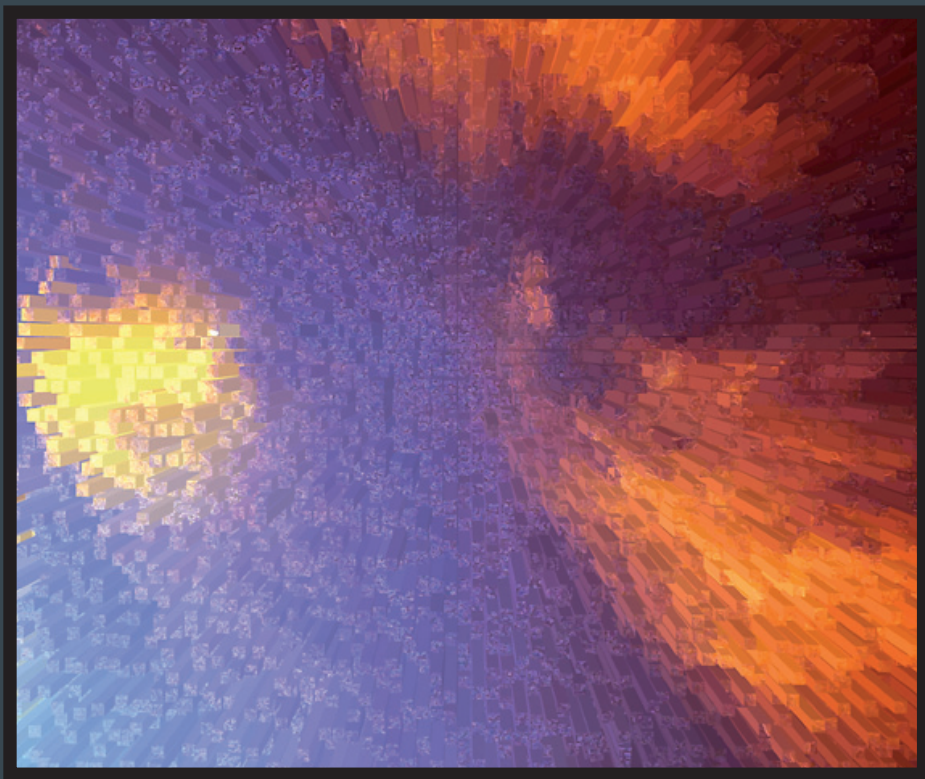


Being

Who we are in Christ



A Discipleship School

David Boan

6



Being

Who we are in Christ

A Discipleship School

Unit 6

“...to as many as received Him, who believed in his name, he gave the authority to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” John 1.12-13

Unit 5 - In Review: stated as an outcome

The entry into us of the Spirit of God is the Gift of God Himself. This self-giving of God is typical, for having first made us in His image. Because He loved us He always wanted us to share in the life of the Trinity of the Godhead.

As a consequence of the Word of God taking flesh, God appeared, not in man, but as man. Just as Elisha received the spirit of Elijah, and found himself receiving the power of the God of Elijah, so we have received the Spirit of Christ, the God man, as we received the Spirit of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With the coming of this gentle, yet powerful, Guest we have come into union with the God man, with Christ. We have received the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Unlike the Old Testament comings and goings of the Spirit, He is not momentarily upon us – so as to leave again - He is within us forever; He will never leave us nor forsake us.

We are now in a relationship of deepest intimacy. It is not that we are placed remotely at the fringes of His exchanges, but right into intimate union with Him. We are called to trust this as true, and not to doubt it. It is an objective work of God, independent of our feelings. It is a work done for us which comes from the Father, through the Son and by the Spirit.

This radical union opens for us the experience, by the Spirit, of the knowledge of the Father and the Son. We are said by God to "have the Son" and so we have the life of God. This 'having' of a person indicates that true riches are persons, and not things. To have eternal life by having the Son opens us to a sweet fellowship and common life with God where we may freely give ourselves to Him just as He has so freely given Himself to us. This mutual self-giving is our re-introduction to the life of God; the life which we had lost.

On a wider scale of the whole people of God, this means that we are sharers in a New Covenant. As God gave Himself to Israel under the old covenant – a covenant Israel broke constantly – so God has given Himself again to us. He has assured our participation in it by giving us a Man who, on behalf of Israel and all of us, has kept the covenant from the human side in a way that it has been freshly completed. There is really only one covenant, but the "new" factor is the forgiveness of our sins, the putting of God's requirements internally, into our heart, and the giving to us His Spirit. The glory of the new covenant surpasses that of the old, for through it we know God from within His inner relations of the Trinity – for He has communicated it through his own Word, who took flesh for our sakes. Of that God-man's Spirit we have all received.

© David Boan 2013 asserts a copyright that is purely a matter of preserving the material from commercial exploitation. As with all my work, permission to copy it is freely given, provided that it is presented unaltered and not sold for commercial gain.

Table of Contents

<i>1 – Understanding Being and Doing</i>	<i>259</i>
231 – You must live it “for yourself” but never “by yourself”.	259
232 – When people find “... it is just too hard” and “it doesn’t work”	260
233 – A contract-God: a concept of God as basically a Lawgiver	260
234 – The ‘covenant-God’ of grace.	261
235 - Gift and Task: Being and doing	262
 <i>2 – Being - the vicarious humanity of Christ.</i>	 <i>262</i>
236 –Vicarious persons: the high priest and the “firstborn”.	262
237 - The high priest’s vicarious work on the day of Atonement.	263
238 – God dealings with us are concentrated in Christ’s person	264
239 – Christ the Mediator: God-to-man & from man-to-God	265
240 – Placing our faith in Christ as our representative	266
241 – Worship & obedience offered to God “in” and “through” Christ	267
242 – Because Christ is the ‘God man’ He has a dual role	267
243 - The basic matter of living by faith.	269
 <i>3 - Redeemed: Purchased for God</i>	 <i>269</i>
244 - Redemption brings joy to God.	269
245 - The offence of Jesus eating with “tax collectors and sinners”	270
246 - The “lost” is restored to the owner	270
247 - The initiative of the Owner redeems the “lost” to Himself	271
248 - The joy of the owner is the thing to understand	272
249 - Joy of God when sinners repent	272
250 - Returning to our Father means deliverance from His enemies	273
251- Being redeemed of the Lord means deliverance “from”	274

<i>4 - Chosen - an elect people</i>	<i>275</i>
252 – Jesus Christ is the elect and the rejected Man	275
253 – The elect bear witness as recipients of grace	276
<i>5 - Called</i>	<i>279</i>
254 – “Calling” in the sense of God calling us to Himself	279
255 – Calling as “Illumination”	281
256 – Calling as “an Awakening”	282
257 - Apostles bear witness, they do not call people to follow Christ	282
258 - Goal of this call	283
<i>6 - Changed</i>	<i>286</i>
259 - Living by the faith of the Son of God	287
260 - The miracle of a person becoming a Christian!	287
261 - New garments imply new persons	287
262 - The heart - deep inside the man - is changed	290
263 - The new birth; a birth “from above”	290
264 - The transition through dying and rising with Christ	291
<i>7 - Baptised - immersed in the Spirit</i>	<i>293</i>
265 - The man set free for God by the Baptism in the Holy Spirit	293
267 – Why is it a “baptism” in the Holy Spirit?	294
268 – The beginning and empowerment for the whole Christian life	295
269 - The baptism of fire by the Spirit	296
270 - The act of God that is the beginning of the Christian life	297
<i>8 - Forgiven</i>	<i>299</i>
271 – Forgiveness comes before repentance, and evokes it	299
<i>9- Reconciled</i>	<i>300</i>

272 - God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.	300
273 - Christ is our peace	303
274 - Known peace is the basis for knowing the disturbance of spirit	304
275 - Known peace the basis for knowing an attack on it	304
 <i>10 - Justified</i>	 <i>304</i>
276 - Christ is our righteousness: if He is justified, so are we	304
278 - A righteousness of God, manifested "apart from the Law"	305
279 - Righteousness not "through Law" is shown by the resurrection	305
280 - The resurrection of Christ and the justification of the believer	306
281 - Dying and rising with Christ	307
282 - At His resurrection Christ became a life giving Spirit	307
 <i>11 - Sanctified</i>	 <i>308</i>
283 - A holy people	308
284 - Christ is made unto us sanctification	308

Bibliography

- Barth, K. (1932-1967). *Church Dogmatics*, 4.3.2 T&T Clark
- Torrance, Thomas F. (1976). Edinburgh,UK: T & T Clark.
- Torrance, James B. (1981).

Our main concern up to this point has been Who God is and what He has done for us in Christ. Our focus now moves to consider what God is now doing “in us” by His Spirit. This involves a corporate perspective as well as a personal appreciation of the obedient life of faith we are now to live.

Unit 6 deals with Who we are as God sees us in Christ. It expresses what that looks like in practice as the New Testament speaks to us using various images and pictures concerning ourselves. It follows our changed status; in moving from being in Adam to now being a people who are found “in Christ”. We see how foundational Christ’s response to the Father is for everything that we have now. His vicarious work for us - on our behalf and in our place, has brought us a new Being. It is now being applied “in us” by the working of God’s Spirit who has come to dwell.

Unit 7 will deal with our response to Christ’s response to the Father, made on our behalf. It is our first experience of “Doing” something which is based upon our new Being which has been won for us by our Redeemer. We look at Repentance and faith - the two Biblical responses required of us when we first hear and then continue to live under this gracious Gospel.

I – Understanding Being and Doing

231 – You must live it “for yourself” but never “by yourself”.

Whenever we move from considering what has been done *for us* to the activity of now carrying it out, there are traps that await us, simply because we are fallen humans, used to doing things our own way and on our own terms.

We are accustomed to think, as we move into “action mode”, that “I am doing this”; “I need to do it”, and I “do it by myself”. Our habitual action is very much an “I” centered thing; and it is, of course, that is quite right, in the sense that each person must live the life given to them for themselves.

Many Christians think like this. They know that God has done certain things, but they think of those things as external to themselves, as something done over their heads for them but in which they are not involved. Stressing that everything is done and finished, they think, they must now get on and live the ‘Christian’ life as best they can. They often think of themselves as very much on their own. In this way a sharp disconnection is made between all that Christ is for them and does for them and the life they now are attempting to live.

As has been laid down in the objective teaching of the first five units, we are now engaged in a life of union, lived in relation to Another. He has originally initiated a relationship with us as creatures, and has re-initiated it on redeemed terms. So we must live it for ourselves but never by ourselves. We are, after all, simply responding to the saving initiative of Another as we live in relationship to God.

232 – When people find "... it is just too hard" and "it doesn't work"

Sometimes, people abandon the Christian faith, as they know it. They are usually sincere people who have struggled with their own fallen desires and found that the power they expected to be present in them to overcome these desires was not there. Rather than fight on, very much in their own strength, they have simply declared the life they tried to follow too hard and retired.

Perhaps they have spoken to other Christians about this constant failure, only to find that they may be judged as a "backslider" who has not really tried hard enough. Or they may have been received with understanding but put on to a programme, or some counselling, which is supposed to help with this or that problem. Either way, they are in the first case, being rejected or in the second, simply being motivated by fleshly means so that they may try harder.

A much more appropriate line of enquiry would be to ask them, "What was the gospel to which you first responded?" If we discover that, we shall see what their faith was grounded upon. We shall discover what it was that they committed to as being true, before they attempted to live it out.

If their faith was based on error - a 'gospel' that was not the gospel - then they may be free to acknowledge that they have dealt with God according to a way that He has not revealed. Such a life lived on this basis should fail. It should be too hard, and it should be exhausting and lead to despair. If that was the case, they were quite right to give up.

What many of us have had to do is to re-learn the gospel. We have had to make certain that what was presented to our faith was accurate and true. We have had to re-assess, look at the Scriptures afresh, and often we have repented from what we first heard, and turn to what is true. We have learned to base our convictions on surer grounds.

233 – A contract-God: a concept of God as basically a Lawgiver

See Boan, 2013DS Atoning Death #119

Our view of God underlies our understanding of what He has done for us. For example, to think of God primarily as a Law giver – in the sense of the way Westerners understand a law of contract – will affect our understanding of the death of Christ. It leads us to focus on an external, legal procedure to understand how the death of Christ "works".

It requires us to think of God as needing to punish sinners in order to be conditioned into being gracious to us. Whether this is seen as coming through their own human merit, or by Christ satisfying the conditions which God has set up as a Law, the point is that the death of Christ somehow will condition God so that He can be forgiving to the ones He will save. Further, if people want to be assured that they are in good standing with this god, then they

must fulfill the conditions, or show evidence of repentance so that they may be assured of their salvation. The whole picture is contractual; if you respond properly to God with repentance and faith then He will accept you. The focus, alas, falls squarely back upon what people must do; not a safe place to be!

This view of God leads people to the idea that, even if they may get “into heaven”, or get into a right relationship with God through Christ’s work, they stay in by their performance. If they don’t do well, then God will reject them [or the Church will]. As a result, they must do very well, whatever the cost. It is the reason, some say, that God gives us “rewards” – they are incentives to do well, to run the race and finish. Such a view of rewards is always self-referred. It panders to our self interest and does not liberate us from ourselves. And it appears fatal if you sin and don’t do well.

Such people often ask the question, “Can you lose your salvation?” It betrays a deep lack of assurance that they are safe, and accepted by God. This is intensified if the grounds for that safety lie in their own effort. Such insecurity is a product of the ‘message’ they heard or have come to believe.

234 – The ‘covenant-God’ of grace.

See Boan, 2013DS Atoning Death #106

God is a forgiving God who, finds a way to forgive us in Christ. He has created us for ‘sonship’ - a life of shared communion with Him. The central issue, for our understanding of the atonement is based in the exchanges within the Father/Son and the Son/Father relationship.

In the atonement, God has acted to bring this communion through Christ. So God, in His grace, has come to stand in for us, and has brought to fulfilment the promises and the law in the person of His Son. Law, is expressed here, not as an impersonal law of contract, but as law that makes clear the obligations of grace; meaning that God presents us with His requirements, but ‘requirements’ expected in us by Him as our response to the way that He has already fulfilled them in the person of Christ for us.

In this understanding, there is a priority of grace over law, the filial [sonship relationship] takes priority over the judicial [legal commands]. God is seen to be a covenant God of faithfulness not a contract-God.

A covenant is a promise in which two people bind themselves to love one another unconditionally. “I will be to this to/for you no matter what”. It is set up by an initiative which draws a free response, and so makes for a relationship based upon the strong self-giving of the one to the other.

A contract is a legal relationship in which two people bind themselves on mutual conditions. “If you will do this; I will do that”. It lays down conditions [“if”] that must first be met before the exchange of responsibilities is required. If conditions are not met, no response is required. It is a legal deal.

To be assured of our safety and permanency in this covenant relationship we need to look away from ourselves and our efforts; and to trust who we are from the way God sees us and deals with us in His Son.

235 - Gift and Task: Being and doing.

So the gift of being within God's family is based on the word of God to us, not upon any performance we do. Further, this "gift" of who we are, comes before the "task". The "being" - who we are - comes before the "doing". So the gift is the basis for the task. We are not Christians because of what we do; we do what we do because we "are" children of God.

This asks that we see all the commands of God to us as imperatives, asked in the light of and on the basis of the gift of the filial life we have been given. The commands of God our Father, when carried out, do not make us to be His sons, they are commanded because we already are so. The gift of who we are – our being - always precedes, and is the basis for, our actions - the doing.

In this way, "rewards" are rewards of grace, they follow obedience but are not incentives to obey. They are the gifts of a Father to a son, as something arising from the giving of themselves to each other; they are resultant, they arise out of life, they are not incentives to live it. In the book of Revelation, rewards are given to those who overcome; these are simply the realisation of the gospel promises.

Revelation 2.7 "to eat of the tree of life"; 2.11 "to not be hurt by the second death"; 2.17 to be granted "hidden manna... white stone..."; 2.26-7 "...to have authority..."; 3.5 "clothed in white garments... not erased from life... confessed before the Father"; 3.12 made "a pillar in the temple... write upon Him a new name..."; 3.21 granted "to sit down on my throne...".

2 – Being - the vicarious humanity of Christ.

236 – Vicarious persons: the high priest and the "firstborn".

Read Colossians 1; Romans 5; Ephesians 1; Boan, 2013 Atoning Death #116-117

Vicarious action is action done on behalf of someone else. It may be done in a way that substitutes for them and so they are excluded from doing it themselves. We have already seen how Christ substitutes for us in his atoning death for us. To choose one of the aspects of the atonement that we studied, when Christ operates as our redeemer- kinsman, He picks up our debts and responsibilities. He takes over what we cannot deal with. So, He "elbows us out of the way" - so to speak. Having done it for us we have no part in it. Indeed, it is essentially effective for us because we have no part in it. He acts there, as a substitute for us, so as to

properly exclude us!

In considering Christ as a vicarious person, we may also think of an action designed to be inclusive. In this case, what is done is done on our behalf by someone who, while doing it on our behalf, does so as our representative. He gathers us up into what He is doing in a way that he is operating in our name. He is acting as “the One for the many”.

The high priest in Israel's life was such a vicariously, representative person. For the covenant between God and Israel was concentrated in his person. He both includes and represents his people in himself. This pattern is brought to fruition in the New Testament with the inclusive and representative nature of Christ as the Mediator. He represents God to man and man to God in his own Person as One on behalf of the many.

A similar theme is developed in the idea of the “first born son” [Colossians 1]. He too, was a representative person with a vicarious role. In the Old Testament, the tribe of Levi, was chosen by God to act as the one tribe for the many sons of Israel. They would do this until a time would come when God sent His own Son to be the true Israel, the elect Servant of God, the firstborn of all creation, in whom and through whom all the purposes of God for mankind could be brought to fulfilment [Numbers 3.12].

Such a fulfilment is expressed in the teaching of Paul, where he speaks of God gathering all things into one in Christ [Romans 5 and Ephesians 1]. In these chapters, the idea of ἀνακεφαλαιώσις or “recapitulation” – bringing all things together under one head. It expresses the idea that the purposes of God are not abandoned but brought together in the inclusive and vicarious humanity of Christ.

237 - The high priest's vicarious work on the day of Atonement.

Read Leviticus 16

We see a wonderful parallel in the work of the high priest and that of the Lord Jesus. Yom Kippur – the day of atonement - was a day that gathered up all the worship and the offerings of Israel for that year. We can make the following observations:

[1] the worship on that day was led entirely by one man

[2] he was appointed by God as their representative, in solidarity with their own humanity; he was flesh as they were.

[3] all that he did he did in their name. This was made clear by the fact that he had a memorial breastplate before God, with their names upon it over his chest. When he acted he stood for them.

[4] he consecrated himself by washing and sacrifice

[5] in taking the animal, the victim, he vicariously confessed the sins of all Israel in the act of

vicarious penitence

[6] when the animal was burned as a symbol of God's judgment, he then took the blood into the Holy of Holies and vicariously interceded for all Israel that God would remember His covenant promise and graciously forgive

[7] he then returned to the waiting people outside with an Aaronic blessing.

238 – God dealings with us are concentrated in Christ's person

Read John 17; Hebrews 3, 5

The New Testament writers saw this high priestly work as foreshadowing the vicarious, representative work of Christ for us.

[1] the whole of our worship [=obedience] is led by the one man for us

[2] he comes from God as the true authentic high Priest for us. He is in solidarity with us, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He is in solidarity with all men and women of every race and colour. He bears on His heart the needs, sorrows and the injustices and he comes to offer that obedience to the Father which we cannot offer

[3] all that He does, He does not do for Himself, but in our name, for us.

[4] He consecrated Himself ; "for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" [John 17.19]. The one was acting for the many, "both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one... He is not ashamed to call them brethren" [Hebrews 2.11].

[5] Jesus' entire life in the Spirit, a life of love and obedience, is His self-consecration for us. He offers, not an animal, but Himself in death that He might be the Lamb of God to bear and bear away the sins of the world. As He did this as a human, He affirmed and accepted the just judgments of God. He sealed in His blood the covenant purpose of God for mankind.

[6] After His resurrection, He told Mary Magdalene not to touch Him, because he was ascending to his Father. The High Priest, in ascending, went on His way to the Holy of Holies, to intercede for His people. Then, on the evening of the same day, he met with the disciples in the upper room with a high priest's blessing "Peace be unto you". As John's Gospel records, it is the return of the High Priest Who gives them the gift of the Spirit equipping them for the apostolic commission to the world [Hebrews 3.1].

We can say that God's covenant dealings with Israel were established in the hands of a mediator.

[a] In the God-to-man movement, the high priest entered into the holy presence of God to present all of Israel in his person.

[b] When he vicariously confessed their sins, by dying, and interceded to God for

them, God accepted his forgiven people in the person of the high priest.

“...we can make a twofold statement about Christ, in the light of the New Testament.

[a] When Jesus was born for us at Bethlehem, was baptized by the Spirit in Jordan, suffered under Pontius Pilate, rose again and ascended, we were born again, baptized by the Spirit, suffered, died, rose again and ascended in him, and now he presents us in himself to the Father as God's dear children, and our righteousness is hid with Christ in God – ready to be revealed at the last day.

[b] Conversely, because Jesus has lived our life, offered himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to the Father in our name and on our behalf, as the One for the Many, God accepts us in him. We are accepted in the Beloved Son.

...Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, the One in whom God draws near to men, and the One on whom we can draw near to God through the Spirit. We worship “in the name of Christ” because he has already in our name made the One True Offering to God, and because he ever lives to intercede for us in our name. The Covenant between God and man is concentrated in his Person.” Torrance, James B. [1981] page 139-140

239 – Christ the Mediator: God-to-man & from man-to-God

In considering our creation, Christ's incarnation and our union with Him we can see that, in each of these activities of God, there is a double movement from God to man and man to God.

[1] A God-to-man movement.

In each of these activities of God, the Father works through His Word, His only Son. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the work come to be our actual experience; He brings it about, so to speak. If we were to express in a shorthand way the whole movement towards us, and paying attention to each Person of the Trinity, we would express it as a God-to-man movement that is from [ἐκ] the Father, through [διὰ] the Son and in [ἐν] the Spirit.

Similarly, if we were thinking of what takes place in the Mediator, Jesus Christ, we would say

that at His Incarnation there is a movement from God-to-man, where He brings us a revelation of the Father because He shares the same Being with Him.

[2] A man-to-God movement

In Christ's person there is also the movement from man-to-God. For the eternal Son of God, in taking our flesh, took up into Himself our fallen life and then lived a life "in the flesh" which was thoroughly pleasing to God. He offered to God our full human experience, our birth, our growth, death, pain, anguish, distress, agitation, our incapacity and temptation – all of our bondage and humiliation.

He did this for us, making a human response to God on our behalf. All His mind, will and soul were acting as the human agent in His saving work for mankind.

This vicarious response He made to God on our behalf and in our stead, and He offered it to God when He offers Himself to God through the Spirit. Thinking from the human side then, we might say that when we worship God it is to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.

Both of these movements, from God to man and man to God are found in Christ. They are caught up in His Person for He is the one mediator between God and man.

240 – Placing our faith in Christ as our representative

Our studies so far have led us to understand that God has done all His saving work for us in and through Christ. For us to receive the Spirit of Christ is to be in union with Him so that His life and ours intersect in a united existence.

Before we go on now to look at the life of a Christian within the body of Christ, there are some elements about our creation, Christ's incarnation and our union with Him that we might want to review. For, if we are not careful to maintain what we have learned in the objective teaching of the this course; we may discover ourselves, as we move to more applied teaching, lapsing back into powerless living which causes us to despair.

The danger lies in thinking that what Christ has done is finished and over, and now we must get on and do for ourselves the life which is called "Christian". But the objective teaching we have laid down will keep us balanced. It will help us hold together what we do and that in which we are given to share, in and through Christ. To hold that balance will be a walk of faith. And to do that, we must know about the vicarious human response that Christ has made for us to God in our place and on our behalf; we may express it as the inclusive and representative humanity of Christ. It is vital for it tells us where to centre our trust as we walk by faith.

Let us just consider, as an example, our worship of God, which of course covers the whole of the Christian life, including our obedience to Him, not just actions like singing, praying, adoring Him and sharing in the Lord's Supper [Romans 12.1-2].

241 – Worship & obedience offered to God "in" and "through" Christ

God has established for us a relationship between God and man in Christ. Then worship, like justification, is both "in" Christ as well as "through" Christ.

[1] "In" because that is the way the Father has elected to deal with us from before the creation. He has chosen to express His love towards us in Christ Jesus. "In", because the life we share arises in union with Him. As we have seen before, we "have" the Son. We do not think of having something – whether it is justification, righteousness etc – apart from Him. He "is" our propitiation, righteousness, sanctification, wisdom etc; we do not think of these as being ours unless they are first ours as we are seen by the Father "in" Him.

[2] "Through", because He is the intermediary between God and us, as He is between us and God. No one can come to the Father except through Christ. Any approach, communication, revelation or response will be going "through" that God- man.

The worship that we offer then, is sharing in, participating in, the worship that is Christ's offered to the Father in the Spirit. It is not worshipping on account of some merits, or the benefits of Christ – as if in some way the gifts can be separated from the Giver – as a basis to draw near to God. No, we are only able to come and worship by actually coming "through" Him. We can never separate what we have in Christ from Christ; we always think of having, or doing something because we have Him and do it through Him.

So we are drawn by the Spirit to come near to God the Father, 'in' and 'through' the Mediator, who is our great High Priest. In this way, we are lifted up into the life and communion of the Godhead.

It is the presence of the Spirit within us which makes it possible for Christ's prayer and worship to the Father to so echo in us and come out of our life to the Father as we pray and worship. It is we who pray, but we don't pray in our own name but in the name of Christ, and yet it is not we but He who prays in us, so that what we pray, we pray in the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

242 – Because Christ is the 'God man' He has a dual role

[1] Christ is the God to Whom we pray [1 Corinthians 16.22; Revelation 22.20]. God has given us Christ to be the Object of our love and worship.

[2] He is also a praying Christ; he is the man who prayed.

In coming for us, He lived a life in the power of prayer so that we might be restored to communion with God. He came as man to provide for us that life of human love, obedience and worship for which we were made. In this way He saves us to be what we were always meant to be.

We need to keep both these aspects before us, for if we over-balance on [1] then we shall think of Christ exclusively as God and as a result, emphasise our priesthood alone. So we begin to replace the Priesthood of Christ, and the understanding of the vicarious humanity of Christ begins to disappear in our worship. Our worship and our obedience then becomes man-centred, powerless, boring, wearisome and a great effort.

We are often confident of the God-to-man movement; we know that God has come to us in Christ, made revelation of Himself as Father through the Son. We are sure of His death for us on the cross, His resurrection and ascension. We know that God has spoken through Christ; we value His prophetic ministry as shown by the way we treasure the revelation He has given now found recorded in the Scriptures. But we are very sorely tempted to stop there, and to forget that the life we now live is first based upon His life that has been lived to God for us.

We must be equally certain of the Man-to-God movement which has taken place in the response which Christ made for us to the Father. To do that we need to have a full sense of the humanity of Christ – we need to see that His mind, will and soul are given their proper place in his saving work on our behalf.

“...it is in the complete integrity of his humanity that he acts, as man for us men, in all that we as men are called to do by way of response to the creative and redemptive love of God, in obeying and believing, in repenting and surrendering, in asking and receiving, in serving and praising, in loving and adoring God the Father Almighty as his true and faithful Son - all of which Christ does not for his own sake but for our sake in redeeming, converting and re-creating our humanity in himself, thus restoring it to its truth and freedom and perfection in filial relationship to the Father. It is because the unimpaired human nature of Christ is inseparably united in him to the Creator Son and Word of God, making his humanity quickening and creative, indeed humanizing humanity, that as through union with him in the Spirit we share in his humanity we on our part are so profoundly humanized that our obedience and faith, our repentance and surrender, our service and praise, our love and adoration may be the spontaneously free and glad self-offering of the sons of God to their heavenly Father.”
Torrance T., [1976] p.209-210.

243 - The basic matter of living by faith.

See Boan, 2013DS The Spirit of Christ #181

A practical key is demonstrated by this example of worship. For the most important matter to know in living the Christian life is that we have Someone who has done it all before - He is the "author and perfecter" of our faith [Hebrews 12.2ASV].

Whatever we offer to God in our life as worship and service to Him, we must first recognise that Christ has done it for us, in our name and in our stead. So, our hope to ever be able to do it first rests on trusting that it has already a 'done' thing in Him.

This is where our faith lies in the most practical of matters. For example, do we need to resist temptation everyday? We do; then we must know that it has already been resisted for us in our God-man. If it has been done there, we, conscious we have received of that man's Spirit, know all that we need to know about such resistance. Further, we shall trust God for the power to resist by the Spirit what our Lord has already resisted. In this way, our faith is placed in his work already done. Our personal resistance is our response to His response to His Father.

3 - Redeemed: Purchased for God

244 - Redemption brings joy to God.

Read Revelation 5.9

The Scriptures help us to see that we are people who are "lost". But we must not mistake this image of being lost. It is not something which begins with how we are feeling - we may feel lost, but that is simply the manifestation of something that is really happening in God's heart. When the Scriptures speak of being lost, they mean **lost to God**.

For us to be redeemed is to be purchased for God; and so returned to that relationship with God which He always knew was ours but which we, in our fallen and estranged situation, no longer knew. Small wonder then, that when we are redeemed, we are saved from the life of being lost to God.

For God, it brings Him joy that we are returned to Him as children of His who can now grow up and take our mature sonship. We have been in a far-off country, and have returned home to our Father - He has overwhelming joy.

For us, it is to be released from the emptiness of our former place, a release from those things which held us in bondage; to say nothing of the release from ourselves, our self centred life style and striving and fears. This is powerfully illustrated in Jesus' teaching.

245 - The offence of Jesus eating with "tax collectors and sinners"

See Luke 15.1-2; Boan, [2006] The Waiting Father

Luke 15, verses 1 and 2 records the tax collectors and sinners coming to Jesus who received them and ate with them. In doing this Jesus was offensive to the Pharisees and the scribes, who regarded the tax collectors as unclean sinners. Attributing their own stance to Jesus, they ask Jesus to explain Himself. They had inferred that He would answer them on the grounds that they have assumed.

Jesus did not answer in a way that accepted the presupposition. He told a story, or three stories, which invited the hearers to make a judgment about the matter they had taken issue with Him about.

246 - The "lost" is restored to the owner

Read Luke 15.4-7

Before Jesus came to the central story, His preliminary cameos concerned a shepherd and a woman; each is looking for, in the first place, an animal, in the second place, a thing. The contrast turns on the great difference between the sought and the seeker. The sought is insensitive to its dilemma, indeed has no awareness of the other who is the owner. The seeker alone gives meaning to the word "lost"; that which is lost is lost to the personal seeker. This is the controlling perspective of the first two stories.

The meaning of the 'lostness' of men and women is something which is only understood from the perspective of Him who understands the meaning of their lives. It will come out that the true meaning and dignity of men and women is only known to the Father; Who alone knows who they are. The high dignity and honour of being human is something which is preserved in the mind and heart of the Father who seeks His own.

Humans have been made in the image of God. And because God is a Trinity of Persons relating to one another, understanding the image is controlled by the idea of 'relating'. To have wilfully wandered from the way, to be lost in regards to relating in love and fellowship to God, must mean that there is no way to know oneself and understand one's own human dignity. It will be that, only as the Seeker finds the sought, that the "found" one will come to know who he or she is, for that is only known in restored communion with the Seeker. For the sought, identity will be found in relation to the seeker.

The use of a sheep, an animal which must be watched over and does not have the capacity to care for itself, emphasises that the care of the owner is necessary to the life of all the sheep; and, for those lost, it will turn into a "seeking" care.

It also stresses that while the sheep has no capacity to care for itself, it nevertheless has the mobility and the drives of its basic hungers and curiosities. It, thus, has the possibility of losing itself to the owner. It is active in the process of losing itself; but has no capacity to care for

itself. Nor, once lost, can it seek a way back - being unaware that it is lost.

There are two groups to be considered, both belong to the owner. One of the groups is described as being at home, they are sheep who are in the fold and have a proximity to the Owner. Coming to their richest expression in the elder brother of the third story, those in the fold are within earshot, they are physically close. But, as we shall see, they seem to be close and preoccupied with the things of the Father, but their knowledge of his love leaves much to be desired. It is shown that they alike are also lost to Him.

The second group is separated from the main group. However, the separation is presented from the point of view of the owner, He is described as "losing one of them" [verse 4, 8]. This smaller, separated group [the "lost sheep" and the "lost coin"] receives the attention of the owner. He strenuously seeks them out. This explains Jesus' reception of, and eating with, the tax collectors and sinners. It is a judgment upon those who are righteous in their own sight that He has no call for them. It is to be noted in the interchange of the third story that the elder brother is exhorted to have the joy of the Father - it does not say that he comes to that place.

247 - The initiative of the Owner redeems the "lost" to Himself

The owner/seeker finds the lost one by his own effort. The finding is the work of the seeker. This is the point of "sheep" and "coins" - they are not able to find themselves.

[1] "What man among you..." Or what woman" - it will be the owner's action which we must concentrate upon to understand the mission.

[2] "if he has" ... if she has" - the sheep and the coins are theirs. They have them within their control and direction. They steward these things in a way that mirrors God as the Steward and Director of our life.

[3] "and has lost...loses one" - the understanding of lost is solely from the point of view of the owner.

[4] "leaves ... and goes after"..."lights a lamp, sweeps the house and searches" - the activity of finding is solely the work of the seeking owner.

Later, in the prodigal's case he comes to his senses, but his coming home is presented, from the point of view of the Father, as him having been "found". This perspective is what the first two stories establish before we read the third story. It is that the "finding" is really the Father's work; His heart is revealed to be a seeking heart which desires us. Albeit, the third story portrays Him as a "waiting" Father, in respect of a prodigal son. The seeking of God is His waiting for us. In a way that befits sheep and coins, the owner must be a pro-active seeker. In the case of those made in the image of God, He waits for them to come freely, of their own accord; it is the only way he will have them come home to Him.

If the Father is seen as waiting, it can only be true that His heart is the seeking heart because such an active work of seeking has been committed to his Son. The Son of God acts as the agent of His Father. God is the prime Mover, Who, in conjunction with the obedient Son He sends, initiates the finding of those "lost" to Him.

It is while engaged on that holy mission in seeking those lost to the Father, that the Son tells these three stories to one group of the lost brothers who do not know Father's heart as well as His agent Son does.

248 - The joy of the owner is the thing to understand

When he has found it, ...calls neighbours... Rejoice with me"[5]. The seeker has joy in the finding of the lost one. The seeker calls others who are nearby to him – his neighbours – to share in his joy. The joy of the seeker in finding and returning with the lost is equivalent to the joy in heaven [including the angels, God's "neighbours"] over the repentance of sinners who are lost and return from squandering their inheritance of sonship. God's 'neighbours' in heaven rejoice over His finding His lost ones .

The heart of the Father is revealed through the story of Jesus, who, as the Son of God has knowledge of the joy of God that we cannot track nor plumb. For, it is in the joy to God, who has found us so lost to Himself, that we see the reason why the Father has sent the Son. It is an utter joy to Him when we are brought back into relationship: to sweet fellowship with the Father brought about by the work of the Son with whom tax collectors and sinners share a meal.

It is a joy shared "in heaven" - for the neighbours see things the way the Father does; they share his heart and understand his joy.

249 - Joy of God when sinners repent

In the story of the sheep, the punch line at the end [verse 7] makes a very powerful contrast between the two groups. For we must not forget that the stories are told to those that asked the question. In other words, the tax collectors and sinners did not have this story told to them. It's application is for the scribes and the Pharisees.

In telling the first story Jesus uses the language of the Pharisees and scribes by his words "sinners", "righteous persons" and "repentance". He makes the shocking statement about the comparative joy to the hearts of the heavenly beings. They have more joy over the sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

This comes to mean this: God is more excited in His heart over the one person that the Pharisees call a "sinner" who comes to repentance than over the ninety nine persons they call "righteous" and who see themselves as having no need to "repent". Of course the ninety nine

are the Pharisees and scribes. They see no need for repentance because they are justified in their own eyes as “righteous”. This is manifestation of their blindness. It is for this reason, as Jesus says in another place [John 9.39-41], their sin remains - to accuse them on the judgment day.

While it is true that if a sinner comes to God he will need to come in “repentance”; that is not what qualifies him for the coming. These three stories will actually make clear that he is drawn by the seeking heart of the Father, and because he is coming to the Father, of course, he will come with repentance. The repentance does not qualify the sinner to come, it is a manifestation that he has had a revelation of the Father’s seeking heart toward him, and that He is his Father.

It is the coming that shows that he knows he will be received, and so knows the Father’s heart. It is the coming with repentance that shows that he comes as a wayward son. It is not turning from his waywardness that makes him a son, but that he has come to know that he is a son has turned him to his Father and so from his waywardness; hence repentance. Estranged sons, coming home to fathers as sons, when they have not had fellowship with their seeking Father, always will repent. Far from qualifying him for sonship, the repentance is that which is the result of knowing that His father receives him.

This is why there is joy in heaven over the one sinner who repents. The repentance is a clear manifestation that a son, who knows himself to have been wayward, returns because he is convinced of the welcome which he will receive from his father. This is true even if he understands this imperfectly [as we shall see] for the main thing, to the Father, is that the son has returned. Having returned, they have much time for rich fellowship to take deeper knowledge of the shared life they both now are in the place to enjoy.

Whenever we think of ourselves as the “redeemed of the Lord”, then we need to remember not so much to focus on what we are free from, although those things are many. We need to see the joy of our Father in that we were “lost” and have been “found” as far as He is concerned. We are restored to Him - this is the Godward side of redemption. Because we are restored to Him, we are restored to the life we are to have with Him.

250 - Returning to our Father means deliverance from His enemies

Before we make a study of those forces and consequences from which we are set free, we must recall that we would never have been in their hands had we not sinned. It was the failure of the human race to faithfully obey God that brought these things upon us.

The significant point is that returning to God’s shared life is, at the same time, the deliverance from these foes. The deliverance ‘from’ is not unconnected with our salvation to the shared life of God, our Father. It is simply the corollary of it.

When we are returned to a life of obedience to God, then, to live that life is, at the same time, to resist the devil and the world. Obedience to God will be the denial of self, and not letting sin rule us through our body thus making no provision for the flesh. Avoidance of these things is not our focus. They are simply a consequence of our positive life of obeying God.

251 - Being the redeemed by the Lord involves being delivered 'from'

To share in the life of righteousness, peace and joy of God is to know the kingdom of God [Romans 14.17]. We previously thought God was our enemy, but we have discovered, in being reconciled to Him, just who is really hostile towards us; it is these from whom He has redeemed us.

Some of the things the Scripture tells us that we are free from are listed here:

[1] redemption from the wrath of God means that we are also saved from the consequences of sin. We now see God working all things for our good, even through those matters with which He disciplines us [Hebrews 12].

[2] Because we have died with Christ we are saved from the power of death. We have gone through it "in Christ".

[3] Because we have been saved from death then we are saved from sin's reign over us.

[4] And since the power of sin is the law, we have been saved from the law of sin and death.

[5] We have been delivered from the curse of the law, which was upon us.

[6] We have been saved from ourselves - our own self-centredness; being now free to live for others.

[7] We have been saved from the power of the flesh by the work of Christ on the cross and also by the application of that power to our lives through the Holy Spirit.

[8] We have been redeemed from the futile way of life handed to us from our forefathers. We are not caught up in their generational sin or bias [Ephesians 2].

[9] We have been removed from the disturbance between Jew and Gentile - there is now one new humanity.

The enemies which the believer overcomes through Christ in practical every-day living 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 judgment of the law, Romans 7.1-13

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

4 - Chosen - an elect people

252 – Jesus Christ is the elect and the rejected Man

See Boan [2013] God and Us #25-30

We have seen from our considerations of God being holy, that holy love is always exclusive of others. In the Old Testament the election of the individual is not just a differentiation, in the sense of being chosen, it is also accompanied by a life lived in faith and therefore, in contrast to others. The lives of the rejected and the elect are lived out in parallel – alongside one another.

This presents a two-sided picture as wrath and grace are seen as Israel lives beside the heathen, Abel beside Cain, Isaac beside Ishmael, Jacob beside Esau, David beside Saul, Jerusalem beside Samaria.

Jesus Christ' coming, after the final last, great prophet of the Old Testament, John the Baptist, creates a new situation that lifts the veil over election.

[1] His life as the elect of God shows all that is to be seen without these opposite numbers living beside Him. He is unaccompanied by a Cain, an Ishmael, an Esau or a Saul.

[2] He does not need them because He is Himself both the elect man and the rejected man; and He is both at once. He is made sin and so bears the rejection of God and the damnation of human sin. All who are elected are elected in Him - all who are rejected are rejected in Him. Unlike the Old Testament characters, there is no one outside, or alongside Him as a foil in this work.

[3] Jesus Christ is the revelation of the superiority of the electing will of God over the rejecting will of God. The will of God that rejects the world in its sin and rebellion is seriously seen in Jesus - the other side is also clear. In Jesus Christ, God elects men and women, and says Yes to them; all of God's promises find their Yes in Jesus Christ [2 Corinthians 1.19-20].

[4] Jesus Christ is the reality of the elect man; we see in Him what the life of such a man practically looks like. Everything that He is, is not for His own sake, but for others, an unlimited number of other men and women. He is the promise and proclamation of their own election.

We can say for "many". But if we cannot say "all", it is not because of any weakness or limitation of the work of Jesus. It is intended for all as it is sufficient for all. Speaking of God's character, we can see His intention of the Saviour's work is for all.

"...who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"[1 Timothy 2.4]

"I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but have the light of life"[John 8.12, See also 9.5, 12.46]

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" [John 1.29],

"...but that the world might be saved through him" [John 3.17]

"...this one is indeed the Saviour of the world" [John 4.42].

"The bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world" [John 6.33, 51]

"...He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" [1 John 2.2]

We cannot consider the number of the elect as a closed matter. It is after all, a matter within the sovereign control of God. On the other hand - we cannot equate their number with all men and women [John 3.16]. The elect of God are elected "from" the world [John 15.10]. They are always the many who are few [Matthew 20.28, 22.14]. Nowhere does the New Testament say the whole humanity of the world is saved.

253 – The elect bear witness as recipients of grace

[1] The content and life of the individual elect is not a private matter.

He is saved and blessed on the basis of his election. And he is elect in order to bear witness to it. The task of the elect is to be a voice of witness for Jesus Christ and Father [Revelation 4.4, 7.9, 16; Revelation 14.4ff; 5.9f; 7.10-15; 14.2-4. Jesus Christ is elect to be a Witness, and so are those who are elect in Him. Those who are elect in Him are to bear witness of Him [Acts 1.8 John 15.4f, 1.7f, 1.16 1 Corinthians 2.2; 1 Corinthians 1.26c compare with James 2.5].

This is true of the Old Testament witnesses. Those whom Paul calls 'vessels of wrath' and the 'vessels of mercy' confront each other in solidarity with one another. They both are found within Israel [Romans 9.6-24]. Yet their confrontation is a powerful witness of the elect and rejected. Both groups point forward to the One Mediator in whom the electing will of God has borne witness to itself.

[2] This bearing witness is seen in the apostolic group:

Jesus is Himself the Apostle [Hebrews 3.1, John 5.8 "sent by the Father"] and the apostles also share in Jesus' mission [John 17.18ff, 20.21ff].

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke bear witness to the three stages in the apostle's training. Each of these stages declares both their own inadequacy to bear witness to Jesus, while at the same time, the sufficiency they have in Jesus alone.

[a] The calling at the Galilean stage. This emphasises Jesus' Prophetic office.

[b] Then they come to function as visible representatives of disciples of Jesus, the community. This emphasises the Priestly stage, and has to do with the Passion.

[c] Finally, there is their commission to speak to the world after the resurrection and Ascension. Here the emphasis falls on Jesus as a true and exalted King.

Taking the stages in order:

1] The first stage is the appointment of the apostles.

It is veiled. It is the Teacher and the Prophet of Nazareth calling followers to be enrolled in His school. He calls them to seek and gather men. He ordains them, to be with Him [Mark 3.14,16] and that they should preach and cast out demons [Mark 3.14-15]. They go with Him [Mark 3.34 Matthew 12.46ff].

To those who are outside of their group Jesus speaks in parables - which, if Father gives them ears to hear they will. But to the disciples, Jesus explains the parables, for He is the key to the mystery of the kingdom given to them. He teaches them to do their work as He does it [feeding 5000] They are with Him because He is with them.

In Matthew 10, Jesus appoints the disciples as apostles; for them to engage in healing is part of the prophetic task [Luke 9.2]. He instructed them in their going out to this work. [a] That they need no help from men, or support, they bring a free message [Matthew 10]. [b] That temptations and persecutions are to be expected. Mtt 10.24. [c] That they need to fearlessly confess Him before men.

[2] Second stage

This deals with the movement from Galilee to Jerusalem and the three related predictions of suffering stated on the way. On the road to death Jesus gives the apostles their commission and office. Matthew 17 also speaks of the transfiguration, Jesus' joy at the Father's revelation to babes [Luke 10.21ff] and the need for the disciples to speak it from the housetops [Luke 12.3ff]; they are not to fear persecution. They are to make sure that the light is seen [see the image of the candlestick Luke 11.33].

Up to this point, there is an awareness that a Prophet had arisen and the crowds understood this [Luke 7.16ff, Matt 21.11,46]. At Matthew 16.13 ff, Peter went further and declared Jesus to be the Christ! And this would be proclaimed later .

The command to silence expresses the secret character of the content of the confession [verse 20]; it is particularly sharp in Mark 8.30. Such revelation was not to be stated openly at that time because it was still a secret matter between the Father and the Son and is to be revealed at the final stage.

In the midst of this action the apostles were appointed [John 6.14-15]. At that time, Jesus would not allow the people to make Him King, since the cross was really the basis for that

being declared. He also spoke of the temptation and sifting of the disciples, the disclosure of their human frailty [John 6.70].

The learning curve of the disciples is carefully constructed around the three predictions of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

[a] At the first prediction of Suffering Jesus brought a sharp rebuke, followed by teaching on denial [Matt 16.21ff, 16.24ff]. This was followed by Peter's uncomprehending action at Transfiguration, and then the inability of the disciples to drive out the demon because of their little faith [Matt 16.21ff, 17.14-20].

[b] At the second prediction of suffering, the disciples were concerned with "Who is the greatest?" [Matt 18.1 Jn 3.3 Luke 10.20, 10.41 Luke 14.23ff].

[c] At the third prediction there was Mrs Zebedee's request for her boys to be honoured. [Matt 20.20//Mk 10.35]. Jesus asks "Who can drink the drink and be baptised with His baptism". All the disciples got angry and all learned that greatness finds its expression in servanthood [Matthew 20.24ff].

Jesus issues warnings about being deceived; the false Christs would come, to lead astray even the elect. If they were not elect they would be lead astray. They fell asleep, they all deserted Him and fled, Peter denied Him, Judas had already betrayed Him.

The apostles are presented in a state of absolute blindness, misunderstanding, error and denial. In fact, they did not follow Him. They were presumptuous, they fell asleep, they ran away, they disowned Him and betrayed Him. But while they were doing this, Jesus was for them, watching them, praying for them, humbling Himself, serving them, accepting the cross and the death and passion [Matt 26.26]. He died alone, with thieves, both the repentant and the unrepentant, and He prayed alone. The apostles could be reconcilers or redeemers; they could only withdraw behind Jesus and leave Him to go forward alone.

Peter as the clear example: he acted as the apostle's spokesman, but in the subsequently satanically inspired defection, he was moved to wild flight and denial. If he was their leader, then he led in mistakes, defections, misunderstanding, weakness and disloyalty. And he was led through the temptations and failure to the faithfulness of Jesus that never fails. What is Peter apart from Jesus' word, intercession, death and glory?

Peter illustrates that there is no apostle who is not a brand snatched from the burning; the basis and authority and glory of the apostle is that he is bearing witness by the grace of God! It was similar for Paul [1 Corinthians 15.10]. It is upon such a rock as Peter that Jesus will build his church.

It is Jesus, who is the one Victor over temptation who stood with them - in that sense they have overcome. It is in virtue of His priestly office that they are priests.

It is through men, called, authorised and equipped in this way that Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

It is through what these men say there is a binding and a loosing. What they say and do has the power to close kingdoms because Jesus wills it, acting Himself and deciding in it. These are the ones who are subjectively and objectively humbled, and therefore bound to Jesus, dependent wholly on Him and living by and with Him. They are givers because they are receivers of the Lord's Supper, of His body and blood. The power of the keys of the kingdom is the power of their mission.

[3] The final stage

There is an all-inclusive form in which the witness of the apostles meets us in the end of the Gospels. It is the great commission, which in Luke, Mark and Acts precedes the Ascension, just after the Risen one has revealed the meaning of the Scriptures.

The attitude of the disciples was confused and frightened [Luke 24.37], and some doubted [Matt 28.17]. They could not carry out the appointment; Jesus was still necessary to them, by His presence and word, to carry it out. In this way the Gospel writers show they understand that understand the apostles, at the time they received the Kingly commission, were quite unable in themselves.

Matthew 28.19a speaks of the sequence "make disciples of all nations, ...go...baptise....teach". Jesus was telling them that, in the making of disciples, they were to 'Make of them what you are, let them learn what you have learned'. This looked back to the first stage of their own call. What He told them as Galileans Jews was now to go to all the world. This vindicates Him as not just the teacher of the Jews but of all men [Matthew 10.27]. His prior command uttered then vindicated the power from the outset. They were to rely on His authority in every age [Matthew 28.20b. Luke 10.16 Luke 24.49]; they were to await the Holy Spirit, who is the power of Jesus. John 20.21 parallels this Pentecostal event.

5 - Called

Objectively, our calling is the work of Jesus Christ in his prophetic office. Subjectively, it is an event of revelation and knowledge by which the being of a man or woman is not only affected but seized and refashioned to become new being.

254 – "Calling" in the sense of God calling us to Himself

Barth, K. Church Dogmatics iv.3.2nd half, p. 535

Christians are elect and so therefore are called. The election precedes to the future event of the calling; these two go together [1 Corinthians 1.1, Romans 1.1,8.30, Rev 17.14, Jude 1, 2

Thessalonians 2.13]. This calling is to a life which is holy and therefore faithful. Both election and calling are free events - they are a free act of grace on God's side, and a free decision of response from the human side as well. Yet it is clear that without the first there would not be the second.

[1] The "calling" of the individual is set within the universal work already done.

The human situation has been altered by the Word of God; by the existence and the work of Christ. This work has a universal impact; a matter which the Old Testament texts indicated, declaring that the Gentiles, as well as Israel, will have an interest in the saving work of God [Jeremiah 33.9, Isaiah 66.1 Ephesians 2.14].

The call does not speak of [a] an inner light available to all men. We need to hear the distinction made between the people of God and others in the world. [b] Nor is the call simply an eschatological mystery; something that will become clear at the end. [c] The call is not the final result of the mission of Israel and more latterly of the Christian church to the world and other men [Matthew 28.19]. It is not something pushed off into the future.

But while it is true, the world had been impacted and changed by God's action in history, it is not appreciated in a way that everyone could see. What the apostles did not say was that the general human situation was the same as they themselves were. They did not think the as yet 'uncalled' were the same as the called. In their call, the Christians had been separated from the world.

The way that the apostles would express themselves to the as-yet-uncalled was to consider all of them as the ones who 'were to be' called. On God's side, all things were ready for all [Matthew 22.4]. This sets our own attitude to the as-yet-uncalled. Their calling is before them no less surely than the fact that Jesus has come, died and risen for them. This is the one thing we know truly about them. In this sense, we must always see them as those who are still to be called.

For no matter how seriously we take the distinctions between Christians and non Christians, we are never to think of a rigid separation. We are to live tolerantly, communicate with, serve and bear witness to the world. We would not be evidencing that we are called ourselves if we did not! Only in this way can the uncalled learn of their own culpable intolerance of the Word of God.

Our personal calling stands in constant need of repetition and renewal; so it never stands so fully behind us that it is not also before us. This is what is described in Israel by the quotation from Isaiah 65.2

"And Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me' [Romans 10.20].

255 – Calling as “Illumination”

See 1 Peter 2.9; Ephesians 5.14; Colossians 1.13; Acts 26.18;
Hebrews 6.4-5; 10.32; 2 Corinthians 4.6

The calling of God is not simply the “call to the church”. Rather the light of life carries through its particular work in a man to a conclusion. It shines on all men, but in the event of “calling” does not simply shine on a man, it illuminates him so that his blind eyes are healed and can see. A man is called and becomes a Christian as he is illuminated. The light of the world imparts itself to him.

“But you are a ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession’ that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” [1 Peter 2.9 ASV]

“But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” [Ephesians 5.14ASV].

It is the light of the Resurrected One which shines on the called man who is delivered from the power of darkness [Colossians 1.13].

“...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God...”[Acts 26.18]

“...those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...” [Hebrews 6.4-5]

“...remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings...” [Hebrews 10.32].

“For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” [2 Corinthians 4.6].

Illumination is the calling that brings a total alteration to the one on whom it falls [Luke 11.34ff]. The light bears fruit [Ephesians 5.9]; there is an armour of light [Romans 13.12]. When a man or woman becomes a Christian he is a child of the light [John 12.36 1 Thessalonians 5.5 Luke 16.8]; and we are said to be “light in the Lord” [Ephesians 5.8].

We are already separated from darkness [John 8.12;12.46]. Evil has its basis in that a man hates the light and will not come to it [John 3.20]; the works of darkness are to be “exposed” [Ephesians 5.11f]; a function only the light can do, by virtue of what it is.

Consistent with the witness of the elect, Christians are to be noticed by others, they are to shine as lights in the world [Philippians 2.15], proclaiming the acts of the One who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Their light should shine before men in such a way that their good deeds are perceived [Matthew 5.14 see also John 8.13, 12.46]. Notice that we are not only dealing here with a starting point in the Christian life, but what makes a person totally a Christian.

256 – Calling as “an Awakening”

Complementing the picture of illumination is that of being woken up. There is an awakening.

“And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for salvation is nearer us than when we first believed...”[Romans 13.11]

“For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”[Ephesians 5.14ASV].

This picture is rich in three ways.

[a] It places what happens to a Christian as analogous to what happened to Jesus Christ at His resurrection. As One who has awakened from among the dead Jesus calls the Christian to share His risen life.

[b] It describes the Word of God as a summons which overtakes a man, just as the word of Jesus overtook Jairus' daughter and Lazarus, raising them from the dead. It emphasises the dynamic action of the call of God as arousing someone.

[c] It shows that Christians are those who, having been awakened, can fall asleep again, and need to be re-awakened, again and again [1 Thessalonians 5.24]; as we see in the parable of the foolish virgins [Matthew 26]. We have a Lord who will not leave us in peace, but will summon us to wake up again. God does this with the church continually.

Both word-pictures, of illumination and awakening, describe an existence which is alert and not dull, one which is enlightened and not dim. They describe imparted revelation that is effective, and imparted knowledge which is active.

257 - Apostles bear witness, they do not call people to follow Christ

By calling we mean the direct personal work of God to call and this is the function of Jesus Christ. The apostles, and those who are secondary witnesses after them, were not mediators of the call. They are neither bringers of the call nor are agents of the call themselves. They simply confess Him as His servants [2 Corinthians 4.5]. Then, as they preached the gospel, they bore witness of what they knew of God and His work in Christ. When a response was forthcoming - as God Himself called the listeners, they responded to that response, seeing it as a work of the Spirit.

This is quite important in our day, when evangelists, in their desire to see people “won” to Christ stress that the “winning” of lives to Christ is the work of men and women. Under the pressures of such mistaken thinking, after a presentation of some Gospel truth, they very often give people something to do, perhaps to raise their hand, come forward, or seek counseling. In doing this, they overstep their call to be a witness, by life and speech. In pressing for a result, they move out of step with the Spirit Who is attending the preaching of the Word.

This failure to see themselves simply as witnesses also has implications for the hearers. For, as a result of this form of preaching, a person may be drawn into:

[a] focussing upon what the preacher says to do in order to respond, instead of finding within himself the draw and response which is being generated by the call of the Spirit.

[b] a decisionist style of response, where the act of will to respond is emphasized rather than the registration of the desire to respond by being drawn by God. In this way the gentleness of operation, so characteristic of the freedom of the Spirit, is quenched as the pressure of the situation and the preacher is maximized, when it should not be there at all. A result of this confusion, sown right from the beginning, the recipient of the message later finds it hard to distinguish the gentle tug of the Spirit in later life. By this initial encounter, the new “disciple”, is trained by the evangelist to live his/her life in the church looking for direction from others instead of the Spirit.

[c] believing that they are a Christian because of some response they made. In which case they are made to focus upon what they have done as the basis for believing that they are now different. In this way, their focus is drawn away from the objective work of God for them as the proper object of their faith. Instead their life is made to be more centred around their decisions, their feelings and their experiences; a copy of the old life.

Sometimes, for the benefit of thinking clearly, but not as a distinction which is practical, theologians have distinguished between the external call, coming through the preaching of the word and the sacraments and the internal call, meaning the direct calling of the Holy Spirit. They also distinguish a once-for-all call from a continual call which happens over the whole of the Christian's life. These must never be separated even though they may be distinguished.

258 - Goal of this call

[1] The goal is simply that a person becomes a Christian man or woman.

[a] We need to clarify that this calling has nothing to do with the fact that a person stands in a Christian tradition, culture, or a set of Christian ideas, principles, habits or customs. To be a Christian in this sense, no calling is required.

[b] Nor is it true that we ought to think of calling, in the medieval sense of “vocation” meaning the special calling to a particular task.

In the New Testament, the word “Christian” occurs only in three places [1Peter 4.16, Acts 11.26, 26.28]; and the missionary command of Matthew 28.19 was not that the disciples should make of the nations Christians, but that they should make them disciples, like themselves.

The men and women who were gathered in the ἐκκλησία [church] were called in the let-

ters, πίστοι [faithful ones], ἅγιοι [holy ones, or saints], ἀγαπητοί [beloved ones], and above all, ἐκλεκτοί [chosen ones] and therefore κλήτοι [called ones]. Where the word χριστιάνοι [Christians] is used it is filled out by these words above, especially κλητοί.

Those who have become disciples through the apostles have placed their faith in Christ, and so have placed themselves under His name. They have already recognised that it is a Name above every other [Philippians 2] and they bow to this Name now. It is because they are 'called' that they are Christians [Philippians 2.10].

What is to be understood here is:

[i] The active knowledge of faith in Christ is not something all men have [2 Thessalonians 3.2; Luke 18.8]

[ii] Sometimes, attachment to Jesus Christ may simply be intellectual, a function of a particular doctrine of Christ. This would mean that Christ belongs to the Christians rather than they belong to Him. That a man attaches Jesus Christ to himself is no basis for the Christian life - he would have to change, so as to forget himself. Jesus would have become his creature instead of the Creator; Christ would then be the exponent of the man's faith rather than its essence.

[iii] We cannot be brought to yield to Jesus Christ as if by a greater power which compels us to go that way. To know "Jesus is Lord" is to know that He has chosen us [John 15.3]; when Jesus Christ makes Himself known as Lord it is a gentle operation. To receive a yoke that is not 'easy and light' is not the yoke of Jesus [Matthew 11.30]. A forced Christian is not a Christian.

[2] When the calling of God comes, the power of the free grace is released. This brings a person to a free response which is the deepest power, and so typical of the call itself.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." [2 Corinthians 3.17].

In this way the seizure of power by Jesus is distinguished from all others. He seizes us so as to set us free.

[3] The called person is still a true human

The new form of existence the Christian has does not take an angelic form or divine form - it is still a human form [John 17.15]. It is not the cancellation of the old, but the investing of man, as a child of Adam, with the new clothing of the armour of God. Christians have not broken away from their union with their humanity.

This is clearly seen in the life of Peter and the teaching of Paul. Romans 7-8 speaks of how sin and guilt are behind the Christian now, but yet are real potent factors in the present.

Christians are different from all others, not separated but differentiated. They are a new creation [1 John 3.1-2; Romans 8.14-16; 2 Corinthians 5.17; Galatians 3.26]. They have a freedom which is for them here and now - although hidden from the world - but as yet to be revealed

there and then, at the future coming of the Lord.

[4] *The call is to discipleship - a continuing way of following.*

The recognition of this call by a man or woman, and the offer of it by Jesus, is simply the recognition of His right of Lordship. We have been given into the hands of the Son by the Father [John 17.6ff] and so the Christian is made over to his Master; and he transfers himself to the One to whom he belongs. In this way, he freely escapes from the one to whom he does not belong - which is himself. "You are Christ's..." [1 Corinthians 3.23, Romans 14.7ff, 1 Corinthians 15.10, Romans 1.1].

The gift and the work of the Holy Spirit is the Word's power of this call. It is the placing of this man in fellowship [κοινωνία] – common life - with Him. [2 Corinthians 13.13, Romans 8.9, 1 Corinthians 12.3, 6.19, 2 Corinthians 3.17 Ephesians 3.17 Romans 5.8]. This is the goal of his awakening, his illumination, which is his call.

[5] *Union with Christ*

"Fellowship" with Jesus Christ is the New Testament expression for where we have now come to be. In understanding 'fellowship' as being a life-union, a shared relationship, its use preserves the truth of there being no identity with the Leader. Rather, it asserts a relationship in which He is leader and we are followers; He the Owner, we the possession; He the giver of the Holy Spirit, we the receivers of the Spirit. In *fellowship* both are what they are, not mixing up or exchanging their functions and roles, each retains their own person.

So we see that union does not mean; [a] the dissolution or disappearance of the one into the other; [b] nor does it mean identification. It is a self-giving, which for all the disparity, is nevertheless total on both sides. Like Christ's own humanity and deity this union is, at this time, concealed. It may be known in faith, but not by sight.

[1] Union as seen from Christ's side

We begin our thinking about the union with the Self-giving of Christ to the Christian. In this we need to see that: [a] Christ is unique in this work, He has no assistant or fellow worker to accompany Him in this. [b] But having risen from the dead and continued in the work of the Holy Spirit, He will not be alone. What the union means for the Lord is that He will not be Himself without His own, Christ without Christians. He will not be Master without the disciples, or Leader without followers, the Head without the members, the King without fellows in His people. He does not go alone but wills to be who He is and do what He does in company with others whom He calls for the purpose, namely, with the "despicable folk" called Christians – to use Barth's turn of phrase.

[2] Union as seen from the Christian's side.

It is important to state that union is a reciprocal matter. The union of the Christian with Christ is as real as Christ's with him. He does not believe, confess Him and obey Him on his own

resources. These are undertaken through the Spirit, the Christian is not only called to reciprocate in this union, but also empowered to do so. This is to take seriously what sort of man he is. The union is a truth that is not outside him but in him.

He also cannot part from Christ. The union of the Christian with Christ is always presumed and is the basis for the exhortation that so often accompanies it. That Christ is, by the Spirit, "in the Christian" means that: [a] spatially, they are present in one another. [b] Christ speaks, acts and rules as the Lord of the Christian's thinking, speech and action. He is taking possession of his free reason [2 Corinthians 10.5]. This is done without any suppression of the Christian or any attempt to control him by Christ. The human person of the Christian is validated and honoured in a full and genuine freedom.

That the Christian is in Christ means that his free human acts are orientated on Christ, in agreement with his being and action. He is awakened to express a true genuine humanity, and is to live, as the Mediator does, for others.

6 - Changed

259 - Living by the faith of the Son of God.

See Galatians 2.20

From His side of the covenant relation, God has been faithful to us; it is His righteousness that has saved us. He has expressed this faithfulness to us in the person of Jesus Christ. In the history of Jesus Christ, God has accomplished a full salvation for us.

He is the God Man who has come to us from heaven, as God has reached down to provide for us a Revelation of Himself through Christ, his incarnate Word. This One is at the same time, the Reconciler between us and God. In this priestly work Christ has, in His person bridged the gap between us and God.

Christ, in His earthly life, has also been the proper man who has offered to God a life of repentance for us, a proper confession of our sin because He did not contest the rightness of God's judgment upon us. His priestly work of offering himself for us has, in his death and resurrection been vindicated for Him; His justification has become ours in Him. Our justification before God is secured in this way.

He has also lived the proper faithful life that a man should live before God. His faith has triumphed in the way that He has responded to God fully; as we should have but could not. Consequently when we have faith in Him as the true man of faith, we find that He is the pioneer of our faith. We live by the "faith of the Son of God" [Galatians 2.20] who loved us and gave himself for us. He has, in His resurrection been enthroned as king and this human life that He has elevated we share in; He has become to us our sanctification. The resurrected life that He has, becomes ours in Him.

260 - The miracle of a person becoming a Christian!

How does a person become the subject of this Christ event – when and how does it come to be applied to him or her? It is both a mystery and a miracle. For man is by his own situation and fallen nature an enemy of God; he is not alive to God, it is impossible for him to have faith in God or to hope in Him, let alone to love Him. How is it that a man can be set in place within a relationship to become the faithful partner of such a gracious God - a partner in the covenant of grace?

No man can go on a pilgrimage to find God, or reason himself to God. The darkness of mind, and the estranged position of the man and woman who lives for themselves and their own life and soul means they cannot find God by any method of their own.

Mark 10.24 records Jesus saying that it is hard to enter the kingdom of God and in fact, for the rich especially, although really for all men and women, it is impossible. When the disciples ask in astonishment, “then who can be saved?” Jesus answers in a general way, applicable to all men and women, “that with men it is impossible” but it is not so “with God”. This makes clear that any entry to the kingdom of God is a matter of God’s work and miracle.

So, God will have to find us. It is part of His faithfulness to us that just as He has provided for us in Jesus Christ to be saved, so He brings that salvation to our knowledge through the Spirit of Christ.

God makes Jesus Christ a true prophet to/for us. Through the apostolic message, which speaks of the historic work that Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, there is an accompanying work of the Spirit to wake us up [awakening] and to make us alive [quickening] and to illuminate us. This new beginning of life is His baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is a judgment of God upon us and yet it is the decision of a God who keeps us free within His judgment upon us. The possibility is not within the grasp of man, it is only within the possibility of God.

261 - New garments imply new persons

The judgment of God is his decision to set us free to become what we ought to be and to do what we ought to do – to have faith in God. Scripture helps us to understand the nature of the mystery of this miracle by using a number of pictures. We begin with the pictures centred around clothing.

To understand these pictures of the new garments we must know that in the ancient world clothes did not make the man. That is a modern understanding. An ancient person never wore clothes that were inappropriate to him – for in that way he would be claiming to be someone he wasn’t and so would be socially deceptive - whether we think of the poor man elevating himself by wearing clothes of the upper class; or by the intentional deceptive way in which a person who was wanting to pass themselves off as a less important person, and

so to travel incognito, would “dress down” so as not to stand out as a normally conspicuous person of society. No, in the ancient world ‘the man made the clothes’; clothes expressed who the man was in society.

Second, we must not think that the image of clothes merely means that something external has been draped over a man as he becomes a Christian, as if a thing external to his inner self has been thrown over him so that he appears from without to be someone he is not. Rather it is the reverse, as we shall see from the change worked in the “inner man” spoken of below. In the very changing of the person there is a miraculous change that requires the new clothes to fit the man.

[1] Not without a wedding garment

See Matthew 22.1-14

In the teaching of Jesus, when the king’s invitation was rejected by those who were invited to his feast as his covenant people, he commanded his servants to go out into the highways to invite those who would have been dressed as the riff-raff, the poor, the hungry and the destitute, both good and bad. Then they are provided with the marriage garment as a festive clothing fitted to their new status as they approach the marriage banquet laid out by the king. The garment is the essential part of the gift of being invited. How like the gracious Host to provide the garment which expresses their changed status and also their way to honour His event?

Jesus is not castigating a simple fault of etiquette committed by the man without the garment who attempts to seat himself at the table. The man is coming in his natural old self, with the old rags in which he was accustomed to live. He shows he has no awareness of the honour bestowed upon him. The implication in Jesus picture is profound, he cannot come in his old natural way to the king’s table. The invitation has changed his status. This is a parable told to the Pharisees and chief priests [Matt 21.45] who understood themselves as able to be “righteous” by their own standard life style and so able to enter. What Jesus is teaching them is that the entry is a gift and the dress is indicative of a new man who is made new, and dressed as a gift worthy of the access granted to him.

[2] White robes as official robes

See Revelation 3.4-5; 6.11; 7.2

Those chosen and called of God, who are seen gathered around the throne of God in worship are not dressed in any old clothes or according to how they would like to dress themselves. Those garments are an official designation of their new being, and that they are empowered and able to take place in the activity of the worship of God in heaven. Their clothing speaks of who they are in the grace and call of God. They are the saints, the called, the righteous.

[3] The whole armour of God – new dress for a new conflict

*See Isaiah 59.15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5.8 and Ephesians 6.11-16;
Boan, 2013 Jesus Exalted, #151, 152, 171*

This armour is something a Christian can take in the freedom and the power of who he is but it is not available to a man because of his own natural self. It comes with the miracle of being those who must resist the devil in the evil day in which they have now been placed by the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This is a position to occupy because the call of God has placed them in relation to evil powers that are His enemies and have now become theirs under new circumstances.

Formerly, these evil powers were overpowering and controlling of their former life; but now there is a new stance that may be taken toward them. All because of a new change that has been worked by the judgment and call of God. So there is a new dress to stand in which is appropriate to the new way of the conflict. Now it is not a matter of armour for an aggressive fight so much, as it is a matter of “standing” and holding the resistance by virtue of the new dress - all of which points to Christ. It is a matter of being clothed in Him.

This armour is not to be viewed as clothing that is external to them; for it is none other than putting on Christ. It is not disconnected with the union that they have with Him.

[4] Putting off the old man; putting on the new man

See Colossians 3.9-14; Ephesians 4.22-24

This use of similes of garments, robes and armour signal an external statement of an inner change. Now we are directed to the metaphor that expresses the inner change itself. It is an exhortation to the Christian, in any given moment, to be putting off of an old man, which belonged to the former manner of life and to be putting on the new man. We are to “dress ourselves” by faith. We are to trust that matters have really changed for us, we are now entitled to change our clothes; there is something to shed and to be ‘put off’; there is a new clothing to be picked up and put on. Then, so dressed by ourselves, we are to deliberately ‘come out’ into the world dressed as who we are. This is living by the faith of the Son of God.

This new man is created according to God and after the image of Christ in true righteousness and holiness. We are being made more and more to be conformed to that image. In the same way as the armour of God may be construed, it is a putting on of Christ. This “putting off” and “putting on”; this divesting and dressing of oneself is an active exhortation in the mouth of the apostles to encourage Christians to leave off their former way of life and to actively take up the new life, firmly recognising their right and requirement to present themselves as new persons.

[5] The inner man, the hidden man of the heart

See Romans 7.22; 1 Peter 3.4

Just as with the man of Psalm 119, there is, in the miracle of the Christian, an inner man who delights in the Law of God. While this man stands in need of strengthening every day [Eph-

sians 3.16] through the Spirit of God and while the [2 Corinthians 4.16] outer man is perishing constantly, the inner man is being renewed day by day. This “man of God” [2 Timothy 3.17] is a man fully equipped for every good work.

Putting on a wedding garment, the armour of God and the white robes means that a Christian should grasp the opportunity to express who he is; for he is radically changed in such a way as completely overshadows what he was before. He has become the bearer of a new name, which is appropriate to his new reality. It is so new that no one knows it except the man who receives it [Revelation 3.5, 13.8, 17.8] but it is under this name he is indelibly entered into the book of life.

262 - The heart - deep inside the man - is changed

Romans 2 and 3; Jeremiah 31.33ff, 32.48-51; Ezekiel 11.19-20;

The contrast, presented in Romans 2, is between a Jew who is a Jew outwardly - in an external way - and one who is a Jew inwardly, in secret where only God in his truth knows him. The circumcision that counts is that of the heart, worked by the Spirit and not of the letter. That this doesn't refer to Gentiles who have some access to these things by nature is clear from Romans 3.9-22 where the whole world is seen as guilty and standing before God with no hope of being justified by works of the law.

What Paul is referring to, for the consideration of the current Jewish community, are Christians whom God has brought to conversion and change by the grace of the gospel emanating from the arrival and work of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus.

So Jeremiah 31.33f speaks of the day when God shall put his laws directly into the hearts of his people. Jeremiah 32.38-41 speaks of giving them another heart that they may fear Him. Even clearer is Ezekiel 11.19-20 where He speaks of giving them a new heart and a new spirit. This is the focus of Romans 2. Paul is stating that in the messianic age there are such persons around - in Israel in only small numbers, but among the Gentiles in very large numbers. These folks have become different men and women, true Israelites. The matter underlying the Christian way is a new man, a different one from the old man.

263 - The new birth; a birth "from above"

See John 3.1-10; Matthew 19.28; Titus 3.5; 1 Peter 1.22-25

A new birth is a new beginning, yet it is worked on the man who has already come to birth “through a woman” [1 Corinthians 6]. That Jesus would speak of a new birth - or a birth from above - is a miracle and mystery which Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, could not grasp [John 3.9ff].

Matthew 19.28 uses the word *παλιγγενεσία* to describe the total renewal of the world [“the

new world" RSV] which has taken place at the appearance of Jesus Christ. This word is translated "regeneration" in Titus 3.5 and is applied to those God has saved. "...but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal [ἀνάκαινώσεως] of the Holy Spirit."

The natural procreation which comes about through the will of a father has its origin, likeness and characteristics in flesh, "what is born of flesh is flesh" [John 3.6]. At every birth, parents muse about what their child will "become". To come into the world can be thought of as being given an authority to "become" who you are. Birth is the beginning of who you are set to become, either by your own will or in yielding to the will of God for you.

Such a birth through "the will of man" [John 1.12] is sharply contrasted with becoming a child of God through a creative act of new birth. This second birth, this regeneration, is "an authority to become children of God" [John 1.12]. It is given by Jesus Christ and speaks of becoming what we ought to have always been. It is an authority to become faithful to God in response to His faithfulness to us; and to be those in whom He finds the reflection of his image.

A human father is said to "sire" his children through his own sperm, or seed [τό σπέρμα]. In our own salvation-history, the active power that God has used in bringing us to be "begotten again" [ἀναγεννημένοι] is portrayed in 1 Peter 1.22-25; where the seed which has brought us to this birth is an incorruptible one - no less than the living and abiding Word of God. That it is "living and abiding" means that it will not fade away, and so our siring is seen to be by that which abides for ever. The contrast is that flesh is as grass and does not abide. This word is identified as that which was preached to us - it is the apostolic gospel. We are begotten by God through the word of truth [James 1.18] which from the day we first heard it bears fruit in us as it continues to grow and increase through the world as it does with us [Colossians 1.6].

Not as a child, but like a newborn child [1 Peter 2.2], a man comes to see the kingdom of God [John 3.3], receives it and enters it. Here he is born again, or born from above by direct divine fatherhood. He is "begotten" to a living hope and the sharing of an inheritance [1 Peter 1.3ff] understood as laid up for him in heaven already [Col.1.5]. For all our treasure is found in that man who is in the heavens [Col 3.1].

So we see that the Christian life begins with a change that cannot be understood, but cannot be stated too radically. That God works this miracle in a person's life is the Christian's basis for being who he is and acting as he now can.

264 - The transition through dying and rising with Christ

*See Galatians 2.19-20; 2 Corinthians 4.10; Romans 6.2,6,8,11;
Colossians 3.3; 2 Timothy 2.11.*

The Christian person is one who has died, but who has been raised to a new life. Man died, but in doing so he has begun to live. This whole understanding of dying and rising with Christ is developed powerfully in Paul's apostolic teaching. Paul can speak of himself in this way;

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live; but Christ who lives in me."
Galatians 2.19-20

How can it be him no longer who is living? It is a crucifixion with Christ that is the death he means, and this crucifixion has gone on to the shared resurrection life of Jesus. And he now thinks of Jesus alive within himself; and that there is the centre of his life – "no longer I, but Christ..." Paul can go on speaking about this continued living as carrying about this dying in his own body [2 Corinthians 4.10].

Paul understands all Christians would not be what they are if they did not have this crucifixion, this dying and death behind them, for if this is not so, then there is no future for them either. In 1 Corinthians 10.1-4, Paul states that the old Israel has been "baptised into Moses" in the cloud and in the sea. He understands that to be "baptised into" a person is to have been united with that person by going through this powerful salvation event together. In Moses and Israel's case it was done at the same time and in company with one another – and it united them as they participated in the saving work God had done for them.

Now, in the case of Christ He has done this wonderful saving work for us all alone; fittingly so, for only He could. That He was deserted by those around Him declared this to be the wisdom of God. Jesus' death was a death that worked the death of the old man - the old Adam [Boan, 2013 Jesus Exalted, #147-150]. That is seen as the point of departure for us. We understand it was there, as God deals with us in Christ, that the old man was condemned, rejected and done to death. For us, that existence terminated there in Christ's death. Now, in the wonderful baptism of water and the Holy Spirit we have been baptised into Christ. Our baptism in water is simply our acknowledgement of this wonderful truth as we look to the community to baptise us. This is the powerful picture of Romans 6.2,6,8,11; Colossians 3.3; 2 Timothy 2.11.

From this dying with Christ, the Christian goes forward to the resurrection and the "newness of life" [Romans 6.4]. It is a passage from death to life [John 5.24, 1 John 3.14]. If the old had not passed away and perished then the new would not have come [2 Corinthians 5.17]. Going forward is the only option to this new man - that is why it is a point of departure. The Christian man's Christian life begins with this beginning. This is a divine change and that is why it can be described in these terms and images of new garment, new heart, new generation and birth.

This new beginning brings the possibility which is not within man's ability to determine. It must first set him free to be free for God in a way which he was not previously so.

7 - Baptised - immersed in the Spirit

265 - The man set free for God by the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Without separating them, there are two viewpoints to be assessed when thinking about the person who becomes a Christian. There is the perspective, viewed from above as a work of God done through Jesus of Nazareth. It was done for us, there and then and is done outside of us. The other perspective, is viewed as a work of God done for us by the Spirit of Christ. It too is done for us, here and now and is done inside of us. These two viewpoints open two questions for us.

[1] How does the work of Jesus Christ which took place in the past [there and then] come to be effective for all men and women, both forward and backwards in space and time?

When a man does things in his own life and then dies, all that he has done is imprisoned in the time he lived and in his own experience; it is not available to us. His own history is separated from us by his death and we cannot appropriate it to ourselves in the present. Also, a man only comes once in time; he does not repeat.

Further, once a man dies, if he has a new history, it is not one we share or may even know about. He has passed into a setting where his own history in this life is transcended and outmoded by the new; whatever that is.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes clear who He is, His history and all that He did. In Christ's resurrection then, His history in time was not superseded or outmoded. His history - what He did there and then - was not past or transient; nor does He enter a new history different from what He did there and then. On the contrary, the resurrection makes all that He did, there and then, alive to us now because it is present to all times, because He is. What passed away with the resurrection was not the history of Jesus past actions, but the idea that it might be transient - his history is not imprisoned in time and space because it was not threatened by death like everyone else's life history is. Jesus' history is accessible to all men and women. The resurrection makes it applicable now – for He ever lives.

[2] How can it happen that specific men and women may experience the history of Jesus Christ and that it becomes for them [here and now], the renewing event?

The particular change which we have been discussing is the change to a person so that they are now free, able and willing to respond to God. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In this way the history of Jesus Christ, open to all men in Jesus Christ's history, is manifest to a particular man or woman in their personal history here and now. As a result, they become persons who are open, seeing, comprehending [Colossians 1.6]. Each man will have a witness inside himself that will tell him he is a child of God [Romans 8.15, Gal 4.6]. He will know that he is the brother of the Son of God, and a child of God.

What was done there and then in the history of Jesus Christ, becomes this man's here and now, and not only something done for him, but is now done in him. The power of this divine change in a person is the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

266 – The mystery examined

We have been looking at the gracious mystery of the way that God works to cause us to be able to respond to His call which comes through the apostolic message. We have seen how a person becomes a Christian and that this mystery is an initiative of God long before a person is able to respond.

We examined the four Biblical pictures [metaphors] of this radical change and appreciated that because of the Resurrection, the historical life of Jesus may be entered and experienced by anyone, forward and backward in time. This is so because He is alive to apply it to us, and as a life giving Spirit, He does so. This dealt with the mystery -without explaining it away - of how what He did for us there and then, can become our personal experience in the here and now.

267 – Why is it a "baptism" in the Holy Spirit?

See 1 Corinthians 12.3

This divine change which has come upon a man so that he is free to respond to God and walk into a new place of living out all that Christ has done for us is called a "baptism". It is a "baptism" because it is something done to us which we can only receive as a work of Another done on/in us.

Mark 1.8 and the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke, speak of Jesus, after being baptised in water has the Holy Spirit descend upon him and remain. Because the Spirit remains upon Jesus, John the Baptist is able to recognise him as Son of God and the baptiser in the Holy Spirit [John 1.33]. Jesus baptises in the Holy Spirit; it is a baptism which only God Himself, or the Son sent by Him, can bring to a man or woman.

Paul, emphasising the oneness of all Christians as members of the body of Christ, makes the statement,

"For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body...we were all made to drink of one Spirit." [1 Corinthians 12.13].

Here the image of being baptised stresses the outward work of being baptised by the Spirit - immersed in the Spirit - and that it is this work of God which makes us members of the body of Christ. As we see in the Acts of the Apostles, the coming of the Spirit upon people is the only criterion for the apostles to count them as Christians [Acts 10.44ff. See Boan, 2013 The Gift of the Spirit, #208].

The image of being “made to drink” [the verb used is passive] has a strong picture attached to it. Jesus used it to express his suffering - his trials, condemnation and crucifixion. He understood that the Father had given him a cup to drink. As a child willingly takes his nasty tasting medicine, Jesus drank the cup of wrath down to the last drop for us, in our place and in our stead. Such was the father’s desire for Him for our sakes.

Here, the image of being “made to drink” stresses, the importance that, from God’s perspective, we must drink of the Spirit. The picture is that this inward appropriation of drinking is something to which God required of us to yield. If it does not happen then we cannot be healed, changed and renovated. The emphasis is on the work of God brought to us and of which we partake by His insistence and work upon us. He has “made us drink”.

268 – The beginning and empowerment for the whole Christian life

The work of God done in the person baptised with the Spirit is that they are empowered for a particular calling and task. They are empowered to be a witness of/for Jesus Christ in the world in which they live, in any place and time. They are to be this witness even in times of deep hostility against them.

This ministry of being a witness is the form of the whole Christian life. The total scope of life is contained in this idea that the person, upon being apprehended by God finds themselves speaking and living in such a way that they become an effective advocate for the person and work of Jesus.

Concerning this action of being “baptised in the Holy Spirit”, Jesus taught that it was a promise of the Father about which Jesus had told them [Acts 1.5]. It would be a reception of power that would empower them to be His witnesses, both in life and word [Acts 1.8]. This work of witness would go all over the world. This is what took place at the feast of Pentecost [Acts 2.1-42] when a great wind came, accompanied by little tongues of fire upon each of the gathered Christians there, and they began to speak. This speech bridged the different languages of those gathered there and spoke of the glory of God and what He is doing. Peter records that at Cornelius’ home this action was repeated on those gathered there [Acts 11.15-16] in just the same way. Similarly in Ephesus, Paul encountered twelve men [Acts 19.1-7] who upon being corrected by him concerning the importance of being baptised in Jesus’ name, found that as he laid hands upon them the Spirit came and they all spoke in other tongues and prophesying.

Jesus re-assured his disciples that in a hostile environment they were not to be alarmed or worried about what they were to say. [Mark 10.20; Luke 12.11ff]. They would be taught what to say by the Holy Spirit, and in such a way that they would be aware that it is the Spirit who spoke through them.

269 - The baptism of fire by the Spirit

Read Acts 2; Matthew 3.1-15; Luke 12.50

Acts records that there is a second element to the rushing wind of the Spirit; it is the settling on each of the persons present a small tongue/flame of fire. In the teaching of John the baptist, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire would precede the coming of the final day of the Lord when the wheat and chaff of mankind will be sifted through by Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 3.1-12, John the Baptist, preached a baptism of repentance leading to the remission of sins. John also implied there was a flight from the “wrath to come”. Amongst others, John had the attention of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. To these, he delivered a strong warning concerning the need to see the fruit of repentance coming about in their life. He understood that they were trusting in their heritage as children of Abraham to deliver them. John made clear that the making of Abraham’s children is a small matter to God and that He could raise children of Abraham from something as inert and lifeless as stones. In passing, we note that this is a powerful image to apply to the deadness of any man or woman before the baptism in the Spirit encounters them.

John saw that the failure to bring forth repentance in life was a sign of the tree that would be cut down by the axe of God’s judgment. It was vital to have this fruit of repentance before the “wrath to come”. John preached a coming remission of sins which was designed to awaken in the hearts of people a hunger that would lead to the repentant life.

But it is the baptism in the Holy Spirit that will signal the mightier ministry than John’s. For when Jesus comes He will baptise them in Holy Spirit and fire. And this will be before He gathers up the wheat and the chaff which is what Acts 2 indicates by the moon turning to blood and the day of the Lord breaking in. The message is that those last days have dawned.

In Matthew 3.15, Jesus made it clear to John the Baptist that to fulfil all righteousness John should admit Him to the baptism of repentance along with all the people. In doing this, Jesus submitted Himself to the judgment of God contained in the preaching of the Baptist. In this way, whatever was demanded of all by the righteousness of God’s will Jesus entered into by Himself on their behalf. It is here that Jesus began to take up the office He was to discharge – and which would be completed on the cross.

Luke 12.50 records that Jesus, on the way to Jerusalem, spoke of a “baptism” He had yet to undergo. The cross and the baptism are interrelated by Jesus when he remarks that “I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!”

Jesus’ death and the death of the disciples were related. This is made clear by Mark 10.25-40. The sons of Zebedee asked to sit at His right hand and at His left. Jesus put to them the question could they “drink the cup” which He drinks [the present tense tells us He already sees Himself as doing this drinking] and could they be baptised with the baptism that he is baptised [present tense again] with.

He went on to make clear that his drinking of the cup and the baptism He spoke of was not for Himself alone, it was done for them. So, they too, would die in his death and so their entry into glory would be secured no matter what places they occupy; which is what lay behind the question they asked.

In drinking his “cup”, Jesus tastes death for every man, so that we can no longer die as sinners, without hope [Hebrews 2.9]. According to the New Testament, Jesus died for our sins [1 Corinthians 15.3]; bearing them on the tree [1 Peter 2.24]. He is the Lamb of God who bears and bears away the sins of the whole world [John 1.29].

In His death Christ took the place of all men and women – the place where they would have had to die the hopeless death as sinners. He has ransomed many hopelessly enslaved to sin [Mark 10.45ff]. Made sin for us [2 Cor 5.21] He has died this death for us [1 Thessalonians 5.10].

So we neither must nor can die the death as sinners; as we cannot taste this dereliction of death [Mark 15.34]. He has “tasted” death for every man [Heb 2.9]. In his death, we who deserved to die as He died are already put to death. With Him, the old man, which we all were and are, is crucified [Galatians 2.19; Romans 6.6] with Him [just as the two thieves were], the penitent and the impenitent [Luke 23.39ff]. We are planted together in the likeness of his death [Romans 6.5]. We are all dead with Him. [2 Corinthians 5.14]; for as He was lifted up from the earth; He drew all men to Himself [John 12.32ff].

It is the baptism in the spirit, which is at the same time the baptism of fire, that fulfils the judgment of God and establishes God’s righteousness. It would not surprise us that John 14.6-7 would speak of the conviction of the Spirit concerning righteousness, because Jesus goes to the Father. This conviction comes on all those who are baptised in the Holy Spirit; it is the immersion in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

All those who receive this baptism know that they have passed out of judgment and wrath and have received the forgiveness of their sins. They are now waiting for Jesus, who has delivered them from the wrath to come [1 Thessalonians 1.10]. This powerful assurance of sins forgiven and the righteousness of God having been brought to its fullness in our life is an experience brought to us by the baptism in the Spirit which is a baptism in fire.

270 - The act of God that is the beginning of the Christian life

Here are some observations as to what this act of God on human beings means for them. They state what is the content of this baptism in the Holy Spirit.

[1] We have seen how baptism in the Holy Spirit is the imparting here and now of what took place for us in Christ Jesus there and then. It is an imparting to us from Jesus, who, as the life giving Spirit, has baptised in Holy Spirit so that a person who was formerly faithless to

God can now be faithful and respond with an obedience of faith. All this as the starting gift for a man or woman who was previously not free for God. Jesus brings about the change in which a man, in virtue of God's faithfulness to him, becomes faithful to God in return and so becomes a Christian.

[2] This change, this baptism in the Holy Spirit, is worked in each particular person in such a way as to reveal the Son of God "in me" [Galatians 1.16]. It is not simply an outward matter nor is it just words; it is a revelation of Jesus Christ which is inward – it is the change to a new existence. It cleanses, renews and changes man truly and utterly.

[3] As God gives to us what we could not have without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, so, as a gift of grace it demands the response which is appropriate. The gratitude, which is the response of the Christian to the Lord, is evoked by the stunning nature of the gift. In this gracious way, the man acquires a Lord and a Master. And as he realises that he is set within this relationship – then the obedience of faith is effectively demanded of him. This is why obedience is a joy and a delight. This is the key to sustaining the joy of the Lord - it is the glad response to grace that recognises that without it we could never have known the Lord; let alone serve Him.

A man cannot escape this commitment to obey by pleading his sin and guilt – for he has been freed from that. Nor can he plead his weakness and inability – he has been set free to be able. The only way ahead for him is to obey – not in a mechanical way, but in a way that he is set free to walk genuinely as his true self as asked to by God.

[4] He is also baptised into a body. A Christian is set in relation to the communion of saints by his baptism in the Holy Spirit. He can be truly the free man that he is only as he belongs to them. He is one with the people of God, a member of the body whose Head is Jesus Christ. This is not the same as reception into a church seen as a religious society. This is not about pledges, uniforms or helmets and badges. This is about taking one's place in the spiritual power and endowments of the charismata of the Spirit for the life and ministry of the total community of God's people. It is good to see yourself as a person who belongs to the body and who is endowed with those gifts and ministries which are to be expressed in the particular place where you are found.

[5] It is a beginning - it is not perfection. It is a commencement pointing to a future. The Christian is already a new creature [2 Corinthians 5.17] and the old has passed away and the new has come – nevertheless it points forward to a future. It is a spiritual new man who must develop and grow into what he is. He must "become". It is a good work which must be continued. It is entry to a land which "I will show you" [Genesis 12.1]. It must always be encountered afresh. We are constantly facing new moments when we must "put off" and "put on". We find both sides of our experience to be present in any moment. This is simply consistent with our being justified and a sinner, both at once.

There is great importance in believing in the baptism in the Spirit as the way you began the

Christian life. Otherwise, we are often found asking God for enduements of power which we already have, but have not recognised.

Consider! Have you ever thought that your Christian life simply began with the response you made to God? It is vital to recognise that you could not have made that response unless you had been baptised in Spirit and fire. If you never stood on that ground then do so today. To recognise it, is to know the grace of God as the basis, beginning and continuing of the Christian life.

8 - Forgiven

271 – Forgiveness comes before repentance, and evokes it

When two people, let's call them Alice and Bob, have a quarrel they become estranged from each other. After a time, Alice comes to Bob and she says, "Bob, I forgive you". What is clear is that this word she speaks is not only a word of love, it is also a word of condemnation. It clearly implies that, in terms of this quarrel, Bob is the guilty one.

How does Bob react? Perhaps his immediate response is indignation. Being aware of the judgment being stated in the words, he may reject the word of forgiveness – and the love that is behind it – by refusing to submit to the implied guilt contained within it. He has no change of heart toward Alice – he is impenitent.

Later, however, Bob reflects upon his actions and the quarrel. He returns to Alice, and says, "I am sorry. I was quite wrong". Accepting the love and forgiveness means that Bob has submitted to the verdict of guilty. This is an act of repentance. It is generated by the prior act of offered forgiveness on Alice's part and is Bob's response to her overture in the first place.

The good news is that there is forgiveness with God our Father; He has spoken that word of forgiveness in Christ on the Cross – which is, at the same time, a word of love for humanity and a word of judgment. This word of grace, illumined by the Holy Spirit, summons from us a response of trust and repentance.

In accepting the forgiveness of God offered to us through the deep satisfaction the death of Christ makes to God's holiness, we are, from a position of safety, submitting to the verdict of guilty.

This means that God's forgiveness is logically prior to our repentance; for it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. We must never reverse this matter. Otherwise, we shall see ourselves repenting about our life so that God will forgive us. Along the lines that God is seen to say, in some contractual way, "if you change then I shall forgive you." Nothing is further from the truth.

9- Reconciled

272 - God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.

*A study of 2 Corinthians 5.14-6.2: Boan, 2013 Atoning Death, #106,108;
Colossians 3.15; Romans 5.1*

1 God loves us "in Christ"

Whether it is our election in Christ before the world was made [Ephesians 1. 4]; or at the creation of the world [John 1.1-3] or the redemption of the world, within the inner relations of the Trinity, any action the Father takes, is taken in and through the Son. The Son never ceases to be the focus of the Father, even while He is expressing the Father's love to us. This focus of the Father on the Son is reciprocated in a similar exclusive focus in the response of the Son to the Father. Even while living and dying and rising amongst us, Jesus is always focussed on and submitting to the Father.

This means that God is acting "in Christ" in such a way that we are caught up into the actions of a Head Man. The reconciliation with the world is done in One Person, Christ and it is effective for the world because of Who that Son is, and how God has always been dealing with the "many" in the "one" since before the creation of the world. We now turn to the study of 2 Corinthians 5.14-6.2; we make a series of subheadings.

2 "reconciling"

The party which God will be reconcile to Himself is the "world" - it is a collective work of reconciling which is done in Christ. More of this below. Notice in our text that Christ's work is described as reconciliation. Notice also that the basis of the reconciliation is atonement. That is its ground.

Atonement is the covering of sin from God's sight by God Himself. It is this covering of sin from God's side, that has a result registered from the side of man; the covering causes sin to lose its accusing power. Once the accusing power is lost to sin, then its power to fracture the covenant relation with man and God is gone, with the result that a new humanity comes into being whose sins are not counted [2 Corinthians 5.19b].

Reconciliation and Atonement mean a change of relation between God and the whole human race. It is a change initiated from God's side from alienation to peace.

There are five matters that concern us when we think of reconciliation.

[1] Reconciliation is between two parties or persons who have fallen out. In this case one party is finite and the other infinite.

[2] Reconciliation affects both parties and not only one. There is reconciliation on both sides.

[3] Reconciliation rests on atonement.

[4] It is the reconciliation of the world, as a cosmic whole, which is involved here.

[5] It is final in Jesus Christ and His cross. It is done once for all. So that in history, the great victory does not wait to be won, for it has already been won in reality. It was not some tentative, preliminary affair. God was not taking some opening steps in setting up a possible way of reconciliation - it was brought about and finished in Christ's death.

3 "the world"

Each of us is saved as part of the human race - it is a collective work of salvation. We are in solidarity with all others on the planet. Christ lived and died for the whole of the human race. The first thing reconciliation does is to change men's corporate relation to God. It is universal, not by the gathering together of single units, but in a solidarity sense.

"For God so loved the world"... [John 3.16]. The world is the primary object of God's love. His love is directed to all in such a way as it should be received [taken home to themselves] by each person. Salvation is personal in its appropriation; but it is not individual as to its nature, it is collective.

What makes the world a unity is not its affections, emotions or its organisation. It is its conscience. Just as God, who goes direct to the human conscience, is universal in His scope and application.

4 "to Himself"

Reconciliation works a change between us and God. We do not mean that it changes His mood, or His feelings and affections for us. God never changes towards us - His love has never varied [Boan, 2013 Atoning Death, #106,108].

What does change is God's manner towards us. It is His treatment of us that is changed. His discipline of us is altered. For, while He always had friendly feelings for us, nevertheless we did not always have friendly relations. He never ceased to love us, even when He was angry with us, even when we were His enemies [Romans 5. 10], which refers to the way in which He regarded us in respect to our behaviour - our deeds - not to our hostility towards God.

The first matter in which God is reconciled within Himself is that reconciliation puts away guilt. So it is a reconciling based on not counting sins. This is because

[1] Guilt rests on God charging up, reckoning, or counting sins.

[2] Reconciliation rests on Him not counting [imputing] sins.

[3] The non-reckoning of our sins rests upon Christ being made sin for us.

Reconciliation, when it is between a great and infinite party and a finite one, has no moral meaning apart from guilt. Guilt arises from having committed transgressions against a holy

God. It is something malignant in our relation with Him. If God were not holy there would be no need for atonement. Our guilt stirs up His anger and makes a separation from Him. So, if there is to be a reconciliation, there must be a justification and an atonement which will lead to restored communion. We can only be saved in such a way as is consistent with God's own morality, His holiness.

5 "He made Him to be sin who knew no sin"

Christ, as God's own eternal Son knew no sin in His life through doing it. But upon Him, sin's judgment fell. Christ was made sin. That is, by Christ's own consent, God identified him with sin in the way He treated it. God did not judge Him but He judged sin upon His head. God never counted Him sinful, but was always well pleased with Him.

It was sin that had to be judged, more so than the sinner in the salvation of the world. God made Him sin in this sense, that He took Him in the place of sin, rather than of the sinner, and judged sin upon Him. In this way the divine judgment on sin was effective and real.

Judgment of sin fell on Christ where such judgment was perfectly understood, praised and owned. Holiness was perfected and completed in judgment. The cross of Christ was the world's great day of judgment: for judgment is a crisis.

It is not the Son's suffering and death but His holy obedience to suffering and death which is the satisfying thing to God. Christ submitted with all His heart to God's final and holy judgment on the race. He did not view it as an unfortunate incident in His life - it was the grand will of God. His death atoned not simply because it was a sacrifice unto death, but because it was sacrifice to holy and radical judgment. Judgment is not chiefly an infliction of retribution. It is a positive matter - it establishes holy and eternal righteousness. This is why it is not a morally repulsive thing- it brings right order. It rectifies what is wrong.

6 "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"

Christ honoured God's claim as right and just - this is what He did for the race. He met the claim not by suffering, for loving holiness does not find satisfaction in making the offender suffer. Nor by confession of words, "I have sinned" - for we have not offended God in word, but in deed and life; and it requires an acknowledgment of the same. The claim is met by **adequate holiness** - by a holy man who can make a confession of the rightness of God with a holiness which meets God's own in life and intimacy.

And this is how we become the righteousness of God in Him - for the holy satisfaction which Christ made to God's holiness is, at the same time, and by the same act, the glorifier of the new humanity, which "in Him" is righteous in God's sight, and so justified. What Christ presented to the Father for His complete joy and satisfaction, was a perfect obedience for the whole human race. This racial holiness took place in Christ's public person, as He stood for all.

Our union with Christ by the Spirit, and arising through faith, is the way we are united to this work done for us. He is for us only as He is "in us" and we "in Him".

7 "Be reconciled to God"

1. Our conscience, throughout all of our life has lived ill at ease with God. And this is because we believe that He is counting our sins - just as in our experience most everyone else does.
2. We have lived by the law to ease our conscience before this. For we think that we must perform properly to be acceptable to God and man. Sin has deceived us here - we cannot, through living by law, or by our own works, satisfy our conscience or God.
3. It is vital to understand that God is not counting our own trespasses against us. Our fallen, self-centred conscience may resist this truth at first, claiming it to be too easy. But this gospel message of the cross shows that, while it is true that salvation is freely offered to us - it is not cheaply won from the side of God and His Christ.
4. Recognise that in the conscience of God, His own holiness is satisfied with the work of Christ. Only the holiness of God can satisfy the holiness of God - and Christ was the Holy One of God. If God is satisfied, then His rigorous judgment is the certain base that it is right for us to trust His work. The severity of God's holiness and personal claim on us has been met in Christ. This is the certainty of the salvation we have in Christ.
5. It is important not to refuse the gracious act of God in Christ. It is to refuse the remedy for sin. It is this remedy that the gospel announces as a properly urgent message, which comes from the fact of the Holy One we are dealing with.

273 - Christ is our peace

It is this peace with God that anchors the Christian life and makes it steady. For the 'rest' that our conscience has preserves us from constantly worrying about how relations stand between God and ourselves. We do not take God for granted, but it does mean that there is a basic acceptance that things are all right between us and Him.

This general sense of peace is meant to rule our hearts – to exercise a continual reign over our inner man.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" Colossians 3.15 ASV

274 - Known peace is the basis for knowing disturbance of spirit

This awareness of peace with God, which is accepted as a basic backdrop to our inner life, allows us to pick up, from time to time, the situations in life where we register that we are not at peace. In this way, just as we would in any stable relationship, we can register when there

is a disturbance to the normal evenness of the exchanges between us and someone else.

It is against this reconciled position we are aware of the gentle registrations of the Holy Spirit within us. Where He is quenched as to His power, or grieved in Himself about what we are doing, then we can register this disturbance. This “state of the union” means that peace with God is a given – something that has become ours in Christ.

275 - Known peace the basis for knowing an attack on it

Conversely, when false accusations are made to us concerning ourselves, they are clearly discerned against the backdrop of our general peace. So the insistency, the pushy nature of the attack, which can throw our spirit out of kilter, allows us to register that this is not the Holy Spirit at work, but some other spirit. Accordingly, our conscience rests in the given peace of God through Christ and allows us to remain unmoved by false accusations with a wholeness that stabilizes our person.

10 - Justified

276 - Christ is our righteousness: if He is justified, so are we

2 Corinthians 5.21

Justification means to pronounce, or declare a person righteous. It speaks of how God treats us on grounds that He deems us be righteous. Needless to say, such a declaration is given us by virtue of the person and work of Christ. It is not a declaration made on the basis of anything that we have done, but what has been done for us. To be justified is a pre-cursor to fellowship with God; it opens us to access into His presence and life [Romans 5.1].

We have seen so far that the whole of our life in God is really a sharing in the life of Christ - it is the life of God made available to us by participating in the life of Christ.

In this section, we want to understand how it is that we are accounted “righteous” before God. So our study will be about righteousness and will lead us into what accrues to us as those who are “in Christ”. This, in turn, will demand us to look at the resurrection of Christ again. On the same basis we shall also find that Christ is our sanctification and ultimate glorification.

277 - Paul's words and imagery are different from Christ's.

Jesus preached about the kingdom of God. He spoke of how the coming of the kingdom was a bringing in of righteousness. His message centred upon His own ministry. Paul teaches us that the coming of righteousness and the justification of people centred on the death and

resurrection of Jesus. The difference which comes about in Paul is that he is centred on Christ Himself. Paul's gospel is about Jesus Christ, not simply about what Jesus Christ taught. This change leads to a difference in their words and their imagery.

But whether it is Jesus about the kingdom or Paul on justification, we can see similarities. Both are concerned with the relationship between God and mankind. Both involve a process of judgment. A judgment in which there are both negative and also positive elements. Both involve the restoration of the relationship with God which He had always intended to exist. And, both involve an ethic and an outworking of change into lives which affect behaviour.

278 - A righteousness of God, manifested "apart from the Law"

Romans 3.19-end

In Paul's own experience he maintains a strong contrast between law and grace. This is why he is so disturbed when the "false apostles", with their Jewish emphasis, require non-Jewish persons to accept the Jewish rite of circumcision [Galatians 2]. The questions seem so harmless - "what harm would there be to follow the rules of cleanliness and ritual?" and "why not comply with the Jewish law?" Paul sees this addition of the Jewish law as a serious distortion of the gospel.

What Paul saw was that the law had been used to condemn as a criminal the one acknowledged by God as the Messiah. For Christ was crucified as One whom the law had condemned as wrong and had hung on a tree as accursed of God. The verdict of the Law was clearly wrong. If this was so, then salvation certainly could not be through Law.

The acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah implied that Jesus was the fulfilment of everything that the law had promised [Romans 10.4, 2 Corinthians 1.20]. This was an acknowledgment that the law was inadequate as a way of life. It was now replaced as a way of being in right relationship with God; for this right relationship now comes through Jesus. Instead of attempting to have their life by the precepts of the law, they now live as those who are "in Christ".

279 – Righteousness not "through Law" is shown by the resurrection

We have seen clearly that in sharing the life of Christ by union with Him we can say that we "have" Him as He "has" us [Boan, [2013] The Gift of the Spirit, #184-189]. This is the way we need to approach the understanding how we "have" a righteousness in the sight of God. It is based upon "having" a Person with Whom we are in union.

We have studied [Boan, [2013] Jesus Exalted, # 151-153] how the world history is broken into two ages by the resurrection of Christ. These two ages, may be described as mankind participating in the lives of two head men, Adam and Christ. The world viewed as "in Adam" or "in Christ" is the single idea controlling the way that Paul, the apostle, thinks of the history of the

world and also of the Christian life within that history.

In our reflecting on the gift of the Holy Spirit in the study of 2 Corinthians 3.1-4.6 we noticed how the two ages also may be described as being “in the flesh” or “in the spirit” - for at His resurrection Christ becomes a life giving Spirit.

Paul uses these images to concentrate on the basic facts of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. In Romans 1.3-5 Paul finds the resurrection so central to the declaration of Jesus as the Son of God, and so as Lord.

What convinced Paul that the Law was unable to save man from sin was not his own struggle with sin. He described his own life under law as one who was “as to the law - blameless” [Philippians 3.6]. It was with that understanding of himself that he was spoken to by the resurrected Christ from heaven.

By raising Christ from the death which had been brought upon Him under the condemnation of the law, God had declared Christ to be innocent and righteous. He had justified Christ through raising Him, He had vindicated Him. So, the resurrection had reversed the verdict of the Law which had condemned Jesus to death; the resurrection of Jesus by the Father had proclaimed Him righteous.

This justifying of Jesus in the resurrection is the sole basis for the justification of the Christian.

“He... was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.” [Romans 4.25].

As we identify ourselves with His cross and resurrection we share in His death to sin and His declaration of righteousness. This is to say, we share in the status of being righteous before God.

280 - The resurrection of Christ and the justification of the believer

The first thing to see is that, when we say that it comes about “in Christ”, we do not simply mean that it comes about through Christ. Rather, this justification for the believer is effective because he, the believer is “in Christ”. So its effectiveness has to do with how the believer shares in the verdict of “not guilty” - his vindication - which was pronounced on Christ in His resurrection.

In dealing with the exaltation of the Son of Man, we have already shown how Paul sums up the description of the experiences of the whole of mankind as either being “in Adam” or “in Christ” [1 Corinthians 15]. Both of these representative men are federal in their operations, they are heads of humanity. When we are incorporated into Christ that is the same as saying there is a new creation [2 Corinthians 5.17].

In our discussion beforehand, we portrayed the two ages as a line, broken in two at the resur-

rection point. And that was according to the context, for there, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is speaking in linear images of Adam and Christ as “first,” “second” and “last” men.

What is vital to see about these two stages is that Christ’s life in his humiliation is a sharing in the condition of being “in Adam”. Christ is the reason that the two ages overlap; the new humanity was created within the former stage of the old humanity. In this way, Christ shares our life and our death, in his taking flesh, before we can share His. If we die with Him out of the “in Adam” stage - one existence - and are raised with Him into the “in Christ” stage - a new existence - then it must be our life that He lives and our death that He dies. He must be one with us if we are to be one with Him. The two humanities “in Adam” and “in Christ” overlap in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. In this way Christ shares what we are; so that we may share in what belongs to Him.

Notice that this is not an exchange - it is rather a coming by Christ into our life sphere so that we may be drawn by Him into His. He was rich, and for our sakes He became poor, in order that we might become rich “in Him” [2 Corinthians 8]. Christ shares our poverty that we might share His riches.

He is made “sin” in order that we might become the righteousness of God “in Him” [2 Corinthians 5]. In that He is “made sin” He is identified with the human alienation from God. He shares the penalty of the law on the earth, and so experiences death. Yet, by His resurrection He has been declared righteous. As a righteous man death cannot hold him, for it lacks a basis to do so. Therefore he was acquitted, vindicated after He suffered, the just for the unjust. We become the righteousness of God in Him, for we share in his resurrection: and if that is so, we also share in the righteousness which belongs to Him.

281 - Dying and rising with Christ

Christ’s humiliation and exaltation spans the intersection of the two ages of “in Adam” and “in Christ”. So, if we have been joined to Christ, we are made one spirit with him [1 Corinthians 2, and 6.17], then we have spanned both ages as well. Concerning ourselves as being “in Christ” we have died because of sin and we have been raised because of righteousness. That is, we have shared in the verdict and the judgment which has been passed on sin. We have also shared in the acquittal and restoration which was pronounced [in His resurrection] on Christ.

282 - At His resurrection Christ became a life giving Spirit

See Boan,[2013] Jesus Exalted, # 150,151-153

In considering the resurrection we saw that there were two ages typified as “in Adam” and “in Christ”. What was developed in the gift of the Spirit was that the two ages can be presented

as being “in the flesh” and also “in the spirit”. And what followed there was a study of 2 Corinthians 3.1-4.6 which contrasted the two ministries of the old and the new covenant. We saw that the risen Christ had become a “life-giving Spirit”.

To have received of the life-giving gift of the Spirit is to be “in the Spirit” - it is to receive the Spirit “of God”, the spirit “of Christ”, which is the spirit of the “one who raised Jesus Christ from the dead” that is, the Spirit of the Father [Romans 8.9-11]. This is the same spirit who was responsible for Jesus Christ being declared Son of God [Romans 1.4] and Who also declares us to be the sons of God [Romans 8.14-16; Galatians 4.1-8].

So we see that our sonship depends upon Christ’s resurrection; it is at the resurrection that we become what He already is. This true now, by sharing in his risen life through the Spirit of Christ and it will be so bodily, when we see Him as He is we shall be like Him [1 John 3.2].

11 - Sanctified

283 – A holy people

John 17

In the Old Testament the whole of the congregation of Israel is called holy [Ex.19.6; 1 Peter 2.9, Deut 7.6, 28.9, Is 62.12, Dan 7.27]. In the New Testament the goal of presenting the whole community as holy is stated [1 Peter 2.9 Ephesians 5.24ff]. As we have seen, the οἱ ἅγιοι are the saints. It is a technical term for Christians [1 Corinthians 16.1, 2 Corinthians 8.4]. No single individual is ever called a saint, although John Baptist is called a “holy man” [Mark 6.20]. So the saints are collectively spoken of as holy and this sanctity belongs to them only in their common life [1 Corinthians 14.33]; while Jesus the Holy One exists in the singular, the saints do in the plural.

Sanctification takes place as God fashions a people of holy men and women, who, despite their sin, have the freedom to represent Him and to serve Him in what they do and suffer.

284 – Christ is made unto us sanctification

1 Corinthians 1.30 John 6.69; 17.11, 17.19, Acts 4.27-30, 3.14,
Mark 1.34//Luke 4.34, 1 Peter 1.15, Hebrews 2.11; 10.29

Christ is made unto us sanctification as well as justification. It is vital to see that only Jesus Christ is the faithful covenant partner of God and, in that sense, His sanctification is unique. We can only think of our community as holy as we are found in him and live in solidarity with Him as He does with us. He took our place and acted for us as the Son of God who establishes God’s right, and our own, by allowing Himself, the Judge, to be judged for us. He also was the Son of Man who was sanctified, who sanctified Himself for us.

Just as we see it clearly about Christ being our justification, so we must also see it for our sanctification. We are not saints because we make ourselves such - we are already sanctified, already saints, in Christ. We do not achieve it by imitation. We are not asked to sanctify ourselves. Our sanctification consists in sharing in - it is a participation in - His sanctification.

[1] This sharing in Christ's holiness is not a private arrangement.

It is a statement of His Kingship that in their sanctification He shows forth that He is Lord of all men. [a] This implies a stamp of necessity and obligation to all men. [b] There is a solidarity with so called 'secular' things. [c] It removes pride, religion, self seeking, and any self sufficiency. [d] It becomes the basis for a humble rendering of service

Saints know that the sanctification of all men is already fulfilled in Jesus, who is the first born among many brethren [Rom 8.29, Col 1.15].

[2] The participation is a work of God

[a] It is not an offer in Jesus Christ, of a chance to be holy which Christians could or might take. It is a revelation of a decision taken about them by God in Jesus Christ. It compels a re-interpretation of their existence, He has reached down and touched them through the Holy Spirit.

[b] God Himself creates saints by giving them direction through the Holy Spirit. It falls vertically into the lives of those to whom it is given. It comes by His speaking, it is the power of His word, it is a call to obedience.

[3] How does it work in practice?

It is a miracle as God sanctifies in Christ slothful, stupid, inhuman, dissipated and careworn sinners. What we can see has happened to them in Christ now is that:

[a] They are disturbed sinners - their sleep is broken, they can no longer be complacent. It disturbs them below that they have this Brother man above who has sanctified Himself for their sake. So they are placed under a new determination; His drawing power is His kingly work in divine power.

[b] There is a definite limit to being a sinful man. This limit is found in a liberty, a freedom and capacity to live on behalf of God and one's brothers [2 Corinthians 3.17]. We are sold under sin and yet have freedom to move. We are not compelled to sin, we may refrain, we can choose to make use of our liberty as sons.

Freedom is found in the gift of Jesus Christ. But we are free only in the fact that it is to Him that we look as we 'lift up their heads' [Galatians 4.25ff]. That freedom has become a factor in the Christian's life and it is the basis for the apostolic admonitions and exhortations [Galatians 5.1, 2 Corinthians 5.17, Hebrews 12.10, John 8.36, 15.3].





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.

Discipleship Schools have been running a long time. This current series represents the most up-to-date version of our current teaching.

