to him in human form. One of the three was Jehovah, the Son of God, who told Abraham of His plans to destroy Sodom. God graciously allowed Abraham to stand before him and plead for the wicked city, which showed him to be the friend of God indeed.

As a parenthesis let us look at Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Is this the man who chose to live in that wicked city and who gave his virgin daughters to its men to be molested? Is this the same man who impregnated the same two daughters and fathered the Ammonites and Moabites? And yet, while living in Sodom he was a possessor of justification by faith in the coming Redeemer—

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (II Pet. 2:6-9).

The fifth manifestation of God's grace took place in God's command for Abraham to sacrifice his only son on a mountain in Moriah (Gen. 22). Isaac was carrying the wood even as Christ carried His wooden cross toward His crucifixion. But Isaac queried about the absence of any sacrificial animals for this trip, at which point Abraham made his great prophetic utterance: *My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering* (Gen. 22:8). When the moment came for Abraham to thrust the knife into the heart of his son, God then restrained him from the actual performance of the task and drew his attention to a ram caught in a thicket to be used as a sacrifice instead. Abraham therefore called the name of that place *Yahweh Jireh*, (the Lord will provide), (Gen. 22:14). Abraham was no doubt made to understand his own prophetic words when God

exclaimed in verse 18a: *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...* Abraham knew full well that God would provide Himself (in the form of His son Jesus Christ) as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin. Again, Paul proves this very fact when he affirms:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not,
And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is
Christ (Gal. 3:16).

Abraham was so certain of God's promise of a redeemer that he knew it would be impossible for Isaac to remain dead. He believed that, even if he were successful in killing and burning his son, the boy would be immediately raised from the dead and they would walk home together. Therefore, in a sense, he did receive Isaac from the dead, as the Scriptures said:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (Heb. 11:17-19).

And let us not forget the interview Abraham had with Melchizedek, who met him on his return from the slaughter of the kings (Gen. 19), and blessed him in the name of the Most High God. This man was an eminent type of Christ. His name and title agree with Christ—*king of righteousness* and *peaceable king*; a priest continually, and of whose order Christ was; and the eternity of Christ shadowed forth in the fact of his genealogy being unknown. Thus we can say that Melchisedek was made like unto the Son of God—

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (Heb. 7:1-3).

Concerning Jesus Christ, the writer of Hebrews says:

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:15-17).

And again, he writes:

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 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. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore (Heb. 7:24-28).

Returning once more to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, we see in Isaac an excellent type of Christ. He was Abraham's only son. Isaac went without reluctance, carrying the wood on which he was to be laid. Jesus went as a lamb to the slaughter, bearing on his shoulders the wooden cross on which he was to be sacrificed, and was not spared by his divine father, but delivered up for us all. Isaac was delivered, as from the dead, and went home alive unto his father's house on the third day from the time Abraham reckoned him as a dead man. So Christ was put to death in the flesh, quickened in the Spirit, and ascended again unto His Father's house.

Obviously, we could make the same illusions to the Gospel of grace in the life of Jacob regarding the prediction that the *elder shall serve the younger* (Gen. 25:23), by the ladder reaching into heaven (Gen. 28:12), by Christ appearing in human form to wrestle with him, with whom he so prevailed as to obtain a blessing—getting the name *Israel* (Gen 32:24-28). He even prophesied of the Messiah under the name of Shiloh (*the prosperous* and *the peaceable*), in whose hands the pleasure of the Lord prospered, and who made peace for all men by the blood of his cross, that he should come forth from his son Judah—

...The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (Gen. 49:10)...(also, vs. 18) I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

However, we are excited to move forward to the time when the children of Israel were in Egypt, before the time of Moses. Here we have the story of Job and his friends. First, we must note who they were. Eliphaz was the eldest son of Esau and father of several Edomite clans, including Teman (Gen. 36:15-16; I Chron. 1:35). He was the first and, presumably, oldest of Job's three friends (Job 2:11; 4:1; 15:1; 22:1; 42:7, 9). Eliphaz's designation, the Temanite, suggests he was from the area settled by the Edomite clan of Teman. Bildad was a Shuhite (Job 2:11). The meaning of his name is obscure, but may be related to the Edomite king Bedad (Gen. 36:35). The name is compounded with the theophoric element *dad*. *Dad* is the name of the Edomite god. Zophar was a Naamathite (Job. 2:11). We cannot be certain where his home was, except that it was presumably East of Jordan.¹³

Though these three friends were not of Israel, but of the race of Esau, they were thoroughly conversant with the principles of salvation by grace. This had been made known to them as a pledge and earnest of what would be done in later times. Though they misjudged Job's case and misdiagnosed the cause of his afflictions, they knew much of gospel truth. In their speeches we see their understanding of the corruption of nature (25:4-6); of vanity and self-righteousness (4:17-19; 15:14-16); of the great Redeemer as the *Messenger* of the covenant, the uncreated Angel, Christ; as *an interpreter* of His Father's mind and will; *One among a thousand*, whose office it is to *shew unto men his uprightness*; and to be found as a ransom (33:23, 24).

The question arises: Why would such gospel wisdom reside in descendents of Esau? We know that Esau did not inherit the physical blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, but do we know that God did not personally desire for him to know the grace

¹³ In the Septuagint, Zophar is called "king of the Minaeans."

of salvation? God made Esau the father of the Edomites and recorded his descendents in Gen. 36: *these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he is Esau the father of the Edomites* (vs. 43). Although Esau had no place in the Abrahamic Covenant, God, in His grace, provided a place for him—*And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it* (Josh. 24:4).

In Deuteronomy God had clearly expressed his gracious oversight over the descendents of Esau. When Israel departed from Egypt, God warned them not to disturb the Edomites or the possession that He had given them—

And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: ⁵Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession (Deut. 2:4, 5).¹⁴

Just as God used Israel to drive out the Canaanites, He used the offspring of Esau to drive out the Horims—

The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them (Deut. 2:12).

God actually destroyed the Horims from before the Edomites—

As he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead (Deut. 2:22).

And God commanded the Israelites saying: *Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite* (Deut. 23:7). Though God eventually destroyed the Edomites because of their enmity against Israel, yet He determined before the world began to reveal His saving grace to them.

Should we therefore conclude that Isaac had taught both of his sons about the blessings of eternal life when the writer of *Hebrews* says: *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come* (Heb. 11:20)? Could this be how Job's three friends could have known so much about redemption?

And what of Job himself: *a perfect and upright man*, justified by the righteousness of Christ. In his walk and conversation he was *one that feared God and eschewed evil* (Job 1:8). He also was deeply knowledgeable of the impurity of nature, the insufficiency of man's righteousness to justify himself before God (9:1, 2, 20, 30-

¹⁴ The Lord says the same of the descendents of Lot: "And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession" (Deut. 2:9).

31;14:4), and of the doctrine of redemption and salvation by Christ. Think of all the doctrines of grace that are contained in his words: *I know that my redeemer liveth*. He knew that his redeemer existed; that he would be incarnate, dwell among men on earth; come (as we now understand as the second time) to judge the world; that there would be a resurrection of the body, and a beautiful vision of God in a future state (19:25-27).

Now imagine, dear reader, how that all of this knowledge of redemption, apart from ritual of any kind, existed and was openly discussed by Edomites and Job before Moses ever penned the first verse of Genesis. Think hard about this when you wonder if ritualistic sacraments really do impart the saving grace of God.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION FROM MOSES TO DAVID

When we think of Moses, we think of laws and rituals and ceremonies. Yet we often forget that Moses had a great knowledge of Christ; of His Person, offices, and grace; and of salvation by grace through faith. This knowledge was so obvious that Jesus said: *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me* (Jn. 5:46).

Moses was an illustration, or type, of Christ. As one reads Hebrews chapter three, the writer parallels them in that they were both concerned about the house of God and both were faithful therein (with Moses as a servant and Christ as a Son in His own house). Moses was a mediator when the covenant on Sinai was given. At the request of the people, and by the permission of God, Moses stood between God and the people to deliver His word to them—

I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount... (Deut. 5:5).

In this Moses was a type of Christ, the mediator of a new and better covenant and the mediator between God and man—

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3:19).

Moses was a prophet to whom all Israelites were to hearken. When Moses, Elijah and Christ appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, a voice was heard saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him* (Matt. 17:5). Christ was the great prophet of the church—

...The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever

will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18:15,18-19).

The writer of Hebrews said it well when he affirmed:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1, 2).

Moses was an officiating priest even before Aaron's appointment (Ex. 29:1). He was also a king and lawgiver under God (Deut. 33:4,5). In comparison, Jesus Christ is the king (Ps. 149:2), the lawgiver and judge (Isa. 33:22), and—

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:7).

Moses was also a deliverer of Israel out of a state of Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:35), and thus a type of Christ Who redeems sinners from the bondage of sin, Satan and the Law of Moses.

The whole ceremonial law was nothing else but a shadowy exhibition of Christ's finished work on the cross. It was the Israelite schoolmaster teaching them the Gospel of Christ. It would be much too tedious to survey all of those particulars, though we will look at just a few.

The first Passover was the tenth plague pronounced upon Egypt, for the purpose of persuading Pharaoh to let the Israelites go from Egyptian slavery. The angel of death would pass over Egypt, killing the firstborn of every family and of livestock. To protect the firstborn in Israel, a lamb had to be slain, roasted with fire, eaten whole with bitter herbs, and its blood sprinkled on the door posts of the houses of the Israelites. When the destroying angel passed through Egypt, he would pass by the houses sprinkled with blood and leave them unharmed. Thus began the ceremony called the Passover (Ex. 12). The lamb had to be a young male without blemish, examined for four days from selection to the sacrifice. It was publicly slain without breaking any bones before the sprinkling of its blood was applied to the door posts.¹⁵ *And the Lord said: When I see the blood I will pass over you* (Ex. 12:13).

All of this was a picture of the coming Messiah. In Christ's humanity He was sinless and perfect. He was a young male in the prime of His life. He lived a meticulously examined life. He died publicly and yet not one bone in his body was broken.¹⁶ Finally, through the price of His blood, He has paid 100 percent of what it would cost for anyone to have forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Paul told the Ephesian

¹⁵ See Ex. 12:3-13; Nu. 9:12.

¹⁶ (Jn. 19:36) "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

Elders to, *feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood* (Acts 20:28b).¹⁷ Christ and His grace are fed upon by faith alone—*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law* (Rom. 3:28). Also, the public profession of Him is often accompanied with bitter afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions. His blood will from henceforth be called the *blood of sprinkling*—

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. 12:24).

Therefore the redeemed are—

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied (I Pet. 1:2).

It is no wonder that John the Baptist announced Jesus as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (Jn. 1:29b); that the Apostle Paul wrote: *Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us* (I Cor. 5:7b); and that the Apostle Peter identified Him as *the lamb without blemish and without spot* (I Pet. 1:19b).

Moving on, the manna from heaven was another great object lesson depicting the saving grace of Christ. Speaking of the manna and of Himself, Christ said, *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven* (Jn. 6:32), meaning that Himself was the truth of which the manna was only a shadow. Therefore, He is called *the hidden manna* (Rev. 2:17) of which every believer in Christ has a right to eat through faith. Thus, the Old and New Testament saints all *eat of the same spiritual meat* (I Cor. 10:3).

Most carefully now, let us consider the water out of the rock, which the Israelites drank in the wilderness, as an emblem and objective lesson of Christ and His grace. The Israelites, wanting water, murmured, and Moses was ordered by the Lord to smite the rock, resulting in the gushing forth of water.¹⁸ God told Moses that He would be on the Rock as Moses smote it with his rod. Thus, he would be smiting God Himself. The second occasion, Moses was commanded only to speak to the rock, but instead he struck it twice. Because of this disobedience, Moses corrupted a beautiful picture of the redemptive work of Christ. Moses' punishment was that he forfeited his life's ambition to take the children into the promised land.¹⁹

Even though pictures are only shadows of the real thing, God has not authorized us to alter them in any way. In the first instance, not only was Christ symbolized by the rock, but He was also symbolized by the rod. The picture is one of God the Father smiting Himself in the incarnation of His Son Who bears the punishment for our sins—

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the

¹⁷ See Rom. 5:9; Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:22; 10:19; I Pet 1:2; I Jn. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 7:14.

¹⁸ See Ex. 17:1-8.

¹⁹ See Nu. 20:1-13.

chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:4-6).

And is this not what the Apostle Paul affirms when he says: *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* (II Cor. 5:21)? And did not David see this truth when he said: *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten* (Ps. 69:26)? And let us not think for a moment that Moses did not understand the picture of the rock being smitten as well as its name. Listen to his words as he says:

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.... But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation... Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee...O that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *that* they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges... And he shall say, Where *are* their gods, *their* rock in whom they trusted (Deut. 32:1-4, 15, 18, 29-31, 37).

Again, we can see illusions of this divine picture in the Prayer of Hanna—

And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. (I Sam. 2:1, 2).

This picture can be understood also in the Song of David

And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence... For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?... The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation (II Sam. 1 22:2, 3, 32, 47).

David repeated this concept many times in his Psalms:

The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower... For who *is* God save the LORD? or who *is* a rock save our God?... The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted (Ps. 18:2, 31, 46).

Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, *if* thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. (Ps. 28:1).

Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me (Ps. 31:2, 3).

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD (Ps. 40:2, 3).

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I (Ps. 61:1, 2).

Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation. He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved... He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved. ⁷In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God (Psalms 62:1, 2, 6, 7)

Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress (Ps. 71:3).

He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation (Ps. 89:26).

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To shew that the LORD *is* upright: *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him (Ps. 92:13-15).

But the LORD is my defence; and my God *is* the rock of my refuge (Ps. 94:22).

Come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation (Ps. 95:1).²⁰

Because such an important and eternal gospel truth is presented in the picture of Christ standing upon the rock that is to be smitten, let us observe its manifestation into the prophecies of Isaiah:

Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken (Isa. 8:13-15).

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Isa. 32:1, 2).

²⁰ See Ps. 42:9; 78:34-37.

The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob. And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out (Isa. 48:20b, 21).

When the Apostle Peter confessed to Jesus that He was *the Christ, the Son of the living God*, Jesus immediately referred to this statement about Himself as being the *Rock* upon which the Church would be built: *... and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Matt. 16:18b). It has been argued for centuries that the *rock* in this passage is a reference to Peter as the first Pope. The question can be easily resolved by asking Peter himself, who answers:

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the *builders* disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (I Pet. 2:6-8)

The Apostle Paul tells of how Israel literally stumbled over the Rock of their salvation:

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Rom. 9:31-33).

Paul clearly understood the rock that Moses struck to be Christ when he affirmed:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ (I Cor. 10:1-4).

Just as God wanted Israel to see Him in the rock, He wanted them to clearly see Him in the rod that was striking the rock as well. Jesus was God in the flesh, and He was the rod of God's wrath upon sin—

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked (Isa. 11:1-4).

King David makes the same declaration when he writes:

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 (Ps. 2:7-9).

Jeremiah saw His work first hand when he said: *I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath* (Lam. 3:1). The Prophet Micah preached it when he proclaimed: *The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it* (Micah 6:9).

This was a unique picture of God sacrificing Himself for our sins. Christ died to save each Christian only once, and that *once-for-all* (Heb. 10:10). Moses interfered with that picture when he struck the rock twice, and for this he did not miss heaven, but he forfeited his goal to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Even so, God wants the Christian today to understand that salvation is *once for all*, and is, therefore, secure in the finished work of Christ, where God the Father smote God the Son on the cross of Calvary in punishment for our sin—

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:10-14).

The example of Moses should serve as a warning to Christians not to warp the picture of baptism and the Lord's supper in the same way. These are testimonies to the Gospel but they are not the gospel in themselves. Those who have never been saved should understand the meaning of the rod smiting the rock and receive God's gift of salvation before reading any further.

However, for those of us who are redeemed, we should see, in the second occasion of Moses striking the rock, a pictorial contrast between the eternal security of the believer and his divine chastisement. Those who believe in the security of the believer are often falsely charged with teaching that there are no consequences when a child of God disobeys. When Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, in Numbers chapter 20, he still went to heaven when he died. However, as punishment, God took his life's ambition from him. He died on the wilderness side of the Jordan river and could only watch as someone else led the children of Israel into the Promised Land—

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them (Nu. 20:11, 12).²¹

²¹ See Deut. 32:48-52 for the fulfillment of this chastisement. See also Deut. 34:1-12.

Another picture of the grace of the gospel was that of the brazen serpent. The Israelites during the exodus were being bitten with fiery serpents and many died. God commanded Moses to make a brass fiery serpent and set it on a pole. Any bitten Israelite would only have to look at it and live (Nu. 21:6-9). All of the ceremonies, commandments and rituals of Moses were impotent, and the sinner was impotent to help himself. Looking at the brass serpent was not an act of virtue but it was an act of faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ mentions this same significant type and applies it to Himself when He says:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life (Jn. 3:14, 15).

Moses' serpent had the form of a serpent, but not the nature. So, likewise, Christ was in the likeness of sinful flesh, but He did not have a sinful, fleshly nature. He was totally without the corruption of the world, the flesh or the devil. It was a fiery brass serpent even as Christ, in the likeness of sinful flesh, bore the fiery wrath of God on His own wooden pole (the cross). This is why Jesus said:

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die (Jn. 12:32, 33).

And, just as the Israelites could look to the brass serpent on a pole and live, those who are envenomed with the poison of sin and incurably condemned, might, through looking to Christ by faith, live spiritually and eternally. Jesus expressed as much in John 6:40 when He exclaimed:

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Bypassing several other precious types of the grace of Christ, let us proceed to Joshua who led the Israelites into the Promised Land and settled them there. So also Christ, Who by His blood and righteousness, has opened the way for sinners into heaven, giving them an entrance into His glorious kingdom. Joshua did not provide true heavenly rest in Canaan, for then another and more glorious rest would not have been proclaimed. Joshua's ministry was a typical one pointing to Christ as our spiritual Joshua, giving us spiritual rest here, and everlasting rest in heaven. Even both names, (Joshua and Jesus) signify a savior. Joshua is actually called Jesus in (Heb. 4:8).²²

And finally we must look at Rahab the harlot, the Canaanite woman of Jericho, outside the covenant of Israel, already condemned to die by God's command to

²² (vss. 8-10) "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his."

exterminate the inhabitants of the land, but spared when she identified her house by the scarlet rag in her window. Even so were we condemned to eternal wrath but for the scarlet blood of Jesus Christ, which brought us peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; through which we have security from eternal wrath, ruin, and destruction. How else could Rahab become a distant grandmother to Jesus Christ Himself...*And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth* (Matt. 1:5). She was not of them that believed not, but of those who had faith in the mercy of the coming Messiah—

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace (Hebrews 11:31).

THE PLAN OF SALVATION FROM DAVID TO CHRIST

Christ has been spoken of by all *the holy prophets which have been since the world began* (Lk. 1:71).²³ Now we come to consider David, who was a prophet through whom the Spirit spoke abundantly of Christ and the plan of salvation made with Him—

Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (Acts 2:29-30).²⁴

David was such an eminent type of Christ that Christ is often called by David's name.²⁵ David was speaking the words of the Father to the Son when he wrote: *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee* (Ps. 2:7). David speaks of the humanity of Christ; of a body being prepared for him which would be Christ in flesh; of the formation of that body in the womb of a virgin; of the Messiah being the offspring of his seed.²⁶

The LORD hath sworn *in truth* unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne (Ps. 132:11; see vs. 17).²⁷

Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus (Acts 13:23).

David describes expressly the sufferings and death of Christ in the twenty-second Psalm, using the very words which Christ uttered on the cross: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me...* He speaks of the Messiah as being a Priest like Melchizedek (110:4);²⁸ of His rejection by the Jews (2:2);²⁹ of His betrayal by a friend (41:9);³⁰ of

²³ (Heb. 1:1, 2a) "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son..."

²⁴ See also Acts 1:16 and II Samuel 23:2-5.

²⁵ See Ps. 89:3, 20; Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:24; Hos. 3:5.

²⁶ See Ps. 40:6

²⁷ See Heb. 10:5; Ps. 139:15, 16.

²⁸ See Heb. 6:20; 5:5, 6; 7:15-17 for fulfillment.

²⁹ See John 1:11; 5:43; Lu. 4:29; 17:25; 23:18 for fulfillment.

³⁰ See Mk. 14:10; Mt. 26:14-16; Mk. 14:43-45 for fulfillment.

Judas' office being taken by another (109:7, 8);³¹ of false witnesses accusing Him (27:12; 35:11);³² of being silent when accused (38:13, 14);³³ of being hated without a cause (69:4; 109:3-5);³⁴ of the piercing of His hands and feet (22:16);³⁵ of His being mocked and insulted (22:6-8);³⁶ of being given gall and vinegar (69:21);³⁷ of hearing His prophetic words repeated in mockery (22:8)³⁸; of His praying for His enemies (109:4);³⁹ of soldiers casting lots for His coat (22:18);⁴⁰ of not a bone in His body being broken (34:20);⁴¹ of His resurrection (16:10);⁴² of His ascension (68:18);⁴³ and of His being seated at the right hand of God (110:1).

The royal Covenant which God made with David, and confirmed with his son, Solomon, is a picture of eternal salvation and of the chastisement of an eternally secure believer—

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (II Sam. 7:14-16). Cf. 4-16.⁴⁴

Some might say that David, though writing under inspiration of the coming Messiah, was blind to the true significance of what he was foreseeing. In response to this charge, it would be good to look at what might be considered the dirtiest story in the Bible. This would be no less than the ugly story of David's adulterous sin with Bathsheba, and the subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah, to cover it up. He then takes Bathsheba to be his wife.⁴⁵ When David is confronted by Nathan the prophet, he admits to the sin. Nathan responds by saying: *The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die* (II Sam. 12:13b). Nathan could say this because he knew the king to be a born again man. This sin was put away before a priest could be consulted and before any animal could be sacrificed. David needed more than forgiveness, more than pardon, and more than a covering for his sin. He needed to be innocent of having committed it in the first place. This kind of justification (or being pronounced innocent) is not something the Mosaic Law could provide—

³¹ See Acts 1:16-20 for fulfillment.

³² See Mt. 26:60, 61 for fulfillment.

³³ See Mt. 26:62, 63 for fulfillment.

³⁴ See Jn. 15:23-25 for fulfillment.

³⁵ See Jn. 20:25-27; 19:37 for fulfillment.

³⁶ See Mt. 27:39-44; Mk. 15:29-32 for fulfillment.

³⁷ See Jn. 19:29 for fulfillment.

³⁸ See Mt. 27:43 for fulfillment.

³⁹ See Lk. 23:34 for fulfillment.

⁴⁰ See Mk. 15:24; Jn. 19:24 for fulfillment.

⁴¹ See Jn. 19:33 for fulfillment.

⁴² See Mt. 28:9 for fulfillment.

⁴³ See Lk. 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9 for fulfillment.

⁴⁴ See I Chron. 17:3-15; Ps. 89:20-37. In the declaration of this covenant, God may interrupt the actual reign of David's sons if chastisement is required.

⁴⁵ See II Sam. 11.

...he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:34b-39).⁴⁶

So we can see the extent of David's understanding when he assumes direct access to God's mercy. He composes his prayer of confession and repentance regarding this matter, seeking much more than forgiveness, pardon and covering. He calls upon God directly (not through a priest or a sacrifice) to... *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities* (Ps. 51:9).⁴⁷ David appeals directly to God's mercy, supplied by the coming Messiah, to remove this transgression completely from his record. David knew the difference between forgiveness, covering and outright justification—

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Rom. 4:6-8) cf. Ps. 32:1, 2.

And even though II Samuel 12 spells out the severe chastisement imposed upon David in this life, he knows that the record of this sin will not be waiting in heaven for him. Bathsheba also must have gone to the Lord for justification in this matter, for she is recognized by God as David's legitimate wife. She becomes the mother of King Solomon and the distant grandmother of Jesus Christ—*And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias* (Matt. 1:6).

And what did King Solomon know of the coming Messiah? He writes of him under the name of Wisdom, as a divine Person, the same with the Logos, the Word, and Son of God; of his eternal existence; of the eternal generation of him; of his being brought forth, and brought up as a Son with his Father from everlasting.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The Prophet Isaiah understood this implicitly when he said: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people" (Isa. 55:3, 4).

⁴⁷ Isaiah defines the blotting out of sin as nothing less than Justification: "I, *even* I, *am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25) and "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. 44:22).

⁴⁸ All this is declared in the eighth chapter of Proverbs. If one did not know better, he would be tempted to think that Solomon was plagiarizing from the first chapter of John because of the similarity of diction, sentiment, and doctrine.

Solomon (or Agur) speaks of Christ under the names of Ithiel (signifying *God is with me*) and Ucal (signifying *The mighty one* or *I am able*). He speaks of the infinite, omnipresent, and omnipotent Being, Whose name (or nature) is incomprehensible and ineffable; a divine Son distinct in person from His Father; same in nature with the Father; and co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with Him:

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *even* the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal, Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him (Prov. 30:1-5).⁴⁹

Continuing with the Old Testament prophets, we can see Zechariah speaking of the Divine Persons who entered into the covenant of grace (or plan of salvation), which would last forever; and of Jehovah and the Branch, between whom the council of peace was conducted (Zech. 6:12, 13).

Isaiah speaks of the sure mercies of David in the Messiah, and whose blood is said to be the ratification and confirmation of the covenant, and Who is the messenger of it (the plan of salvation), even proclaiming salvation to the Gentiles.⁵⁰ He identifies the recipients of the plan of salvation as the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles.⁵¹

The Old Testament prophets (from the times of the kings forward) speak even more plainly of the mercies of grace than in previous periods.⁵² They speak of God's pardon as flowing from His mercy in that there is none like Him.⁵³ They proclaim that He pardons abundantly anyone who applies to him for it.⁵⁴ They talk of the freeness of pardon, as the effect of the unmerited favor, love, grace and mercy of God.⁵⁵ They proclaim this grace to be grounded upon the sufferings, redemption, reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction accomplished by the crucifixion of Christ.⁵⁶

Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ is something that could be studied solely from the Old Testament prophets:

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (Rom. 3:21, 22).

⁴⁹ The book of Canticles, believed to have been written by Solomon, is replete with illusions of the glories and excellencies of Christ, of His blessings of grace bestowed upon His people.

⁵⁰ See Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 55:3; Zech. 9:11; Mal. 3:1.

⁵¹ See Isa. 49:5-8.

⁵² See Heb. 8:10-13; Jer. 31:31-34.

⁵³ See Dan. 9:9; Mic. 7:18.

⁵⁴ See Isa. 1:18; 55:7.

⁵⁵ See Isa. 43:25.

⁵⁶ See Isa. 44:22; Dan. 9:24.

Daniel calls it an *everlasting righteousness* (Daniel 9:24). Isaiah says that the Lord is well pleased with the righteousness of the Son because it answers all of the demands of the Law, magnifying its requirements and thus honoring it (Isa. 42:21). He is the Justifier of them that know Him, because His righteousness is imputed to them as a result of their iniquities having been imputed to Him (Isa. 53:6, 11). He literally clothes us with the robe of His righteousness (Isa. 61:10). He will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). It is an *everlasting salvation* to the true Israel of God, both Jews and Gentiles who look to Christ alone for salvation (Isa. 45:17, 22). Jeremiah said that the Jews would someday call Him *The Lord our Righteousness* (Jer. 23:6; cf. Isa. 45:24, 25). His incarnation and virgin birth are spoken of as if they had already occurred (Isa. 9:6; 7:14). The Angel of the Lord used these same two verses when announcing the birth of Christ to Joseph:

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt. 1:22, 23).

Isaiah spoke of the particular geographical locations where Christ would live, teach and minister (Isaiah 9:1)⁵⁷ The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah speaks of His humiliation, sufferings, and death. Hosea speaks of Gentiles becoming the adopted sons of God (Hos. 1:10). Malachi tells us that divine righteousness will originate from Him as light from the sun, thus calling Him the *Sun of Righteousness* (Mal. 4:2), and speaks of His forerunner, and that Christ would come suddenly into His temple (Mal. 3:1; 4:5).. Micah tells of the place of His birth (Mic. 5:2).⁵⁸

Many people today travel to the “Holy Land” thinking to get in touch with God and His salvation. But if they had only consulted the prophets, they would have found, *Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.* (Jer.3:23). Jeremiah spoke of the massacre of infants in Bethlehem (Jer. 31:15) and Hosea spoke of Christ being carried to Egypt (Hos. 11:1).⁵⁹ Zechariah spoke of the Messiah riding into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass proclaiming true salvation (Zech. 9:9). Now we know that Christ did not ride into town that day to liberate Israel politically. Therefore, Zechariah was foreseeing salvation by the imputed righteousness of Christ the Son. Zechariah also saw Jehovah the Son being crucified and pierced in the side with a spear—

and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son (Zech. 12:10b).

Zechariah foretold His being forsaken for thirty pieces of silver and ultimately forsaken by all of His disciples (Zech. 11:12, 13; 13:7; cf. Ps.s 118).⁶⁰

Most of the Old Testament prophets clearly understood the WHAT of our salvation, but they did not understand the WHEN of the suffering of the Messiah and subsequent glorification. But, because they knew the gracious salvation of the imputed

⁵⁷ See Matt. 4:13-16 for fulfillment.

⁵⁸ See Matt. 2:4-6; Jn. 7:41, 42.

⁵⁹ See Matt. 2:13-23 for fulfillment.

⁶⁰ See Matt. 27:3-10; 26:31; Jn. 19:34-37 for fulfillment.

righteousness of God, they became ministers to us as they were inspired by the Spirit to speak:

Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (I Pet. 1:9-12).

However, some of the prophets do speak of the time of His coming and sufferings. Daniel fixes the exact time from a particular date (Dan. 9:24-26).

Years before any of the New Testament was written, Simeon of Jerusalem received a revelation from the Lord that he would live to see the *Lord's Christ*. And when Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to the temple, Simeon held the child in his arms and said:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel (Lk 2:29-32).

Then there was the eighty-four-year-old prophetess named Hanna who served, fasted, and prayed in the temple daily. She immediately followed up the words of old Simeon *and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem* (Lk 2:36-38).

Before leaving this chapter we must take particular note of Jewish people approaching God's grace while in Babylonian exile. The Temple, center of Jewish religious life and ceremony, was lost. Ezekiel may have anticipated the concept of the synagogue where people could meet God's grace completely apart from Mosaic ritual when he said:

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come (Ez. 11:16).

Nehemiah mentions the public reading of the Torah (Neh. 8).⁶¹ The very fact that prophecies were being written, and people were in relationship with God during the exile, speaks clearly that the Mosaic Law was never meant to impart salvation through its sacrifices and rituals. Jeremiah prophesied of a coming day when the Jews would know this like never before, when God said through him:

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither

⁶¹ See also I Macc. 3:48 "And laid open the book of the law, wherein the heathen had sought to paint the likeness of their images."

shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more (Jeremiah 3:15, 16).

So, from what we have observed, it becomes clear that the plan of salvation (by the imputed righteousness of Christ, accomplished by His crucifixion) reaches from eternity past through the fall of Adam to the coming of Christ Himself. It was taught and testified to by types, figures, shadows, sacrifices, promises and prophecies that are now fulfilled in Christ, but Christ was the sum and substance of this great plan of salvation for all time and eternity. To Him alone be glory forever.

We conclude this chapter by returning again to the prophet Zechariah. God told Joshua the priest of the Son of God coming as *a branch* (Zech. 3:8). But before this, Zechariah saw a vision of Joshua standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Here we see Christ as our Advocate (I Jn. 2:1) and Satan as our adversary (I Pet. 5:8). Joshua, clothed in filthy garments, is standing before Christ, Who said:

Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment (Zech. 3:4).

Isaiah said it when he exclaimed:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness... (Isaiah 61:10a).

Is this not the imputed righteousness of Christ?

*I sinned, and straightway, posthaste, Satan flew
Before the presence of the most high God
And made a railing accusation there.
He said, "This soul, this thing of clay and sod,
Has sinned. 'Tis true that he has named thy name
But I demand his death, for thou hast said,
'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Shall not
Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead?
Send now this wretched sinner to his doom.
What other thing can a righteous ruler do?"
And thus he did accuse me day and night,
And every word he spoke, oh God, was true.*

*Then quickly one arose from God's right hand
Before whose glory the angels veiled their eyes.
He spoke, "Each jot and tittle of the law
Must be fulfilled: the guilty sinner dies!
But wait—suppose his guilt were all transferred
To me, and that I paid his penalty.
Behold my hands, my side, my feet. One day
I was made sin for him, and died that he
Might be presented faultless at Thy throne."
And Satan fled away. Full well he knew
That he could not prevail against such love*

For every word my dear Lord spoke, Oh God , was true.

MY ADVOCATE (author unknown)

Chapter Four

The Gospel And Baptism Of John The Baptist: Was it Christian?

Before we address the question of whether John the Baptist was a gospel preacher and whether his baptism was Christian baptism, we must establish that he was a prophet of God; that his baptism was not a Jewish proselyte ritual; that his baptism was not an Essene proselyte baptism; that his ministry was not a separate dispensation; and finally, that his gospel and baptism were one and the same with that of Christ and the apostles after Pentecost. The necessity for this direction of study is occasioned by the stress of some ritual salvationists in either tracing Christian baptism as far back as the Genesis record or by factoring the Old Testament and the ministry of John the Baptist out of the gospel equation altogether. They demonstrate these errors primarily through the allegorical method of interpretation, of which we will define and discuss in the context of this chapter.

Jesus called John the greatest prophet (even more than a prophet) that had ever been born of a woman (Lk. 7:26-28; Matt. 11:9-12). He said that John was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that a prophet like unto Elijah would appear (Matt. 11:13-15; 7:10-13).¹ Let us consider it established, therefore, that John the Baptist was a prophet.

The Apostle Peter proclaimed that there never was a prophet of God who did not preach the gospel of Christ, when he said: *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins* (Acts 10:43). Mark said that John's arrival as the forerunner of Christ, in fulfillment of prophecy, was the beginning of the Gospel of Christ:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mk. 1:1-3).

John did not restore temporal Israel to its political autonomy in the land of Palestine, but he did preach a repentance that would receive remission of sin—*John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins* (Mk. 1:4). John knew full well that there was only one source for the remission of sin and admitted this when he said: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (Jn. 1:29b, 36)—not just the sin of the corporate nation of Israel.

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, proclaimed that every prophet since the beginning of the world preached the gospel of Christ:

¹ Of course, Jesus proclaimed His own witness through His works to be greater than that of John the Baptist (Jn. 5:36).