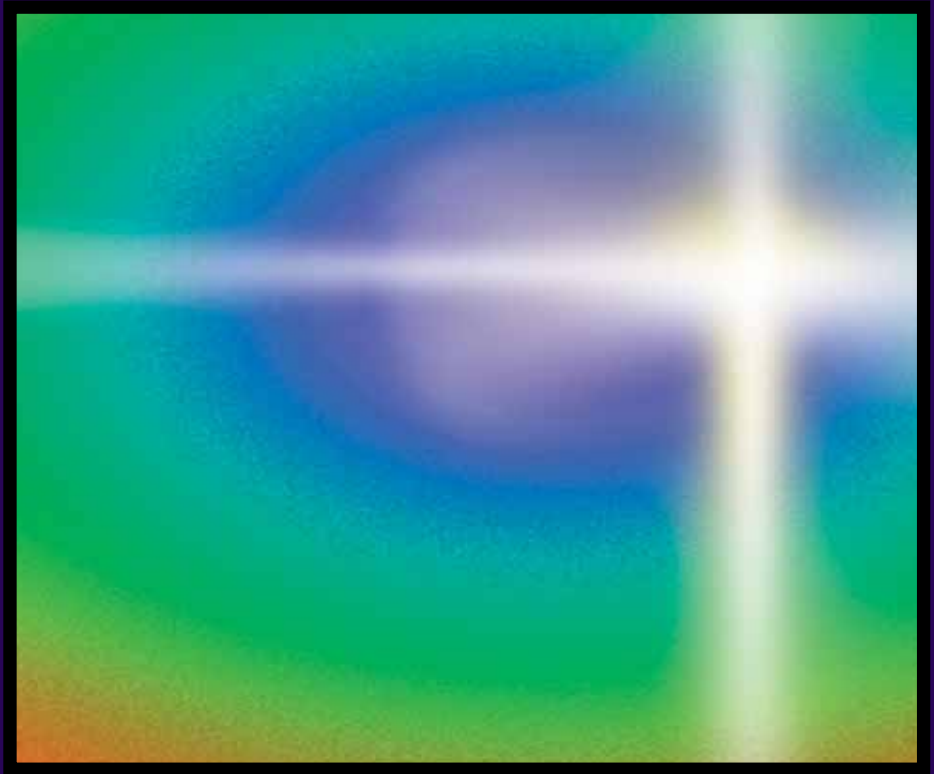


Jesus Exalted

Resurrected and Ascended



A Discipleship School

David Boan

4

Exaltation

Resurrection and Ascension

A Discipleship School

Unit 4

David Boan

“I have come to do your will O God...by this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified...we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh...since we have a great high priest over the household of God...let us draw near... [Hebrews 10.7,12,19-22 NASV]

Unit 3 - In Review: stated as an outcome

The provision of atoning sacrifice was a gracious way of approach the holy God provided for His ancient people when they found themselves unclean, defiled and needing to maintain their relationship with God. It speaks of the fact that God is a forgiving God, who loves us, in such a way as to remove the barriers to fellowship with Him that we had erected through our sins and our personal rebellion.

"In Christ", salvation is from the Jews but it is to the world. The salvation of the human race is what is involved here. The incarnate Word, having taken up our broken humanity into Himself is the one Mediator between God and humanity. In his Person He combines both the apostolic work of ministering the things of God to man and the priestly work of ministering the things of man to God.

His atoning death, as His suffering obedience, brings deep satisfaction to His holy Father as a holy Son, who treated sin seriously knowing its affect from the Godward side. In Him God judged sin, showing it to be sin as only a sinless Son could. He offered to God on our behalf, a powerful confession of sin through dying under its power. He justified God before all the world.

From the human side the Son of God bore our sin and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He offered to God His life, pouring out His life blood for us. He absorbed the wrath of God because alone He made the proper response to the righteous wrath of God concerning sin.

Knowing the satisfaction this finished work brings to God, our conscience is set at rest as we rely upon this atoning work of Christ - the basis of our peace with God.

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I – The Exalted Lord - Risen & Ascended

135 - The apostles are witnesses to the continuing presence of Jesus.

*Read Matthew 28.1-8, 16-20; Luke 24.1-12; Mark 16.1-13; John 20.1-10
See #154-157 of this unit*

The bodily Resurrection, the Ascension, and the coming of the Spirit of Jesus changed everything for the disciples. For they had the powerful experience that they had not lost their beloved Rabbi's presence. Death, except for a few short days, had not separated Him from them. He had been raised from the dead and declared to be Son of God with power.

All of our Gospels record the events of the discovery of the empty tomb and then of subsequent appearances of Jesus to the disciples. This was a showing of Himself to them, for they were later bore witness to His resurrection.

For the disciples, the Resurrection was a return of His presence among them. They recorded that He could appear among them and was not hampered in access to them by walls and locked doors. He could withhold their awareness of Him and then grant it - as with the two people on the Emmaus Road.

Later, after His bodily presence was withdrawn at the Ascension, they would know His re-presencing of Himself with the indwelling presence of the Spirit. This is sets up within their persons an internal witness which declared Himself to them but not to the world [John 14.18-23].

Jesus was an exalted One now. The Resurrection and Ascension changed the apostle's perspective about his first coming when he, as the Word of God, "took flesh". That first coming was to be re-thought in the light of the resurrected coming and, further even again in the light of the coming in the Spirit. That first coming was seen as a humiliation in the light of the exaltation that God was declaring in His resurrection and ascension [See Section 112 below]. This re-thinking set the basis for the apostolic preaching.

136 - The Apostles declare Jesus

See Acts 2.15-36 (Peter), 3.13-26 (Peter), 4.8-12 (Peter and John), 5.29-32 (Peter and the apostles), 7.56 (Stephen), 10.34-43 (Peter at Caesarea), 13.16-40 (Paul at Pisidian Antioch), 17.22-31 (Paul at Athens), 1 Corinthians 15.

The apostolic preaching declares the resurrection of Jesus as of major importance; because if He is not risen, there is nothing of substance to declare for a living audience. So the apostles begin with the resurrection. In the preaching of Peter and Paul recorded in the Acts of the

Apostles we can see how they sketched:

[1] a rehearsal of Jesus' earthly ministry mentioning his words and works, then

[2] a declaration of how God raised Him and that this resurrection is an exaltation and a vindication of Him by God in the sight of men.

137 - The humiliation and exaltation of Jesus

Read Philippians 2.6-11; 1 Peter 3.18-19

The incarnation of the Son of God and the ministry of Jesus right up to the cross is thought of as his humiliation and then the resurrection follows as an exaltation.

This movement over Jesus' earthly life is graphically laid out in Philippians 2.6-11 where it is said that even though he existed in the form of God, he did not grasp at being equal with God [as Adam did, who had no such equality - Genesis 3].

The Son of God, in taking flesh, entered a phase of humiliation [verse 6-10]

[1] emptied himself

[2] taking the form of a bond servant [slave]

[3] being made in the likeness of men

[4] as a man he humbled Himself by becoming obedient

[5] to the point of death, even death on a cross

Then he enters on a phase of exaltation [verse 9-11]

[1] therefore God highly exalted Him

[2] bestowed on Him a name above every other name

[3] that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven or earth

[4] every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

[5] to glory of God the Father.

The same thoughts are used by Peter in describing the movement from the death to the resurrection.

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit [marg.]; in which He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison..."[1 Peter 3.18 -19 ASV]

Here the being “made alive” in the Spirit refers to the resurrection. We shall have cause to ponder the “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit” expressions later.

So, there is a centrality of the resurrection in the gospel preaching, which establishes the resurrection as the point where the transition from His humiliation to His exaltation takes place. This sets the scene for us to consider just how central the resurrection is to the whole of the Christian gospel, our experience of salvation and also to the meaning of world history.

2 - What did the resurrection mean for Jesus?

138 - God has installed His Son as ruling King of the nations

See Acts 13.16-41; Boan, [2013] God and Us, #22

Paul's speech at Antioch of Pisidia was to a mixed audience of Jewish folks and God-fearers. The God-fearers were non-Israelites who, desiring not to be entangled in the sexual promiscuity attached to the current pagan religions, were attracted to the synagogue because it upheld a godliness of life. On the other hand, they usually found the Jewish requirement of circumcision - a grossly mutilating matter to Greeks - a major barrier to fully embracing the current Judaism. As a result, when the gospel came to them, they were ready hearers for such an acceptable message. The sermon Paul preached, particularly with the God-fearers in mind, shows the following development.

First, the humiliation of Christ preached: [1] The structure of Paul's sermon begins with the Hebrews' Exodus from Egypt and the wanderings in the wilderness, the entry into Canaan under Joshua and then the period of the Judges [Acts 13.17-20]. [2] The promise to King David that a Saviour would be born of his line is established for us [Acts 13.21-23]. [3] The ministry of John the Baptist as a forerunner of Jesus and preparer of Israel for Him is outlined; including John's own testimony to Jesus as being greater than he [Acts 13.24-25]. [4] The prophetic voices of the Old Testament were fulfilled by the actions of the Jews in that they condemned the Messiah. His humiliation was brought to a climax in his death on a public cross and burial [Acts 13.26-29].

Second, the exaltation of Christ preached. [5] And now Paul's sermon takes a decisive turn, with the expression “But God raised Him from the dead.” [Acts 13.30]. He continues to show the period of exaltation, and, [6] from there, Paul states that the period of exaltation has begun for Christ. [7] There is the witness of the apostles and others who saw Him [Acts 13.31-32] and then, [8] a startling example of a fulfilment of a promise God gave to the fathers, all of which are applied to the resurrection of Christ.

Third, Christ's sonship is affirmed as we learn that the nations are his inheritance. [9] Paul quotes

Psalms 2.7:

"Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee"

Paul asserts that the fulfilment of that promise about/to the Messiah, which was spoken to David in the past, refers to God's Son and is fulfilled at his resurrection.

This is the first of a series of Old Testament texts that foretell the resurrection.

In Psalm 2, the Father and the Son face the leaders of the nations who are rising up in rebellion. The nations think of themselves as being in bondage, in fetters and bonds [Psalm 2.1-3]. God mocks them by laughing at them. In His anger and fury, He informs them that He has installed his own King upon Mt Zion [Psalm 2.4-6]

Significantly, for the God-fearers, listening to Paul, the Psalm goes on to speak of the nations as his inheritance, a point which would not be lost on them. Isaiah 55.3 indicates that the sure blessings promised to David meant that he would not decay but resurrect. This was established from Psalm 16.10, which cannot apply to David, for he died and is buried [Acts 13.35-36]. This promise applied to Christ [Acts 13.37].

In Psalm 22.9ff, the Son speaks of the decree of the Lord, stating that He has been declared Son of God, and that He is begotten of God. Paul sees that this "declaration" of God concerning His Son and the "begetting" took place at the Resurrection. That is, as the joint rule of the Father and the Son comes into being. Behind this idea is 2 Samuel 7.14,16.

Fourth, and finally, [10] through the resurrection of a man, forgiveness of sins can be preached to the people gathered. [Acts 13.38-41]. This is so because the apostles of Christ first had personal knowledge of forgiveness of their sins when Jesus rose from the dead ["Peace" and "whoever sins you remit ..." John 20.19-23]. The resurrection is the vindication that the death has atoned; it assured the apostles that they themselves now had personal and corporate knowledge of what Jesus had meant by saying that his death would be a ransom for many.

The use of Psalm 2.7 above makes it clear for us that at the resurrection, Christ was exalted to God's right hand and the beginning of his rule had come.

139 - Jesus declared to be Son of God by the Father with power.

Read Romans 1.1-7; Phil. 2.6-11

In Romans 1.1-7 Paul introduces both himself and his gospel.

[1] Expanding the greeting to the Romans [1.1b-6], he tells them that he is an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

[2] Concerning the gospel of God he states the following. [a] It is what was promised in the

Holy Scriptures, the Old Testament. So, there is no break between what God had promised there and what He has now sent in the Messiah [1.2]. [b] The gospel is about [concerning] God's Son, He is the content of the gospel.

[3] Concerning the Son of God Paul now contrasts two successive phases of the Son's life ministry. He points to the contrast of parallel actions.

[a] There is a phase of humiliation as the eternal Son of God takes flesh and empties himself of His glory. This involved three things. He was *born* : this birth was *according to the flesh*; and within the line of *the seed of David*.

[b] The phase of exaltation - in which the Lord Christ is now in the glorified state. Again, three things are done with respect to Him: he is *declared* Son of God with power; this declaration is *according to the Spirit of holiness* - the way the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Old Testament - and this declaration was clearly made *by the resurrection from the dead*.

In Philippians, Paul indicates that the resurrection is the time Jesus was declared Son of God with power. This is what Paul means in his letter to the Philippians when he refers to Jesus as being "highly exalted" and having bestowed on him "a Name" [Phil. 2.6-11].

Two eras, of the "flesh" and of the "Spirit", are sharply contrasted here in Romans. The first era is typified by the standard of being "according to the flesh" and another "according to the Spirit of holiness". The first refers to his becoming man as the suffering Messiah of the seed of David, the other refers to Him being powerfully declared Son of God by resurrection.

This movement of living according to the flesh, and then according to the Spirit is carried forward into the argument of Romans. For, as the resurrection of Christ is the turning point of the entry into the new life for Him, so it will be for us. As He died and was buried to be raised, so we die and are buried and are raised to a new life, even now. This will be worked out thoroughly in chapters 6-8 of Romans.

140 – Resurrection was a justification [vindication] for Christ.

Read 1 Timothy 3.16; 1 Corinthians 15

On the cross we see Christ as made sin for us. Before the world and also in relation to His Father, he was accursed. He stood in the place where the righteous judgment of God was falling on sin. He held on in this place of abandonment, trusting in the love of His Father that He would bring Him back to life. His only hope as He embraced death was in his Father bringing about his resurrection.

His being "made alive" was a vindication to Himself, in His own experience of sonship as well as being a vindication [justification] before the whole world that He was a righteous Son.

This humiliation-exaltation pattern we have seen before #139, is also stated in 1 Timothy 3.16, in the setting forth of the mystery of godliness'. It is also outlined in 1 Corinthians 15, where the same two orders of the flesh and the Spirit are applied to the *earthly orders*, spoken of as the "flesh", the "nations" and the "world" - then the *heavenly orders* of the "Spirit", "angels" and "glory".

In 1 Timothy 3.16, each of the passive verbs [where the action of the verb is done to the subject] indicates that Christ is the implied subject. He has something done to Him; he is revealed, justified, looked on, proclaimed, believed on, and taken up.

If we mark the humiliation theme with "h" and the exaltation theme with "e" then we can see that the verse has three couplets, with a contrast in each couplet. The pattern would then be for the verse *he/eh/he*; see below.

[1] Justified in the Spirit

"And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,[h]

Was vindicated in the Spirit,[e]

Beheld by angels,[e]

Proclaimed among the nations,[h]

Believed on in the world,[h]

Taken up in glory." [e]

[1 Timothy 3.16]

This translation is from the [ASV]. It is more accurate to translate the word "vindicated" as "justified", for that is the root of the word used here. In Romans 4.5 God is spoken of as the one who "justifies the ungodly". This makes the association with the work of Christ on the cross clearer. He was numbered with the ungodly and was made sin for us [2 Corinthians 5.21]. He was made a curse for us and was condemned under the law [Galatians 3.13; 4.5].

As long as Jesus remained on the cross or in the tomb then the righteous character of his work and the effectiveness of his obedience unto death remained in question. Indeed, both are denied if He stays dead - with all the implications that would have for our salvation! But from within the Father/Son and Son/Father relationship we see that His resurrection is a reward and a seal that testifies forever that He was an obedient Son. Because He is justified, so are we - are also found by God to be so - for he sees us "in Him".

[2] Raised for our justification

Similarly, in Romans 4.25, it is made clear that he was delivered up for our sins, and raised for our justification. Just as his death is the manifestation of his solidarity with us in our condemnation, so his resurrection is the manifestation of his solidarity with us in our justification.

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15.17 we see that Paul is arguing that justifying faith is useless if Christ is not raised. This is so because a dead Christ would be an unjustified Christ and an unjustified Christ would mean an unjustified believer - so he says if Christ is not raised "you are still in your sins" and "your faith is vain." Romans 8.34 also makes an appeal for a justifying faith on the basis of the resurrection.

141 - Resurrection meant sanctification for Christ

*Read Romans 12.2, 1 Corinthians 3.18, 1 Timothy 6.17,
2 Timothy 4.10, Galatians 1.4, Titus 2.12*

There is a progressive moral renewal of character in the on-going experience of the believer. This ever-deepening holy living can be understood as sanctification. Paul is concerned with this *continual* work in the believer [Romans 7.14-25, Galatians 5.13-26]. This moral renewal is the form taken in us who are fallen. It is different for Christ; while in His incarnation and death He comes under the conditions of sin for our sake, He does so without Himself being a sinner in practice.

Indeed, we can say that, in taking flesh such as ours, He wrestled with being in the flesh throughout his life, for our sakes. He wrestled and won, as moment-by-moment He resisted the flesh and decided for a godly life, pleasing to his Father. So, He has triumphed over the flesh in the place where it had - in us - formerly held sway.

[1] Christ was under the power of sin

The power of sin is, for Paul, more than moral corruption. The "flesh" is hostile towards God and rebels against the law of God [Romans 8.7], being defiled by moral pollution [Galatians 5.19-21]. Our flesh is a marker of the old age, the order that has been done away with in Christ. In the positive and personal sense, sanctification is the process of continuous moral renewal of our life by the Spirit. In the negative sense sanctification involves the deliverance from the power of the "flesh" as an event that took place in Christ for us.

To speak of Christ being "made sin" means He was subject to the power of sin, and so took his place under the rule and dominion of the flesh [Romans 8.3]. He entered the "fleshly" order, so to speak, and thus he was exposed to the suffering, the weakness [2 Cor.13.4] and also to the death of that order. Christ's resurrection is a deliverance from this for Him. Because it is so for Him, so it is for us believers who are "in Him" [Romans 12.2, 1 Corinthians 3.18, 1 Timothy 6.17, 2 Timothy 4.10, Galatians 1.4, Titus 2.12].

[2] Resurrection is Christ's deliverance from defilement

It is in this situation that Paul can think of sanctification as a decisive act, not only as a continual process, as we have seen above. Both are found in Paul's thinking. This is clearly seen in Romans 6.1-11 which is introduced by the question as to whether believers are to continue

sinning. Paul's answer is that they definitely should not: but the reason he gives for this is that they have "died to sin" and that they have been raised with Christ. So they should now consider themselves to be dead to sin and alive to God [6.11], since they are now "alive from the dead" [[6.13]. There is a definitive sanctification here based upon the fact of the resurrection. The defilement, to which Christ was exposed in being made sin for our sakes, is removed in the resurrection.

The implication that Christ's resurrection is his sanctification is seen from the fact that he is spoken of as having "died to sin" and now lives to God [Romans 6.10]. Therefore, it must be true that prior to the resurrection he was alive to sin - subject to its conditions - [in the same way that the text says that death no longer rules Him]. Christ's sanctification then, provides a pattern for the believer who lives to God. The "even so" of 6.11 puts that connection beyond doubt.

142 - Resurrection meant Glorification for Christ.

See 1 Corinthians 15.42 ff; 2 Corinthians 3.17-4.6; Romans 8.29-30 ; Philippians 3.21

The resurrection for Christ was a spiritual transformation. This change was the investing of His Person with glory. The glory He received was expressly connected with the common life of the Father/Son relationship. His Father "glorifies" Him [John 17.1] with the glory He had before the world was made.

There is also glorification for us [Romans 8.29-30]. That glorification is to come into conformity to the image of the resurrected Christ - the man from heaven [1 Corinthians 15.49]. Also Paul speaks of us as waiting for Jesus to return so that there can be a transformation of our lowly body to be like His "glorious body" [Philippians 3.21].

3 - What Christ's resurrection means for us?

143 - Christ's resurrection sets the agenda for our new life

These features of mature sonship, justification, sanctification and glorification are all facets of Christ's life which accrue to Him by the one action of the resurrection. As the Father raises the Son, these matters are effected in His risen Person.

As we receive the Spirit of the glorified Christ these four aspects of Christ's resurrected life are imparted to us. To participate in His life is to share in these aspects of the resurrection power; they become evident in us. At the proper place in these current studies we shall study each of these facets of resurrection life. Sufficient here to see that the resurrection of Christ is the

basis for what we are receiving in our life now, and that the life we receive is eternal life, the life of the age of the Spirit. It is the life which is the new creation which was inaugurated in the resurrection of the Second Adam.

144 - To believe in God, who raised Christ from the dead, is the central matter for our time.

1 Corinthians 15.1-11
Romans 4.20-25

In the running exposition of 1 Corinthians 15 that follows [#144- 146], Paul addresses believers about the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and their own future bodily resurrection. What is so wonderful is that this applies to us because, as Paul explains it, the resurrection of Jesus is the place where the whole world changed and now a new creation has begun.

In his day, Abraham was called to believe God's promise, and so to trust God concerning the birth of Isaac. He did so and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. He trusted God for a future promise and it came to pass. As he was called to trust, so are we, in our day, after the resurrection of Christ. We are called to trust God, not about something He will do, but about what He says He has done. We are to trust God that He raised Jesus from the dead. That is the central place of faith for a Christian [Romans 4.20-25].

Paul had planted a church in Corinth. Later, among the Corinthians there were some who doubted that the dead in Christ will be bodily raised [1 Corinthians 15.1-11]. We note that:

[1] Paul states to the Corinthians that they have had the gospel preached to them, they received it and they now stand in it. Further, he reminds them that it is by the gospel that they are saved. This salvation that they know and experience must be maintained in their life, for to doubt the resurrection of the Christian dead challenges the very saving power of the gospel [1 Corinthians 15.1-2] in the first place. So it is a serious question.

[2] He recalls that what was preached to them, of first importance, was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is what he, Paul himself, had received and believed; it was consistent to the [Old Testament] Scriptures, and he had passed it on to them [1 Corinthians 15.3-4].

[3] He then lists the apostolic men, and others, who personally witnessed the bodily resurrection of Christ. For them, it was as a matter of historical event [1 Corinthians 15.5-8].

[4] Finally, he indicates that he, himself, received an appearance of the risen Lord. He thinks of himself as a witness who was "untimely born" - he means that he is not a witness like the oth-

ers who walked with Jesus from the baptism of John to his Ascension [Acts 1.21-22]. But he is the last in the apostolic line-up. Although not in the same time-frame of witness as the other apostles, he can witness to the Lord Jesus as being alive.

Even though the other apostles can testify over the span of both the earthly ministry and the resurrection and ascension, Paul can still teach us as a true apostle with authority. He is untimely born for an apostle, but, uniquely in the apostolic group, he stands with us in time as those who have known Christ after the Ascension.

[5] Paul also sees himself as the “least” of the apostles. The church of God he now cares for, he had once persecuted [Acts 9.1-9]. It is the pure grace of God which has brought him to be a major carer and foundation apostle of the church - and this is particularly so for the Corinthians, because he is, in that sense, their founding father [2 Corinthians 3.1-3].

145 - The resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection of the Christian dead are two episodes of the one event.

Read 1 Corinthians 15.12-19

Paul now begins to lay down an important argument, which we need to follow carefully.

[1] He begins by linking the preached Christ, the resurrected Christ, with the fact that some are now asserting that there is no resurrection of the Christian dead. And his implication is: “if you have received the preaching, then what was preached was Christ as resurrected; how then can you now deny the resurrection of the Christian dead?” It is vital to realise that he cannot discuss the resurrection of the Christian dead without the resurrection of Christ [verses 12,16]. He insists that any questioning of the resurrection of believers is also to question Christ’s resurrection.

[2] He now makes an important move. He reasons from the whole class of those who will be resurrected back to Christ. The implication is that, if they are not to be resurrected, then neither is Christ. This implies that the two groups, Christ, and the resurrected dead, are joined [united] in such a way that we cannot speak of there being a resurrection for the one, without at the same time saying it for the other [verse 13]. Paul expresses the union of the to-be-resurrected ones and Christ using the analogy of the “firstfruits”.

[3] If the objection that the dead are not raised is sustained, then a further implication would be true. The preaching would be empty and the apostolic witness found false for the apostles would have been speaking against God if the dead were not raised.

[4] Further, if the preaching is empty, then the Corinthians faith is an empty thing and they are still in their sins [verse 17]. So we can know in our experience that the death of Christ ac-

completes our release from the guilt of our sin because he rose.

[5] Further, if the dead are not raised then the dead in Christ have perished. We would then be left as people who only have a hope in Christ for this life, the period of our earthly existence in the body. Paul thinks we are to be pitied if that is the case [verses 16-19].

146 - Christ as "the firstfruits" of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15.20-23

Paul sees the to-be-resurrected ones and the resurrected Christ as united. He understands that the to-be-resurrected ones are, as it were, asleep and that Christ is related to them just as the first fruits of a harvest crop are related to the whole crop. The Old Testament uses this picture.

"You shall bring the firstfruits of your soil into the house of the Lord." [Exodus 23.19]

"When you enter the land which I am going to give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits to the priest..." [Leviticus 23.10].

"Of the first of your dough [coarse meal] you shall lift up a cake as an offering to the Lord." [Numbers 15.20]

Numbers 18.8-18 indicates that the Lord gave to Aaron the first fruits that the people brought so that he and the priests would eat them. Concerning the priest it was said:

"you shall give him the firstfruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep." [Deuteronomy 18.4]

Deuteronomy 26.1-11 makes clear that the first of the produce was a thanksgiving for the fact that the whole was given by God. We can say three things about all this:

[1] The firstfruits are an offering made to God as a statement of thanksgiving to Him for what He has already shown by the first fruit itself; namely, there is a harvest to follow.

[2] In that sense, the firstfruits are considered, not as an offering for their own sake, but as an offering that is representative of the whole harvest. It considers the initial portion of the harvest only as a portion of the whole.

[3] The firstfruits are also a recognition by the offerer that all the crop is given by God.

Behind this use of the word "firstfruits" is a picture which contains the following elements within it.

[a] There is an organic connection between the firstfruits and the rest of the crop. They have both grown together; they come forth from the same life source.

The use of the Greek word “firstfruit” is used elsewhere by Paul to state this idea of organic connection. In Romans 11.16 the word is used to speak of Israel as the firstfruits of the dough, and then he reasons to the whole lump. Also in Romans 16.5 he speaks of Epaphroditus as the beginning of a great harvest for Christ in Asia by using the word firstfruit; similarly, of the household of Stephanus [1 Corinthians 16.15] as the firstfruits of Achaia. In Romans 8.23 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit, as the firstfruit, given to believers as a token of the initial, secret, enjoyment of the adoption [Romans 8.15] which, he says, is fully and openly received as the resurrection of the body.

[b] There is therefore an organic unity established between the firstfruits and the rest of the later crop. Even though, as to time, they are separated from one another, organically the initial portion is inseparable from the whole.

[c] The firstfruit is a representative of the whole although it is appearing earlier than the whole. Offering of firstfruits is to represent the whole God-given harvest.

This image then, stresses that Christ’s resurrection is the representative beginning of the resurrection of all and it makes the connection between the two resurrections. The opponents of Paul, who were denying the resurrection of the Christian dead, must have denied the bodily nature of the resurrection. It is to this issue that Paul is reminding them that:

[1] the resurrection of Christ has as its consequence the resurrection of the believers.

[2] Christ’s resurrection is not simply a guarantee of the others resurrecting, it is the beginning of the general event of the harvest to come. This means that the two resurrections are not thought of as two separate events but as two episodes of the same event.

[3] Yet, Paul does indicate that there is a time difference between them, the “after that” of verse 23 makes this clear.

4 - What His resurrection means for the world

147 - Christ a “first fruit” for all men and women

Read 1 Corinthians 15.20-22

Christ’s resurrection is effective for Christians and for all mankind. Paul gives the reason as to why he thinks this way, and why he uses such an image as first fruits, in verse 21.

Christ is a first fruit because:

[1] Christ and Adam are representative of all men and women; the resurrection of the dead comes through a man [verse 21b] and this man is a “head man” with whom all men and

women have a solidarity.

[2] first fruits are understood as organically linked with the rest - hence the "making alive" of all through Christ [verse 22b].

In contrast with the death which came through Adam - another representative man - is the resurrection of Christ, which is the beginning of the sequence of the "making alive" of others [the rest of the crop]. Christ is the first fruits because he is raised as the second Adam, and verse 22b makes clear that it is only as they are united in the second Adam that "all shall be raised".

There is a solidarity with Christ which is expressed by contrasting Christ with Adam, another man with whom we have solidarity, but who draws us in to a different consequence - death.

148 - Christ as the "firstborn" out from among the dead.

Read Colossians 1.15-18

Paul brings forth a similar picture in his use of the word "firstborn". This makes use of another Old Testament image.

It is in Colossians 1.15-18 where Christ is called the "firstborn of all creation" and also in 1.18 where he is called the "firstborn out from among the dead".

The use of the same Greek word by the Septuagint [LXX], the Greek translation of the Old Testament, for "firstborn" in Nehemiah 10.36-37 and Ezekiel 44.30 is very similar usage to "firstfruits".

Some people have seen the similarity between firstfruits and firstborn as connecting Colossians 1.18 with 1 Corinthians 15.20. The connection would be that the resurrection is like the process of birth, and so the group experiencing resurrection-birth would think of Christ as the firstborn of that group. Acts 13.33 and Romans 1.4 would be looked to support such an idea.

However, it is in Colossians 1.15 where Christ is spoken of as firstborn of all creation. This has two important thoughts attached to it:

[a] Christ is placed in relation to the creation in such a way that the meaning of firstborn cannot be understood of Christ apart from the creation.

[b] Colossian 1.16 understands Christ as the firstborn because all things are created "in Him" and "for Him".

Both of these ideas about the firstborn, in [a] and [b] above, are applied in the Old Testament to persons. Firstborn in the family has a unique status and dignity. The first born in a family is the person in the family marked out for exceptional favour and blessing. [See Exodus 4.22 of

Israel as the firstborn, and Psalm 88.27 as David being firstborn and having a dignity higher than the kings of the earth.]

This understanding fits the general argument of Colossians which is concerned about Christ's creative activity, his exalted place in the creation as well as the supreme position in creation and redemption.

So, we shall have to understand Colossians 1.18:

[1] as speaking of the supremacy and the authority of Christ over the dead [who will be raised Romans 14.8-9]

[2] as using the preposition [ek] "out from" to indicate that the identification and the solidarity which Christ has, as part of that group, is the basis for the special status and dignity he enjoys.

[3] This is the same thought as the use of "firstfruits" in 1 Corinthians 15.20.

[4] Christ is the beginning [1.18] then, not just as He is the firstfruit, but in the sense that He is the Pioneer, the Inaugurator of these things - He ushers in the world of the resurrection, the new creation.

The two texts, "firstborn from among the dead" [Colossians 1.18] and "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" [1 Corinthians 15.20] are ways to:

[1] express the unity - the solidarity - between Christ and believers in the experience of the resurrection; [2] show through "Firstborn", which expresses more definitely than "firstfruits", the uniqueness and the pre-eminence of the headship of Christ in that solidarity he has with the resurrection group and to [3] describe the "second Adam" resurrected.

149 - What kind of a body is a resurrected body?

1 Corinthians 15.35-49

In contrasting the introduction of death into the world and the coming of resurrection Paul has used Adam and Christ as two representative men. Because of their place and action, both Adam and Christ stand at the head of a group of people. But it is also true that, considering the way Paul uses them, they stand at the beginning of a time-age as well. This is especially clear when Paul comes to discuss the way the dead are raised.

In 1 Corinthians 15.35-49 he makes the following movements in his argument:

[1] In discussing "what kind of body?" the raised dead receive, Paul establishes that there is an instructive principle at work in the world of agriculture, and the universe at large. [36-41]

[a] First, the seed that is sown in the ground does not come to life unless it dies. Strictly speaking, it is the "corpse" of the believer which Paul is discussing in this section of 1

Corinthians. Elsewhere, Paul will speak of the body of the believer and will mean the body which is still alive. See for example Romans 6.12, 8.10; 2 Corinthians 4.10 and the “body of death” in Romans 7.24. So, in relation to order, the death of the thing sown precedes the coming to life of the new product. [verse 36]

[b] Second, the kind of body the resurrected person or thing receives is a matter of God’s own choice [38]

[c] Third, each body has its own glory [nature] and each species of God’s creation differs in its glory from another [39-41]. This is an example of how God chooses the differences.

[2] In verses 42-44 Paul develops the answer to the question “what kind of body?” He sets out a series of contrasts, which will illustrate the idea of “sowing” which he introduced in verse 36-37.

150 - The glory of the risen body is that it is not natural but spiritual.

Illustrating that the body you sow is not the body you get he states the contrasts:

the body sown

is perishable [in corruption]

in dishonour

in weakness

the body raised

is imperishable

in glory

in power

And these above three contrasts are summarised by the words natural and spiritual.

In verses 44b-49 his argument takes a surprising, but wonderfully instructive, turn.

[a] We see that 44a summarises the contrasts between the body sown and the body raised as “natural” and “spiritual”.

[b] Verse 44b, the sentence, “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” is an argument in itself. For it is stating that the grounds, or the condition, laid down by the presence of the natural body means that there will be a spiritual body. The argument is of the form, “If the one, then the other”.

[c] Verse 45, supports this argument of 44b, by a quotation from Genesis 2.7 “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”. This quotation is used here in reference to the “becoming” of the last Adam as “a life giving Spirit”. Notice that, for the second clause of this verse, the word ‘became’ is in italics in some English versions. This signals that it is not in the original Greek text, but the sense demands that it be assumed for the English translation. For the first clause, which is the quotation from Genesis 2.7, has “became” and the second clause

requires it to complete the reason for the quotation. Christ becomes a “life giving Spirit”. Carrying his contrasts through we now have something like this:

<i>First Adam</i>	<i>Second Adam</i>
= living soul	= life giving Spirit
psychical [soulish]	spiritual

[d] Notice that the argument has now broadened to include the environments of Adam and Christ in their respective bodily existences. The contrast that began as a difference between bodies, has now come to include the living persons, who represent others. The point of departure was the corpse of the believer, now it has broadened to include Adam by virtue of creation. Adam’s actual body, when created anticipates a “spiritual” body

[e] This last point is important, for “natural” in 44a describes the fallen, sinful body [corrupted, dishonoured, and weak]. Whereas in 44b “natural” is broader than that, it includes Adam’s body before the fall. Why does Paul expand this view to Adam’s pre-fall body? It is to show that from the beginning, prior to the fall, a higher or different kind of body to Adam’s was in view. Adam, by virtue of his creation [not because of his sin] anticipates and points forward to a higher form of bodily existence. The same thought is found in Romans 5.14-19 where Adam is used as a representative man who is a type [pattern] of Christ, who was to come.

[f] Verse 46 now extends the horizon to set forth two comprehensive scenarios, two orders of existence contrasted in time. First there is the soulish [natural] and then there is the spiritual. In this way Paul has given us a comprehensive overview of history. We could set it out as two ages: the era of the first Adam and the era of the second Adam

[g] we see, then, that the perspective with which Paul views the resurrection of believers is cosmic. This cosmic language is reflected in the verses 47-49 where he places side by side the parallels of:

earth	heaven
Adam	Christ
earthly	heavenly
out from the earth	out of heaven:

5 - World History is broken into two ages

151 - Two ages control the interpretation of the world history and the Christian life.

We now have two ages compared and contrasted like this:

psychical [soulish]	spiritual
pre-eschatological	last age
incomplete	complete
transitory	definitive
provisional	final

Notice that Adam and Christ are not being compared here simply as individuals: they are head men - federal - representative men, and so Paul goes on to speak of all those associated with each of them.

with Adam the earthy one	with Christ the heavenly man
are the earthy ones	are the heavenly ones
because they bear his image	because they bear his image

It is the image-bearing which fixes the destiny each of these groups [verse 49].

Concerning Adam and Christ, these things can be said in summary:

[1] The contrast between Adam and Christ is comprehensive, ranging over many areas. Yet it shows that they are, in all these areas, exclusive of each other.

[2] They are both viewed as heads, who being representative of others, and so fix their existence.

[3] This is so because each of them represents two contrastive orders of life, two world ages [periods], two creations. These are the psychical [natural] and earthy as opposed to the spiritual and heavenly.

[4] One follows the other spanning the whole of time.

[5] The order of Adam is first - so there is none before him.

[6] The order of Christ is second - so there is no one between Adam and Christ.

[7] The order of Christ is last - so there is none after him, He is the eschatological Man, the last

man, the goal of what humanity was always meant to be.

Paul's understanding of the two ages is central and controlling for the way he sets forth how we are to see world history, as well as how we shall think about where it is that we are called to live. It is this large idea which is behind what it means to be

[1] in the flesh [1 Cor. 10.3] or in the Spirit [Romans 8.9]

[2] the "new creation" [2 Cor. 5.17, Galatians 6.15],

[3] in the glorious liberty of the children of God [Romans 8. 18-21, 2 Cor 3.17]

[4] regenerated [1 Peter 1.3] to a living hope

152 - Paul's timetable for this last time in which we live.

1 Corinthians 15.23-28

In Paul's thinking there is not always a hard and fast distinction between the Messianic kingdom as present now, and the ultimate expression of the kingdom of God which flesh and blood cannot inherit [1 Corinthians 15.50]. This is because if we consider the Person Who is the kingdom, there is no distinction: while if we consider the time difference of the completed kingdom, there is. 1 Corinthians 15 emphasises the conquest of Christ over His enemies and the establishment of His rule. This has implications for the bringing of the kingdom now, as well as for the finality of its future form then.

Elsewhere, Paul speaks of such things as the "man of sin", and what takes place at the judgment. 1 Corinthians 15 has some things to say about the Lord's return which will lay a foundation for what we consider in Unit 10.

Concerning matters of the end, in 1 Corinthians 15.23-28 Paul lays down an order of events in his mind. We could list these points:

[1] the resurrection of Christ is understood as the first fruits in relation to others [verse 23]. Christ is "reigning" now [verse 25], and that He has received this reign from the Father, Who is not subject to Christ [verse 27]. [2] then, after Christ's resurrection, those who are Christ's are resurrected at his bodily coming - when He makes Himself present among us [verse 23].

[3] then comes "the end" which is described as:

[a] the abolition of all rule, authority and power. This has to do with His enemies, those who are currently opposing Him. [verse 24]

[b] the enemies are subdued and brought to be under His feet [verse 24]. The last enemy to be abolished is death. [This must be wider than just the Christian dead in its application].

[4] The Son, as He hands back the kingdom, shows Himself as subjected to the Father [verse 28]. God is all in all. This outline of Paul's will be part of the puzzle when we come to collect these matters later.

153 - The death of death and the new creation.

See Hebrews 2.9

We need to remember that it is on the cross that Jesus, for our sakes, enters into the place of what Revelation calls the "second death". Death is the situation, or the place of the absence of the glory of God. On the cross Jesus, by His obedience, voluntarily entered this place of 'no glory' and accepted it in submission to the will of the Father. He destroyed the power of death, absorbing all the meaning of death into Himself, suffering shame, being found in an inglorious position. In this way He drank death to its full measure. It is said, "He tasted death for every man" [Hebrews 2.9]. The destruction of death, while it is worked on the cross, is not clearly seen until it is manifested in the resurrection.

It is against this backdrop we understand that there is a new creation. Just as it is true that the making of Adam's body was the creative act of God, so it is also true that the resurrecting of Christ was a new creation of the spiritual body. Further, it is also true that if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation [2 Corinthians 5.13]. This means that we are now living in an age which sees those who are in Christ, living on the basis that the old man has been judged and put to death and that, in Christ, the new man has come.

Now, living as Christians by the Spirit of the risen Christ, we are being encouraged in the New Testament to live in such a way that we are to "put off" the old man and to "put on" the new man which has come into being for us in Christ [Ephesians 4.20-24].

6 - The Ascension of the risen Christ

154 - The New Testament language changes at the exaltation of the Lord.

See #147-153 in this unit.

Our study of the resurrection showed it to be the central point for the history of the world. It was the introduction of the new creation [2 Cor. 5.17, Galatians 6.15]. It marked the transition from the "flesh" to the "spirit" [Romans 8.9]; and so it established the possibility that

we should enter the glorious liberty of the children of God [Romans 8.18-21, 2 Cor. 3.17]. It established the grounds for us to be “regenerated” [1 Peter 1.3] to a living hope.

The ascension of Jesus was his parting from men and women in that He was no longer available to them via their senses. For him it was a going up, a return into a heavenly life - a life with the Father - a taking up of His new authority conveyed upon Him as the Son of Man.

So the resurrection and the ascension cannot be separated in that, for the Lord, they mark a transition for Him. It is a movement from the condition of humiliation to one of exaltation. To convey this change to the heavenly life and the new condition, the New Testament chooses to speak using symbols and analogies. It will speak of the ascension as an event that moved the Lord from hades, the sphere of death, to the “right hand of God” [1 Peter 3.18-22]. Language like this does not mean that we are thinking of the ascension as not true or as a fairy tale. It simply refers to the fact that for us, at this time, the Lord moves out of the visible, tangible, arena of our creaturely life. Such is the nature of the change, that the New Testament begins to use different language to express that new position and situation.

This language will often draw upon Old Testament imagery. This is because before the Incarnation, God moved as present but invisible. He often used visionary imagery to display his glory to the prophetic mind. During the time of Jesus’ humiliation, when He walked the earth, having laid aside His glory to take flesh [Philippians 2.6-11], the language was of the sort we customarily use to describe what we are seeing. When we come to study the work of the resurrected and ascended Lord, we shall find ourselves in a rich mixture of Old Testament pictures used to speak of the glorified Jesus. This is especially true in the Revelation to John. There we are given a view of an open heaven for us to know about and consider; but conveyed in language rich and pictorial drawn from the Old Testament events. These events, drawn from the Jewish people’s history as the covenant people of God are applied to them and the Church of Jesus Christ since both are now in lock-step together in regard to future matters.

155 - The time between the Resurrection and the Ascension.

[1] The nature of the resurrected body.

After the resurrection, during the forty days they had together, the body of Jesus is still recognisable to his followers as being Himself. His body must have looked to the disciples as it did to them before the crucifixion; it certainly carried the scars of His suffering. Further, it was the whole man with his complete body, not just his soul or human nature, which came out from among the dead and came to life. It was a body that walked, ate, and could be touched, as the Lord indicated to Thomas.

But, it was also true that the body was not subject to the normal restrictions of space and

time as it had been before the crucifixion. Jesus did not need to walk through doors, but simply appeared in the upper room [John 20.19,26-28]. He could hold a conversation whilst walking with disciples and then, subsequently, disappear [Luke 24.31]. He could come and go, and always at his own initiative.

[2] The timing of the ascension to heaven.

The use of Acts 1.1-11 has been the dominant portion of Scripture for our generation concerning the Ascension of Jesus into heaven. So much so, that we have tended to ignore the other Scriptures which speak of this matter. Acts focuses our minds on the ascension as having taken place 40 days after the resurrection. Consequently, we think of the appearances of Jesus during those forty days as post-resurrection appearances. How should we understand this forty days of Acts 1?

Paul, in discussing the resurrection of the Lord, says that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], to the twelve, and to 500 brethren at once, to James and then all the apostles and then he says, "and last of all...He appeared to me also" [1 Corinthians 15.5-8; Luke 24.33, 36ff]. Paul obviously thinks of the appearance to himself as of the same order as the appearances to the others. But if we did that then we would think of Acts 1.1-11 as a description of the ceasing of the short periods - in which Jesus comes and goes - when the glorified Jesus finally withdrew His bodily appearance from them.

We need to turn to the Gospels to sort this out. Here we see that there is a possibility of understanding that the ascension took place on the evening of the day of the resurrection.

[i] Luke describes the Ascension as taking place after the Emmaus walk on the same Sunday. [Luke 24.50-52].

[ii] Similarly, Mark understands the Ascension as taking place on the evening of that Sunday on which Jesus had risen from the grave. "After the Lord Jesus had talked with them, he was taken up to heaven and sat at the right side of God" [Mark 16.19].

[iii] Matthew 28.18 describes what appears to be a visitation of the ascended Jesus, who, on meeting the disciples in Galilee, says, "All authority has been given to me...". This could only be after the risen Jesus has ascended into heaven and has been crowned and honoured.

[iv] John's Gospel does not have a description of the ascension. However, when Mary meets the risen Jesus in the garden, and attempts to greet him, He instructs her not to hold him bodily, and he says, "for I am ascending to my Father". Indicating that He is in process of doing that. [John 20.17].

Also, in John 20.22 the risen Jesus enters the room and speaks the words "receive the Holy Spirit". Now, before His ascension our Lord was not in the position to give the Spirit for He

was not glorified prior to the Ascension. For, in John's Gospel, referring to the appearance of our Lord at the Feast of Tabernacles [John 7.37-39] and to His promise there of "rivers of living water", John the writer adds, "But this He spoke of the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Our Lord speaks in a definite manner about this, especially in his last teachings to the disciples. He instructs them that before the Spirit can be given, He must have gone to the Father [John 14.16,26, especially 16.7,13-16]. The same sequence is confirmed in the Acts 2.30-32.

[d] To understand the timing issue, perhaps we must take Luke's forty days as symbolic language. Forty days has a special significance in the Old Testament [Exodus 16.35, Numbers 14.33, Judges 3.11,13.1; Psalm 95.10, Ezekiel 29.11]. Some have thought that Luke is modelling his account on the taking up of Elijah to heaven as a preparation for Elisha receiving the spirit of Elijah, empowered for the continuing of his master's ministry upon the earth. However we resolve it Luke is clearly teaching us that as the cloud finally received Him from their sight, Jesus was taken into the presence of God and away from our sight.

156 - The Fact of Jesus' Ascension

See Acts 1.2-11

The ascension and session refer to the fact that the Lord was received up into heaven and that He sat down at the right hand of the Father, enthroned, so as to rule. We are anticipating a Priest and King. The actual event [Acts 1.2-11] is expressed in three words, each of which conveys something a little different from the others. Acts 1.2 states it as "received up"; 1.9 "taken up", and 1.11 as ... they beheld him "going".

[1] The Ascension was the last parting of the risen Lord.

Previous partings had been instantaneous, sudden vanishings [eg. Luke 24.31] and then, equally in the Lord's own initiative, sudden re-appearances. They were 'comings and goings'. This ascension was as they were actually looking. So they saw the process as well as understood the parting. There were no fresh appearances. Leastways none of the kind which placed the Lord visibly in their midst allowing handling of his body, eating and drinking etc. This then, put an end to all the relating to the Lord on the basis of fleshly nature. It is the withdrawal from the life which we have this side of the grave. It completed what the resurrection had begun. See the way that He addresses Mary:

"Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." [John 20.17 RSV].

[2] The Ascension was a “going up”

Here we have the stress on the action of the Son; He “ascended” - the word used in John 6.62; 20.17; Ephesians 4.8. He enters into the presence of the Father in his own right. The use of this word in Greek has been anticipated by the Septuagint translation [LXX] of the OT in Psalm 24.3

“Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?” [Psalm 24:3]

Jesus as a sinless, glorified man was able to enter into the presence of the Father.

The words “taken up” places the stress on the work of the Father. He exalted Jesus as a reward for his obedience and death. The LXX also anticipates this word in the New Testament by using it to translate the taking up of Elijah into heaven.

“As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.” [2 Kings 2:11]

[3] The Ascension was a departure from the earth for a time.

It is important to see that this departure, or withdrawal, was done so that He, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, might be more useful to us than that presence which was confined to the humble tabernacle of the flesh during his stay upon the earth [John 7.37,39; 16.7]. Also, He did not withdraw his bodily presence to cease being with his followers, but in order to reign both in heaven and earth more immediately by his power.

With respect to the “divine presence”, we have Christ with us. It is a “presence” which arrives with the gift of the Spirit, and so He is apprehended by faith. What we do not have is his “bodily presence”; this is withdrawn, for it is apprehended by eye. When He comes again it will be a bodily appearance, for every eye shall see Him. [See Ephesians 1.20, 4.15; Philippians 2.9, 1 Corinthians 15.27, Acts 2.33, 3.21, Hebrews 1.4].

We shall also see that the Church’s experience of Christ is now dependent on the gift of the Spirit from the glorified Jesus. Jesus will now be active within the community of His people in this way [Acts 2.32-33]. Language of the Spirit from here on will preoccupy us.

157 - Jesus governing in Heaven

[1] In the New Testament:

[a] We see Jesus elevated to the right hand of God the Father [Acts 2.25,33,36]. This is Old Testament language for a person who governs and brings matters of the regent into practical reality.

[b] We notice that in the plan of the Father, heaven must receive him until the resto-

ration of all things [Acts 3.21].

[c] Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father [Acts 7.55-56].

[d] We notice that it is a light from heaven, which is accompanied by a voice of the ascended Jesus that calls Saul of Tarsus to account over his persecution of his Church.

"I am Jesus who you are persecuting"[Acts 9.3]

[e] This is re-stated by Paul in his defence before the crowd [Acts 22.3-10] and also before Herod Agrippa [Acts 26.12-16].

[f] Finally, Peter, speaks of the ascension and session in this way - speaking of Jesus he says,

"who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."[1 Peter 3:22]

[2] Psalm 110

The Lord had this Psalm in his mind, particularly over the last week of his life. He put it forth in a number of questions to people and that he applied it to himself is evident [Mk 12.35-36, 14.62]. Daniel 7.11 is without doubt at the back of his mind, but the reference to sitting at the right hand is certainly from Psalm 110.

That this Psalm finds its fulfilment in the Ascension is shown by the way it is used in the NT. Peter uses it in his Pentecost day speech to assure the listening Jewish audience that God has not only raised Jesus but exalted Him to rule [Acts 2.33-34]. There are other passages of the New Testament which reflect this. [eg Acts 7.55, Romans 8.34, Ephesians 1.20, Colossians 3.1, Hebrews 1.3,13, 8.1, 10.12, 12.2, 1 Peter 3.22, Revelation 3.21, 12.5.]

Psalm 110 itself illustrates the setting in which the New Testament uses it.

"The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." {2} The LORD will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. {3} Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. {4} The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." {5} The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. {6} He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. {7} He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore he will lift up his head." [Psalm 110 NIV]

Here we see that a King is addressed. He is seated at the right hand until his enemies are subjugated. In the New Testament, and considering the Father/Son relationship, there is a time-limit to this current ruling position. Eventually the kingdom is handed back to the Father. Notice that the seating at the right hand we cannot see, we receive that by faith; but the subjugation of his enemies we can see, being a matter of sight.

Further, we notice that this King is appointed permanently as a Priest. This is after the pattern of the ancient Priest-King called Melchizedek. Finally, He is paid the highest honour which a human can be paid. He is recognised as the Father's viceroy and he is promised the final victory over all those that oppose him [Hebrews 2.9, 10.13]. When the Lord asked the Jews whose son they thought the Christ to be they had replied "Son of David". He then immediately replied, "How then does David in the spirit call him Lord?"... If David calls him 'Lord', how is He his Son?" [Matthew 22.42-45.

Augustine [*b: 354d:430*], bishop of Hippo Regius in Carthage, gave this wonderful exhortation on this passage to his people:

"... We know that Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, since his resurrection from the dead, and ascent into heaven. It is already done; we saw not it, but we have believed it: we have read it in the Scripture, have heard it preached, and hold it by faith. So that the very circumstance that Christ was David's Son, He became his Lord also. For that which was born of the seed of David was so honoured, that it was also the Lord of David. Thou wonderest at this, as if the same did not happen in human affairs? For if it should happen, that the son of any private person be made a king, will he not be his father's lord?... So that in this very circumstance, that Christ took upon Him the flesh, that He died in the flesh, that He rose again in the same flesh, that in the same He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God his Father, in this same flesh so honoured, so brightened, so changed in heavenly garb, He is both David's Son and David's Lord..."

Augustine, [1955] Expositions of the Psalms p.541-2

The ascension is, for the Lord Jesus, an entry into the reward He receives after the accomplishment of his work. He was One who was given to see the travail of his soul and was satisfied [Isaiah 53]. He continually spoke of his "joy" [John 17.3, Hebrews 12.2, Luke 10.21] and his "peace" [John 14.27] which He had in his work and as a result of its accomplishment. He said that his disciples would share in this joy and peace, in that they would receive of the results of it's being done.

The ascension means at least three things for Him:

[a] In relation to Himself He is crowned with glory, the glory of divine Sonship. As true Son of God He had that before the world was made, but now He enters an exalted sonship of intimate communion and union with God as a true man, without ceasing to be God [John 12.23,28, 13.31-32, 16.2, 17.1,4,5,22,24]

[b] In relation to the members of His body, the church, He is the fullness [πληρωμα] of the divine blessing to His people. All that we have to share in God's life which is found in sharing [participating in] his glorified Son's life; we are really content to be found "in Him". See this worked out in Ephesians 1.3,10,22,23 and Colossians 1.18-20, 2.9-10].

[c] In relation to his enemies, He is now a Conqueror and Judge. In the Old Testament this is expressed by two things, victory over enemies and judgment [1 Samuel 8.20, Psalm 2.6,8,9; 45.1,3,5; 72.8-9].

[3] He is seated - to rule as King

This does not mean 'sitting down to rest' as we have it in other contexts and settings. Here, to sit on a throne implies governing, getting things done. For the Revelation to John speaks of this one on the throne as a vibrant and active Person, attended by four living creatures who are never still. He is not in an armchair, but a throne.

He is to govern there "until" his enemies are subdued. Mark 13.32. See also Luke 19.12 where the ascension is likened to a man who goes away on a long journey into a far country "to receive a kingdom [' given royal authority' Wright [2011] and return". And Luke 23.42 where the thief on the cross understands that after the crucifixion Jesus is "coming into his kingdom".

When considering 1 Corinthians 15.23-28, we saw that there is an order presented by Paul. In that order, there is a present rule of Christ over all His enemies and, when they are subdued entirely, then comes the end.

[4] He is ascended as a priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

[a] Jesus - Apostle and High Priest

Early in the letter to the Hebrews, the recipients are invited to 'consider' Jesus. This consideration was to involve them in a two-fold appreciation of Him. He is the "Apostle" - the man sent from God to men - and "High Priest" - the man going from man to God.

Here the exercise of the prophetic function and the priestly function are caught up in the One man. This is important - for His mediation consists in the fact that He can go both ways. He is both Prophet and Priest. The Son has come down to us from God as the apostle of the Father, at His Ascension He returns to the Father.

He returns as Jesus, the glorified man, having gone into heaven on our behalf. On the earth, He is a victim who dies. At His ascension, as true Priest, He "passes through the heavens" into the very presence of God to make intercession for us.

[b] The bringing together of Priest and King.

As we have seen in Psalm 110, these two functions of a ruling priest are shown in the prophecy of Zechariah, which brings together the government and the intercession. At the time of the rebuilding of the foundations of Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon, Joshua the high priest is described as performing these two works. [Zechariah 3.6-10]. He is a type of Christ in this matter.

7 - Jesus, our heavenly Priest

158 - The Ascension is the entry of our Priest into Heaven

When we think of Jesus as the priest, we might want to group our thinking under two heads which emphasise the two basic functions of the priest. For over the whole of the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament, there is a consistent emphasis which can be found:

[1] The Godward aspect of the priesthood is always emphasised. The essence of the priesthood was the **right of access** [Exodus 28.1; Numbers 16.40; 2 Chronicles 26.18; Ezekiel 44.15; Hebrews 6.20; 7.25; 9.24]. Here the central idea is the drawing near to God by means of a person making an offering.

[2] The other consistent theme is that of **dwelling near to God** for the purpose of intercession [Ezekiel 44.16; Leviticus 16.17; Exodus 28.30; 30.7-8; Luke 1.9-10]. This theme is particularly emphasised in the Ascension.

159 - The Person of Christ and His priesthood: the pattern of Melchizedek.

Read Genesis 14 ; Psalm 110; Hebrews 5.5-10

In the letter to the Hebrews, Christ's priesthood is associated with that of Aaron, in respect of function and also that of Melchizedek, with respect to His Person. Melchizedek is mentioned in the Bible three times. Each time the reference adds something to our understanding of this man.

In Genesis 14 he is linked with Abraham. He is called the "Priest of the most High". In Psalm 110, as seen above, a Messianic Psalm which our Lord applied to Himself [Matthew 22.44;

Mark 12.36; Luke 20.42] conveys the implication of a priesthood which is superior to the Aaronic priesthood. The very idea that there may even may be a priesthood other than that of Aaron's is, of itself, very striking. Finally, Melchizedek appears in Hebrews as a type of Christ [Hebrews 5.5-10]. The implications for Christ's priesthood, drawn from this typology with Melchizedek are:

[i] it is a royal priesthood. Christ is a king as well as a priest.

[ii] Melchizedek's name is used to suggest the idea of righteousness.

[iii] Melchizedek's title "king of Salem" suggests the idea of peace.

[iv] The absence in the Genesis 14 record of any ancestral connections for Melchizedek is used by the writer to the Hebrews to imply the perpetual nature of Christ's priesthood.

One very important thing about the use of Melchizedek as a priest is that it is his **person** and **the order** of his priesthood that is used in the typology of the priestly work of Christ. It is not his functions for, in the Genesis 14 narrative, he doesn't exercise any of the priestly functions. He is just simply called "priest of the God Most High". It is with respect to his person and the order of his priesthood that the writer to the Hebrews uses him. This is another strong reminder of how the salvation which Christ works for us inheres in His Person; He saves because of Who He is and What He does.

Christ's priesthood will be made clear based upon a connection with Aaron's functions. When the nature of the Person of Christ will be noted, these will present a contrast to the person of Aaron. These contrasts reflect the likeness between Melchizedek and Christ. So, we can see that Christ, like Melchizedek was: [i] a royal person, whereas Aaron was not; [ii] Melchizedek was an abiding person, whereas Aaron was not; [iii] Melchizedek was a unique person, whereas Aaron was not. So, Christ's priesthood is older, wider and more lasting than Aaron's.

160 - The function of Christ's Priesthood: the pattern of Aaron

Read Hebrews 5, 7

When we come to think of the work of the priesthood of Christ, then it is the **functions** of the Aaronic priesthood that are central to the writer. His key word which he uses is "better". In this way he states the similarity of the work of Christ as Priest with Aaron, and then, by a contrast, indicates how much superior, in all respects it is in the matter of its functions. Our Lord's priesthood, as to his person and order, was not of the priestly line of Aaron [Hebrews 7.13-14; 8.4], but it is necessary to use the Aaronic priesthood's functions to show what Christ has done. This is done, but done in such a way as to keep before us the continual series of contrasts between Aaron and Christ.

The humanity of Jesus is asserted as a basis for His being a priest [Hebrews 2.17-18; 3.1 and

4.14-16]. He is a brother man, consequently those He represents He is able to understand. He himself has been tempted as we are, consequently He understands temptation. He has also experienced temptation's limit because He has held on in faith and not yielded -ever! So while He has experienced temptation to the limit, yet He is without sin.

In Hebrews 5.1-10 we have a clear comparison made. The requirements of the Aaronic priesthood are stated (5.1-5) in respect of: [i] office (5.1); [ii] character (5.2-3); [iii] appointment by God (5.4-5). In verses 6-10 we have the fulfilment of those requirements by Jesus, only they are stated in the reverse order: [i] divine appointment (5.5-6); [ii] character (5.7-8); [iii] office (5.9-10).

In Hebrews 7, we have stated the comparison between Melchizedek and Aaron on three areas: [i] Aaron was not royal; [ii] Aaron died, so he didn't abide; [iii] Aaron had many successors, indicating the temporary and repetitive nature of the offerings he offered.

The implication of the argument is that the superiority of the person carries over to a superiority of functions.

Finally, in Hebrews chapters 7 & 8 the superiority of the work of Christ is compared with that of Aaron's: [i] a better covenant (chapter 8) because it is spiritual, not temporal; [ii] a better sanctuary because it is heavenly and not earthly; [iii] a better sacrifice (chapter 10) because it is real, not symbolical.

Following chapter 10, the comparisons are not continued; but in chapter 13, there are three functions, connected with the priesthood which are stated: [i] access to God for man (13.12); [ii] offering to God from man (13.15); [iii] intercession for man to God (13.18).

161 - The superiority of Christ's priesthood

Throughout the whole of this discussion, the main points of superiority of Christ's priesthood are: [a] It is royal in its character; [b] It is heavenly in its sphere of operation; [c] It is spiritual in its nature; [d] It is continuous in its efficacy; [e] It is perpetual as to its duration; [f] It is universal in its scope; [g] It is effectual in its results, it actually does [accomplishes] what it is supposed to do.

162 - The "once for all" nature of his offering

Read Hebrews 9.12-14; 13.11-12

The two main actions of the High Priest stressed in Hebrews correspond with the two main actions of the High Priest on the day of Atonement [Leviticus 16]. They were the disposal of

the animal outside the camp [Hebrews 13.11-12] and the entering into the Holy Place with the blood of the animal sacrificed.

Because of this theme, the two main emphases struck in the life of Jesus are His death and the ascension. This latter being the action that sees Him enter into heaven on our behalf [Hebrews 9.12,24]. It is this understanding that makes clear the difficult verses Hebrews 8.3-4. These verses have sometimes been used to suggest that Christ is continually offering Himself in heaven. Three matters are very important in this regard.

First, the letter stresses the uniqueness and the completeness of the offering [Hebrews 7.27; 9.12,28]. Second, the sitting down at God's right hand is the attitude of a victor (whose work is finished) not of an offerer. And third, the essential nature of the new Covenant is the remission of sins [Hebrews 8.8; 10.11-12], and this is only possible if the offering is completed [Hebrews 4.16; 9.14-22]. The use of the aorist tense in Greek - a past tense - in Hebrews 8.3 seems decisive in establishing that the "offering" is the "death".

163 – Jesus' priestly work is effective through His Person & 'order'

In thinking of Jesus as the Prophet, and as we have seen in the studies of His sacrifice, it is necessary to hold the ideas of Jesus being fully God and fully man simultaneously. We noted that we could not plumb the depths of this with our minds, but we could believe it as we know it with our spirit. So here, in considering the High-priesthood of Jesus we are involved in His Manhood and also His Deity.

On the human side: the following things are stated up to Hebrews 5.9: [1] His manhood, makes Him one with us for sympathy and help [chapter 2]; [2] His perfect sympathy [Hebrews 4.14-16]; [3] His perfect training by obedience through suffering [Hebrews 5.2-20]. Notice that where it says that he "learned obedience", it means He experienced what it costs, in practice, to obey.

On the divine side: we can speak of: [1] His divine appointment [Hebrews 5.10]; [2] His indissoluble life [Hebrews 7.16] which establishes a permanent tenure of office; [3] His inviolable and intransmissible priesthood [Hebrews 7.24], which implies the inability of delegation to someone else; [4] His perpetual life of intercession [Hebrews 7.25]; [5] His fitness through His character [Hebrews 7.26]; [6] The divine oath, which is the divine guarantee, of His appointment (7.28); [7] His position on the throne [Hebrews 8.1]; [8] His perfect offering [Hebrews 9.12,24; 10.12].

As Hebrews 1.1-4 describes Him, what qualifies Him for his priesthood is based upon His unique, divine Sonship.

164 - What He accomplishes as priest

Aspects of Jesus' priestly work are set forward in Hebrews. They are: [1] His propitiation (2.17); [2] His ability to suffer (2.18); [3] His ability to sympathise (4.15); [4] His ability to save (7.25); [5] His present appearance in heaven for us right now (9.24); [6] His kingly position upon the throne (8.1); [9] His coming again (9.28).

165 - Knowing Christ as Saviour and knowing Him as Priest.

It is very helpful to see why the writer to the Hebrews decided to deal with the theme of Jesus being High Priest at all.

The recipients of the letter were under persecution (chapters 11 & 12) and some of their number in prison (13.3). They were in danger of spiritual degeneration (5.12) and of going back to Judaism (6.9) and even of turning away from the faith (10.35). They were Christians who had not grown much. The author seems to have expected them to have been able to teach by now (5.12-14) but like infants, they were not even ready for solid food. He is at pains to encourage them to leave elementary teachings (6.1) and to press on to the mature matters of the faith.

It is impossible to miss the conclusion that, when the writer wanted to cause them to grow as Christians and to hold fast their faith in the midst of pressure, he deliberately chose the theme of the priestly work of Christ (applied) as the medicine they needed to avoid falling away and losing heart. If they were to progress and to be assured and to remain steadfast, then they would need to have a personal experience of the priesthood of Christ! What they needed was a resident priest in touch with God Himself.

If we want to understand this better, it is appropriate to go back to the Old Testament and notice when the priesthood - both Aaronic and Levitical - came into being in the experience of God's people. Apart from the foreign priesthoods like those of Egypt and Midian [Genesis 47; Exodus 3] we do not hear of the priesthood in Israel until after the exodus from Egypt, when the priests are appointed at Mt. Sinai.

The function of the priests was to provide a means of access to God without fear or hindrance. This access to God assumed that the Hebrews were already redeemed and had experienced God as their Saviour. The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews had this initial experience of Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, yet, there is a real difference between knowing Christ as Saviour and knowing Him as Priest. The first involves us in spiritual childhood and our "salvation from"; while the second is designed to lead us on to maturity and constant growth by the exercise of consistent access to the One Who has opened up a relationship with us.

If we wanted a parallel to this in the New Testament writings it would be Romans and Hebrews. Romans is concerned to explain a redemption which makes access possible [Romans 5.2ff]. Hebrews is concerned with the access that is made possible by the redemption which is assumed - hence, Hebrews has so many exhortations which have to do with drawing near to God (10.22), and not to "draw back" (10.39) and "Let us go on" (6.1).

166 - The personal and corporate use of this access to God

The word used for believers in Hebrews is one which is a compound verb meaning those "who come right up to God" [Hebrews 4.16; 7.25; 10.1,22; 11.6; 12.18,22]. In this way the clear message, built around the teaching about Christ as our Priest, encourages us to use our nearness and access to the living God. This is how Christians come out of spiritual infancy into maturity [Hebrews 6.1; 10.1].

So it is that the letter has these constant exhortations; "having a High Priest ... let us come boldly" [Hebrews 4.14]; "having boldness of access, let us draw near with faith ... let us hold fast our hope ... let us consider one another in love." [Hebrews 10.19]. Each of these exhortations is spelled out in detail in chapters 11 (faith), 12 (hope), and 13 (love).] Such an exhortation as; "receiving a kingdom, let us have grace" [Hebrews 12.28]; "Jesus suffered ... let us go forth" [Hebrews 13.12-13].

In your Christian life, you may have been taught that the priestly work of Christ, being once-for-all, means that you count it finished. As an action of ascending which He accomplished in history, it is. However, as to its effects upon your own life now, moment-by-moment, it is an historical fact that we continually experience anew as we trust His work.

We are continually receiving from the living Lord in heaven the benefits of his work and its application in heaven. This is so because He is alive. Just as a father, having done something for his son or daughter in the past, can bring its application in their present life because he is there it apply it. That is, his past work comes to present application through him being alive in their present shared life together.

It has to do with the cleansing of our conscience, the awareness that God is not "counting our sins against us" [2 Corinthians 5]. It will mean that we are not experiencing guilt for sin. By guilt here I mean the awareness that, having sinned we would now be liable to a penalty. We do not experience condemnation for our sin.

But we are guilty of our sins, in the sense that we have done them. So when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin we agree with Him that we have done what He says we have done - we are guilty of the doing but He does not condemn us for it. What we register in our persons is the Holy Spirit's grief over our sin. Indeed, it is because we are not condemned that we freely confess our sins to God, we already know His forgiveness.

The public confession of our sins was something Christ for us, not by words He said, but by His dying on the cross. Knowing it to be a finished matter already done, then we, ourselves, who are now sharing in his life by the Spirit, are free to acknowledge our sin to God and, in confessing our sins before one another we are acting as those who no longer are ashamed. A sure sign that our sins have been washed away [1 John 1.8-2.2].

It is very important to recognise the on-going work of the Man in heaven for us - it is the practical ministry of Jesus as Priest for us today. His offering was made once for all, but his ever-living-ministry is experienced by us everyday. Let us now see how, by trusting Him, we practically use our priest. Before that however, we need to follow through the “blood” as it is used in the Old and New Testaments as we see implied in Hebrews 9.7,18.

167 - The blood, its use and application by our Priest

*See Boan, DTC, [2013] Atoning Death #134;
and [2004] Israel's Feasts and Fasts.pdf #2-3*

[1] In the Old Testament

There are many examples of the way the Lord indicates blood shall be used. We see that introduced very early in the sacrifices that Cain and Abel brought to the Lord. There is a contrast between the vegetable sacrifice Cain brought and the live animal, which presumably would be slain, which Abel put forward. We are told that the Lord “had regard” for this sacrifice [Genesis 4.1-12]. The principle of approach was ‘not without blood’.

Also, after the flood and the rescue of the family of Noah, then Noah is found offering sacrifice to the Lord straight away. As the Lord cuts a covenant with Abraham, the spilling of blood features again [Genesis 22.3-14]. There are other recorded situations where the spilling of blood features in the early patriarchal history of the Bible.

At the time of the Passover, we see that the blood of the Passover lamb is splattered on the doorposts of the house to be the mark of protection and deliverance from the wrath of God in that Egyptian context [Exodus 12.1-13]. We see a progression here. There is a movement from the shedding of blood sacrifices, to the application to the doorposts, and the manipulation of the blood to the application becoming more personal. The blood comes to be applied to themselves.

[2] The teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus

[i] The teaching of John the Baptist concerning Jesus was that He was the Lamb of God - the Lamb God had provided. This connotes the Passover image; a matter which Paul confirms when he says “Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us...” [1 Corinthians 5.8]. Yet, as John goes on to speak of Jesus as bearing the sins of the world the image of the goat of the Day of Atonement is used. So, we have a joining together of these two elements in

Christ; the protective blood from the wrath of God in Passover, and the sin bearing image of Yom Kippur [Leviticus 16].

John also taught of Jesus as the one baptising in the Holy Spirit. See Acts 2.28

[ii] Jesus spoke of himself as being the bread of life, and also of his flesh, which He would give for the world. He spoke about drinking his blood [John 6]. He described his mission as coming to give his life a ransom for many [Mark 10.45]. At the institution of the Lord's Supper he spoke of a new covenant "in His blood" Matt 26.28

[3] The teaching of the Apostles can be studied in the following references. Hebrews 12.12, 10.19, 12.24, 13.12-13, 13.20; Romans 3.24 - 25; 1 Corinthians 10.16; Galatians 6.14; Colossians 1.20; Ephesians 1.7, 2.13; 1 Peter 1.2, 19; 1 John 1.6-7.

168 - The ascended Lord's high priestly work applied to us

See Boan, DTC, [2013] Atoning Death #118

[1] Reconciliation through the blood of Jesus.

We have studied something of reconciliation from God's side in looking at 2 Corinthians 5. The work of Jesus for us on the cross reconciliation is the first thing of which we become aware.

It is the nature of a holy God that He will not change His character for us. He stays the same. So his reaction, in the sense of his natural response to rebellion is holy anger. We need to see that this is right reaction, He can do no other but have great wrath.

It is due to the effect our sin has upon God that it comes to have power over us. It is because it bothers Him that we have a relationship problem on our hands. Our guilt is the awareness that we have liability before a holy God, and must come under penalty.

It is the law of God that sin brings forth sorrow and death. This is expressed powerfully in 1 Corinthians 15.56 "... the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."

So, when persons sin, by virtue of the law of God they come under the power of the sin. So it must be with the law of God that redemption begins and the true terms of the reconciliation done.

"The thing that has to be dealt with, that has to be overcome, in the work of reconciliation is not man's distrust of God, but God's condemnation of man. It is this condemnation...with which Christ deals. He does not treat it as if it were merely subjective, - an illusion from which man has to be delivered -...He puts it away by bearing it...In the Bible, to

bear sin is not an ambiguous expression. It means to underlie its responsibility and to receive its consequences: to say that Christ bore our sins is precisely the same thing as to say He died for our sins..." (Denney, 1895) page 103-104

Standing in covenant with God as it was for Israel, we learn that the effect of our sin upon God is to awaken his wrath. Understood as a failure to give to God the proper response of obedience that we were due to give, in the light of God's holiness within the covenant, then we can picture guilt as a debt. In the relationship we have done something for which we are responsible which brings His wrath. Can sin be dealt with, can it be blotted out before God so that his wrath is stayed? Sins cannot simply be ignored by God - swept under the carpet so to speak. By nature God could not do that. But sins can be covered according to an acceptable way which God has established. This is done in Christ for us.

"...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith." [Romans 3.24-25]

It is in the sense that Christ bears our sins that Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15.3 that He "...died for our sins". The OT images of sins being covered, in the sense that they are removed from God's sight in our relationship is stated through images of the prophets

"I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." [Isaiah 44.22]

"...It is Thou who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, for Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" [Isaiah 38.17]

"He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." [Micah 7.19]

"... blot out my transgressions" [Psalm 51.1]

"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. [Psalm 51.9]

"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered" [Psalm 32.1]

God's holiness also desires good for others as well as for Himself. So just as His holiness casts out evil in the way of wrath so His holiness allows Him to express His love for us as One who has a mercy seat. Reconciliation then, speaks of the dealing with sins as being covered through the satisfaction that has been offered through the work of a substitute. Within the Old Testament law of offerings which God gave, reconciliation comes through the blood of a victim.

Our personal share in all this is to have our sins pardoned - a judicial image - and to have them removed from God's sight - a relational image - so that He and we can be reconciled in our relating.

"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to

Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.”[2 Cor. 5.18-19]

[2] Redemption through the blood of Jesus

“...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” [1 Peter 2.18-19]

Notice that here [as also Titus 2.14 and Hebrews 9.15] the idea of redeem has to do with redemption not so much from penalty or wrath, but from sin as a futile and empty life style.

We are redeemed from our empty lives [‘vain conversation’ was the old way of putting it], which is a deliverance from a slavery by emancipation through purchase. An emancipation which, among other things, sees the works of Satan destroyed or defeated.

[3] Cleansing through the blood of Jesus

“if we walk in the light...we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin” [1 John 1.9]

“our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus: who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for his own possession zealous for good deeds.” [Titus 2.13-14]

“In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.” [Zechariah 13.1]

[a] The difference between reconciliation and cleansing

“If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” [1 John 1.9]

Reconciliation delivers us from the guilt and responsibility to make good with God our misdeeds. Which would mean to bear the punishment of them. The fruit of reconciliation is pardon in relation to God.

Cleansing from sin is the deliverance from the pollution which sin brings; that sense of dirtiness, defilement and impurity in our inner being. The fruit of cleansing is acceptance of ourselves and so to experience that we are clean within.

This difference between reconciliation and cleansing is expressed in the Old Testament the that between the work of the offering of sacrifices and the carrying out of cleansing rituals for purification.

[i] The offerings were made with definite reference to the transgression for which reconciliation needed to be made. The cleansings referred to the conditions that were the

results of sin. God's people found that they were defiled.

[ii] The offerings were made in a way that something was not done to the offerer, it was done for him. The cleansing is what happens to the person themselves. That is the chief thing; he registers the experience within himself, something is done to him.

[iii] The offerings are directed towards a change in relationship with God. The cleansings are directed towards making a change in the person themselves.

Examples in the Old Testament are Numbers 19.1-13, which refers to purification with heifer ashes. We see that a red heifer had to be burned and then its ashes put aside. After that the ashes are put into water, a bunch of hyssop dipped into it and the person sprinkled with it, after which they wash.

Leviticus 13-15 refers to leprosy [13-14], discharges [15]. Psalm 51, especially 7a, 7b, 10a, and 10b. Ezekiel 24.11-13 was spoken to Jerusalem as it about to fall. Ezekiel 36.22-38 has parallels with Psalm 51 the issue of cleanness is associated with life and restoration. Malachi 3.3 speaks of cleansing by water, blood, and fire.

[b] Cleansing in the New Testament

[i] cleansing an inner work in the individual

The Ezekiel 36 reference anticipates the work of cleansing is an inner work which takes place in each individual. Jesus located the difficulty in the heart of the man, not in the externals of the cups and pots which were the pre-occupation of ritual uncleanness of the Mosaic Law [Matt. 15.11-20]. See also Matt.23.25-6 and Luke 11.37-41. Jesus makes it clear that only the pure in heart shall see God. This means that only those who have appropriated the blood of Jesus to themselves personally shall see God [Matthew 5.8].

[ii] General statements of cleansing which Jesus made.

He stated to the disciples that they should consider themselves cleansed by his Word to them [John 13.10; 15.3]. This is echoed in Paul's idea of the whole church being cleansed as the bride of Christ - cleansed the church by the washing of water by the word [Ephesians 5.26]. Titus 2.14 associates the redemption through the death of Jesus with the further result of purification through the death of Jesus. See also Revelation 15.6, 19.8,14

[iii] This cleansing of the inner man is for each individual, and is distinctly concerned with the "spirit" and also the "heart" of the person. David's Psalm 51 is consistent with this.

[a] The conscience is the judge of our action. It is the inner voice of our own spirit which, in union with the Holy Spirit, bears witness to our relationship with God and his Son.

Hebrews 9.14 "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." See Hebrews 10.1-2, 1 Timothy 3.9 and 2 Timothy 1.3.

[b] If the conscience is addressed , then also the heart

".. let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" [Hebrews 10.22]

"since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren fervently love one another from the heart..." [1 Peter 1.22]

"the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" [1 Tim 1.5]

"Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart [2 Tim 2.22].

"To the pure all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience is defiled." [Titus 1.15]

[4] Sanctification through the blood of Jesus.

There is a difference between cleansing and sanctification. Cleansing has to do chiefly with the old life; it is about cleansing from some things. It is preparatory to sanctification - it marks that from which we are coming. Sanctification concerns the new life. It is that which God imparts to us. It is very much that to which we are going.

Cleansing is preparatory to, and so precedes sanctification. Scripture sharpens this difference for us: speaking of the work of Christ on behalf of his bride, the church. Here cleansing precedes the sanctifying action.

"...just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water by the word" [Ephesians 5.25-26]

The same thought is found in Paul again where he writes to Timothy

"...therefore if a man cleanses himself from these things he will be a vessel for honour sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." [2 Timothy 2.21].

[5] What is sanctification?

To understand this we must know what the holiness of God is. For if He alone is the holy One, then holiness in the creature must be received from Him. Holiness describes that aspect of God's nature where He always is, wills and does what is supremely good.

He is called the Holy One in Scripture, not simply because He punishes sin, but also because He is the Redeemer of His people. Both the wrath of God [which punishes the sinner] and the love of God [which redeems him] springs from the holiness of God.

Holiness in a person is the disposition to be in entire agreement with the will of God.

"As obedient children do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your

ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behaviour; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [1 Peter 1.14-16]

The sanctification of God's people is effected by the communication to them of the holiness of God - there is no other way of obtaining sanctification, than by receiving from a Holy God what He alone possesses. It is a share in the divine nature [2 Peter 1.3-5].

[a] holiness [sanctification] as **separation from**

That which is taken out of its surroundings, by God's command, and then separated to a particular service - that is holy. This means separation from sin, but also the world, even from what may be permissible. [eg 1 Cor 6.12-20] and the OT examples of Leviticus 20.26 where God sets Israel apart from the peoples. See also Numbers 16.7, and Deut 7.6

[b] holiness [sanctification] as **consecration to**

A person must surrender themselves willingly and wholeheartedly to this separation. Included is personal consecration to the Lord. This works deeply in our wills and takes root into the depths of our personal life. God sanctifies no one against their will. It is for this reason, the Scriptures speak of us sanctifying ourselves.

[c] holiness [sanctification] as **fellowship with God**

Separation and consecration are preparatory for the partaking of the divine nature

...that we might be partakers of His holiness" [Hebrews 12.10]

But God's gift of holiness is not a gift of something apart from Himself. It is personal fellowship with Him [Exodus 29.42-46].

[6] Sanctification was the goal for which Christ suffered.

Participation in God's holiness is the highest destiny of man. This is the goal of the atoning death of Christ for us.

.."Jesus suffered that He might sanctify his people" [Hebrews 13.12]

"that we should be holy and blameless before Him." [Eph 1.4]

It is because His sufferings were a sanctification of Himself that they become one for us.

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves may also be sanctified in the truth" [John 17.19]

In setting himself apart for the express work of suffering for us, the Saviour sanctified himself so that we, in Him, might be sanctified [set apart]. See Hebrews 2.10b-11;

"By this will [of God] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [11] And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; [12] but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, [13] waiting from that time

onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet.[14] For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified [Hebrews 10.9-18].

[6] We are cleansed to serve by the blood of Jesus

"How much more shall the blood of Christ ...purge your conscience... to serve the living God." Hebrews 9.14

There is an intimate connection between the sanctification of the priests and the close fellowship of service that their work involved. After consecration, the priests came near Him [Lev. 8.24, Hebrews 10.19, 22, Rev. 5.9, 10, 7.14.

So they had a right to dwell in the presence of God. They had free access, they ate the shewbread and portions of the sacrifices. Psalm 42.1-2 records a desire to be before God. Fellowship exercises a great influence of life and character. See also Psalm 73.28.

[a] The calling of offering spiritual sacrifices to God

As the ancient priests performed the service of: bringing in the blood and the incense to the Holy place, so we make our prayers an incense to God. The value of prayer doesn't just consist in achieving what is asked, but is also, of itself, a ministry to God. Now, everything the believer does is inspired by his priestly calling]

"Whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." [1 Cor. 10.31]

[b] The power to procure blessing for others

We are now, as priests of God are able by intercession and also instrumentally in practical ways - we become instruments of the blessing to others [Deuteronomy 10.8].

8 - The present Reign of Christ

169 - Understanding Christ as present now

See Acts 9.1-16 - a study of the conversion of Saul

As the apostle Paul met with the Lord Jesus for the first time, there is recorded in Acts 9.1-16 a very clear indication of how we should think of Christ now. As he fell to the ground [9.4] he heard a voice saying, "...why are you persecuting Me". This brought into Paul's life a revelation of the life and presence of Christ. It was a revelation which came through the senses, yet it was not measured by the senses - for those with him only saw the light, the voice being for them an inarticulate sound. Out of the heavenly glory, Christ made Himself known to the future apostle as Jesus who you are persecuting. The whole point being - He spoke from heaven and, in doing so, spoke of Himself as still on the earth as being persecuted by Saul.

The affirmation of these two contrasted and yet supplementary truths fixed Paul's under-

standing of the glorified Christ for the whole of his ministry. The glorified Christ pre-occupied Him and the church as his Body moulded how Paul saw the Christian life.

It was a revelation of the continuous life of the risen Christ on the earth because He was the Son of God. This fixed Paul's understanding of sufferings, they were not only for Christ [Acts 9.16] they were also the sufferings of Christ [Colossians 1.24]. And sufferings were seen as an honour - to suffer for the sake of the Name was something all the apostolic men knew as their lot and their present, hidden glory.

170 - We are called to not be earth-bound in our thinking.

The knowledge of the Ascension saves us from a materialistic understanding of the Gospel, which is so prevalent today. There is a pre-occupation with wealth and temporal blessings as a sign of the blessing of God. This has two sources,

[a] Either it is a rushing forward to the end before the time. It is an attempt to realise the new heaven and new earth before the time.

[b] Or, it is the preoccupation of Christians whose understanding of sonship is deficient - seeking the things of the Father rather than Father Himself. This is paralleled by the work of Adam in the garden where the devil tempted him to have the inheritance, the property [earth] of God, without having a Father.

171 - The present reign of Christ opposes sensual religion and witchcraft

Religion based on the senses is so central to our age [Colossians 3.1]. It is important to understand that our union with Christ is established and that Christ, as our Man, is in the heavens. We understand that Christ is hidden from sight but not from faith. He is present with us today, and will be until the end of the age.

The Spirit of the risen Christ is the way we experience His rule over us now. The Spirit places our trust where it ought to be. He directs our faith away from ourselves and to the ascended Lord. This leads our focus to be, not upon the sensual experiences but, upon the Man in heaven, with Whom we are in union, by the Spirit. The ascended Christ is the object of our faith. Our life here and now is a hidden life - for it is hid with Christ in God [Colossians 3.1-4].

Against the rise of the occult and hidden crafts, which are attempting to control the church and world, it is vital to assert and teach the reign of Christ from heaven today, expressed through the church of God, which is His fullness [Ephesians 3.8-12]. This awakens faith within the people of God.

172 – Present reign honours the Person and Work of Christ.

We are so often limiting ourselves to the Jesus of History. We need to see that the Person to Whom we are united is not the man as He was in Galilee and then so dishonoured in Jerusalem, but the risen, glorified, and ascended, reigning Man in heaven. We must not think of the Gospels as the setting in which we understand and trust the work of the Lord today - for that is to find ourselves limited to the time of His humiliation, and we live at the time of His exaltation.

What Jesus has given to John [Revelation 1.1-5] is what He knows of His participation [sharing] in the life of the Father in heaven. The revelation which John received then, is the knowledge of the shared life of Jesus with the Father now, seen from the point of view of the end of the purposes of God.

As the Gospels are the “story line” - the narrative - of His humiliation and life up to the Resurrection, so the Revelation to John is the “story line” of His life with the Father up till the end. The Letters of the New Testament express the theology and practice of the church in understanding Jesus’ humiliation and the results of his Victory over death in the life of those who are presently in union with the risen and ascended Christ.

So the Revelation to John, as well as the Letters of John, deal with such great themes as: [1] mediation and intercession of Christ; [2] the reign of Christ as happening now; [3] exercise of universal authority which Christ has now; [4] certainty of the complete victory; [5] high priestly work of the Lord now; [6] gift of the Holy Spirit - his prophetic work; [7] Headship of Christ over the Church now; [8] work of Christ as Forerunner, making future blessings sure for us now. This affects our hope.[9] The judgment by Christ of the world and the [10] way to worship now that He is there, in spirit and truth.

All these great themes occupy the second half of the New Testament - they are the undergirding base of the teaching of the apostles after the Ascension.

173 - The present reign of Christ controls our view of the universal Church

Paul’s understanding of the Church, is based on the ascended ministry of the Lord. All the following things concerning the Church are based upon the fact that she is in relation to the Ascended Lord; [a] she has the fullness of Christ [Ephesians 1.23]; [b] she is the body of Christ [Ephesians 5.23]; [c] she is the city of the saints [Revelation 21.2-3,10-14,22-27]; [d] she is the household of God [Hebrews 3.6]; [e] through the Church all the wisdom and fullness of the mystery of Christ is made known to the principalities in heaven [Ephesians 3.10-11]; [f] All the power of the Head in heaven is available and working in the Church [Ephesians 3.20-21].

The church shares in the victory through the blood of Christ. The letter to the Hebrews makes

clear that the death of Jesus was the victory over the devil. This is because the power of sin is the law and the accusations of the devil come with power because of our guilt. If guilt is dealt with, then the conscience has been cleansed, then the power of the devil is broken - for his use of the law of God as an accusing force and fear of penalty is taken away. All this is rooted in the work of Jesus on the cross.

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death" Rev. 12.11

Hebrews 2.14 "...that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"

[a] The conquest in heaven is ascribed to the Ascension of Jesus and the war in heaven that followed. In Revelation 12 there are records of the event from the heavenly perspective.

However, in the song of triumph in heaven, the victory is ascribed to the blood of the Lamb. This records the power by which the victory was gained. Throughout the whole book of the Revelation, it is the slain Lamb who is pictured as the Victor.

[b] The victory was gained once for all [Job 1-2, Zech 3.1-2, Luke 10.18, John 12.31]

Heaven is not a small sphere. Satan, having brought about the fall of man, became the prince of the world. God recognised that he had. God never thought to defeat Satan by raw power. For He had ordained that if man listened to Satan he would die to God and, as one of the consequences of that, come under Satan's dominion. God always took the way of Law and right, so Satan retained his authority until it was taken from him in a lawful manner. Only after he was conquered in the flesh by a human, the sphere where he retained authority, could he be cast out from the court of heaven. The devil had the power of death because of the Law of God. For the power of sin is the Law. Reconciliation with God and redemption can only take place through blood-shedding.

[c] There is also a progressive victory

Satan has been cast down to the earth, so the heavenly victory must be carried on here. We learn that there is a fellowship between heaven and earth [Daniel 10.12]. The present times are times of woe upon the earth now [Revelation 12.12]. The woman in the vision of Revelation 12 is Israel, and we, as those grafted into Israel, are the "rest" of her offspring that are referred to. For we are the church of the firstborn.

So, while we have a share in this victory we recognise that: [1] There is no victory without conflict. We dwell in the enemy's territory [John 17.9-15. Eph 6.12ff]. [2] The victory is through our faith - simple trust in what Christ has accomplished. It is an application of the blood [1 John 5.4-10]. And finally, [3] The victory in faith is in fellowship with the blood of the Lamb.

174 – The present reign fixes our view of the world.

We are neither to withdraw nor compromise. On the one hand, our life is hid with Christ in God; on the other hand, we are living in the world, even though we do not have our origin from it.

This tension in which we live indicates for us the right attitude to worship. We are in a place to understand what it means to worship in spirit and truth. The Revelation to John informs us of the appropriate setting in which the worship in heaven is happening.

We rely on the intercession of Jesus. Whenever we are given to participate/share in the prayers of Jesus by the Spirit, we are hearing the desires of what it is He wants to do right now. There is a deep sense of responsibility on each Christian when we consider the work of the One within the veil on our behalf [Hebrews 8.1-3, 9.11-15]. His extreme activity on our behalf is encouraging to our work and prayer.

We recognise that He is the source of our hope and joy. He is the anchor of the soul when we are in trouble [Hebrews 6.19-20]

175 - The Lord Christ is currently putting down all evil forces

[1] The death of Christ is victory through judgment

Over all creaturely powers which were rebellious to Christ, and who were thus his enemies, He has won the victory.

With some He has won the victory over their rebellion by defeating them, and thus overpowering them and rendering them subject to His own dominion and use. To these it is a defeat, a plundering of their house, and an experience of the wrath of the Lamb. They bow unwillingly, but they will bow.

Others He has taken into union with himself. To these, who once were enemies of Christ [Romans 5.10], it is a joyful experience of mercy, and entry into sonship and participation in the richness of the life of the Son of God. They have been won by His love and the revelation to them of the Father's heart. This is all done by the Father making a judgment upon sin, so that it is seen to be sin.

[2] The death of Christ has defeated the forces of evil

Jesus' victory is not in spite of the cross - it is through the cross. In John 12.31 Jesus made an anticipatory statement -

"Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out."

This speaks of the work of the cross as the downfall of Satan and the cause of his immediate

defeat. This is what Jesus anticipated will happen as the result of His work on the cross.

So, leading up to that death, He understood that Satan would have power over Him while in death, and that there will be an hour of the power of darkness [John 14.30-31], and yet He makes clear that the Father has commanded Him to go to the cross.

However, it will be in that Cross that Satan is defeated, and it will be really Christ's hour of victory. For by taking on himself the guilt of man He will destroy the power of the enemy. Also the Father has triumphed over the principalities and powers through cancelling the accusation that stood against us [Colossians 2.13-15].

Jesus, by offering His life as a ransom, purchased the deliverance of those who were always in bondage through fear of death [Hebrews 2.14-15].

[3] Christ has plundered Satan of his spoil and captives.

Indeed, the picture in Ephesians 4.8 and Psalm 68.18 is that Christ led away a large number of captives. In this way, Christ plundered the spoil of the enemy. What Satan, as a strong man, had taken captive for himself, Christ, through binding the strong man [Matthew 12.29// Luke 11.21-22] by his death on the cross, has now taken captive for Himself what were the captives of Satan. So the victory is won, and now we find ourselves in a time of enforcement of the victory. This sets our perspective as to how we understand the rule of Christ being exercised today.

[4] These forces are now tethered and bound, operating by Christ's permission.

These forces of the enemy are now bound, [Revelation 20.2] and being tethered, these forces can only accomplish what they are permitted to do. In Luke 10.18 Jesus spoke of seeing Satan "fall like lightning" from heaven, which is mirrored in the Revelation to John [12.9]. This happening is, in a like picture, linked with Isaiah 14.12-15 where the king of Babylon, seen as a pattern of Satan, falls from heaven into the abyss. Notice that in Revelation 13.7 where the beast makes war on the saints, it is said that he was allowed to do that. This is linked with the reference in Daniel 7.21-22,25-27 where the beast does prevail over the saints, however they are ultimately victorious.

Rebellious angels have been cast into "eternal chains until the judgment of the great day" [2 Peter 2.4, Jude 6]. These fallen angels still work evil deeds, but like Satan, they have been "destroyed" [Gk: rendered useless] [Colossians 2.14-15].

[5] Judgment and retribution are still happening with the church's involvement.

It is important to see that the wrath of God is revealed now still, for when men suppress the truth, then they find that they are without excuse. Their minds become futile, they fall into idolatry, and then because they worship creatures rather than the Creator God hands them over to what they lust after. [Romans 1.18-32]

The church is the instrument of the kingdom of God. For the Lord has, in His wonderful administration of things decided to use the church as the means to make known His wisdom to the principalities and powers [Ephesians 3.10]. Whenever the church lives as she should, there is an enforcement of the victory of God - there is an overcoming of the world, the flesh and the devil.

[6] The Lord of the church disciplines the church for her good.

Further, it is important to see that judgment [not wrath] begins at the household of God. For it is here that the church is finding that Father is a "holy Father" [John 17.11] and that He disciplines the church [Hebrews 12.3-12], thus dealing with them as sons, so that they may share in His holiness. This discipline of the children of God uses all the means that God has available - which can include the forces bound [2 Corinthians 12.7]. It is because the church of God has a revelation to know God as Father, that the use of these forces does not cause us to waver, but to understand the trials of this world as being used by God to actually grow us in the knowledge of Himself. We can even rejoice in trials [Romans 5.3-5] with such an understanding of this way our holy Father is operating.

176 - The way of the Cross enforces of Christ's victory over his enemies

[1] A way of faith in Christ arising out of union with him.

Whatever victory is going to express itself in the life of the Christian, it is going to arise out of trusting the work and Person of the Head of the church.

[a] It is the work of Christ which we are going to have to stand upon and trust - and this is pre-eminently the death of Christ and His obedient life. This is so important for us. We are trusting the One who has given Himself up for us. [Galatians 2.20]. We are also understanding that our great riches, our access to God as sons and daughters gives us a right standing with God and our share in His holiness, to say nothing of the glory which is to be revealed in us - all of this arises for us in Christ. His humiliation and death was his voluntary poverty [1 Corinthians 6.10, 8.9]. And it is that poverty which has made us rich.

[b] We are sharing in the life of the Son of God. Paul can make it clear that he thinks of himself as dead, and the life which he now lives he lives by faith in the Son of God. He has placed his trust in the life of Jesus, to whom he is united [Galatians 2.20].

[c] 1 John 5.4 makes it clear that it is our faith which overcomes the world. The way of those who are presently conquering [Revelation 2.7,11,17,28, 3.5,12,21] is a way of trust. Indeed, not to live by faith is to sin [Romans 14.23]. The way of faith in Christ is a way of victory - a way of expressing the victory of Christ and enforcing it into the world of where we

live. Like salt and light [Matthew 5.13-16] we bring glory to our Father in heaven when we live this way.

[2] The ruling of the believers takes place as we live in union with Christ.

As we come to study, in later sections of the course, the participation [share] we have in the risen life of Christ it will mean that we are living out in the world the fact that He was risen, and therefore knew:[1] sonship, [2] vindication, justification; [3] Sanctification and [4] Glorification. We ourselves will experience these, because we share them with Him by union. Our living out in the world the union-life with the Lord will bring Him glory.

It is way of the cross for it involves a participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. There is a death of the old man, the putting on of the new man. There is a power of the Holy Spirit at work within us "to will and to do" the things which pertain to the life of God in us. In the face of the powers of evil, the children of God reign in life.

In Romans 5.17 Paul has it that death reigned through Adam [also 1 Corinthians 15.22]. But for those who have received the gift of righteousness they shall reign in life. This is a ruling by sharing in the life of Jesus Christ. A similar idea is expressed in Ephesians 2.4-7 although with a different word-picture behind it, of us reigning with Christ. It speaks of us "raised up to sit with Him in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus". This is a powerful picture of sharing the rule.

It is truly "in the face of" the powers of evil for in Romans 8.35-39, speaking of things that attempt to separate believers from the love of Christ, Paul says that it is impossible for this to happen because in all these things [not in spite of them or released from them] they are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

The enemies which the believer overcomes through Christ are:

[1] sin [understood as a power Romans 3.9, 5.12,20-21, 6.2, 6-13, 16-23, 7.7-13]

[2] the world 1 John 2.15-17. 4.4

[3] the devil 1 Peter 5.8-9

[4] the flesh Romans 8.9-12

[5] the principalities and powers Ephesians 6.12

[6] the judgement of the law, Romans 7.1-13

[7] the fear of death Hebrews 2.10-15, 11.35-37

These freedoms for the Christian are laid out more fully later in following units.

[3] The gospel of the kingdom is preached to the nations

Christ's power is total in this age. All authority is given to Him [Matthew 28.18] both in heaven and on the earth. And the duration of that authority is until the end of the age, which is the time Christ will present the kingdom to the Father, having put all His enemies under his feet.

Ephesians 1.19-22 makes it clear that he has been given this authority over all things - in heaven, on earth, and under the earth - for a specific reason, it is on behalf of the church, which is his fullness. Christ is not detached and operating remotely, as it were from heaven. He is "with us - until the close of the age" [Matthew 28.20]. What is in His mind in saying this is the triumph of the kingdom at the close of the age when He hands it back to the Father.

This is what is involved in the gospel - it is the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel is the servant of the kingdom - it brings the rule of Christ. For what does it mean to make disciples but to teach them to obey Christ in all that He taught the apostles? The obedience of the nations [Romans 1.5] - an obedience they do by trusting Him - simply means that there is an extension of His rule. As each person yields, drawn by the love of Christ, there is an extension of the kingdom of God there.

[4] The way of the cross is a way of suffering

It goes without saying that there is a great deal of teaching in the New Testament which speaks to the importance of suffering with Christ. We understand that we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ - "if in fact we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him" [Romans 8.17]. The teaching of 1 Peter 4 and 5.1 indicates also that the suffering of a Christian should be for that which is right.

The apostles make it clear that they understood that it was their particular lot to have a share in the sufferings of Christ, indeed Paul makes it clear that this is the sure sign of the genuine apostle 1 Corinthians 4.8-12, 6.3-10, 7.4-5, 11.16-33. There is a participation in the suffering of Christ now, which is experienced in His body, the church Colossians 1.24.



Janice and David Boan, an Australian couple, live in Perth, the capital city of the state of Western Australia.

They have been married for 46 years and have five children and 19 grand-children. Throughout this time, they have been teaching the Lord's Word among Christians.

After David was ordained in 1967, he served in two Anglican parishes and a School Chaplaincy in Melbourne. They trained for missionary service but after health issues prevented them going overseas, they taught in a community at the Montrose House and later took the parish of St. Jude's Carlton for seven years. Moving to Perth in Western Australia in 1981, David cared for the Anglican parish of St Alban's in Highgate for seven years.

In 1988, they left the Anglican scene to teach into scattered and smaller groups of Christians in some Australian towns. Later the work extended into the UK, Italy, and India throughout 1995-2000.

At the beginning of 2012, in concert with others, their work became more accessible at the York St Silo, at 4 York Street in North Perth. It is here that David and Jan share the work of the putting forth of God's Word.

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